Standard pre-recorded oral presentations (15 minutes)

RESEARCH ABSTRACT

Related programme themes: Ethical considerations in human-animal interaction research / Studying animal behaviour in human-animal interaction contexts / Companion animals and their caregivers

Title: Redressing the balance: Developing new questions to better represent dog investment in the human-canine animal bond.

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Introduction. Many existing questions have been used to assess the human-canine animal bond (HCAB), but most relate to human, rather than canine, investment in that bond. Given the importance of investment by both the dyad's parties, further development of canine investment measurement is warranted.

Methodology. Previous systematic literature reviews[1][2] identified 169 human-animal interaction questionnaires that had been created before 2019. From these, 228 questions were identified as suitable for assessing HCAB and were grouped according to content theme. Simultaneously, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with dog guardians from various relationship types to explore new themes for question design based upon canine investment in HCAB. NVivo (v.12, QSR) was used for inductive thematic analysis of interview transcripts and themes identified from semantic and latent codes. Through systematic data coding, key themes emerged around owners' perceptions of dog investment into the HCAB.

Main Results. Only 15 of the existing 228 HCAB questions were exclusively dog-centred (independently agreed by two researchers). Qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews identified four key themes for future lines of questioning to address: owner understanding and respect for a dog's preferences; both parties' expectations from, or within, the HCAB; both parties' boundaries within the HCAB; both parties' adaptations to accommodate these factors.

Principal Conclusions and Implications for Field. Currently dog investment is underrepresented within most HCAB questionnaires. Future research is needed to create, validate, and reliability test additional canine investment-based questions within the four themes identified to allow HCAB tools to meet their construct criteria.

References:

1. Wilson, C. & Netting, F. (2012). The status of instrument development in the human–animal interaction field. *Anthrozoös*, *25*, s11-s55.

2. Samet, L., Vaterlaws-Whiteside, H., Upjohn, M. & Casey, R. (2020). *Current Status of Instrument Development in the Field of Human-Animal Interactions.* Oral presentation: ISAZ 2020, September 3rd, 2020.