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Pet Ownership, Other Domestic Relationships, and Satisfaction with Life among Seniors: Results from a Canadian National Survey

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Abstract:

Given unprecedented aging in the global population along with the physical and psychological challenges associated with aging, it is important to identify ways to protect and promote quality of life for seniors. Previous research has suggested that pet ownership may confer a variety of health and social benefits among seniors. The purpose of this analysis was to determine whether pet ownership was associated with satisfaction with life among Canadian seniors. Quantitative data were obtained from the Canadian Community Health Survey-Healthy Aging, a nationally representative survey of Canadians ≥ 45 years of age conducted between December 2008 and November 2009. Analyses were restricted to a subsample of 11,973 individuals ≥ 65 years of age, and multiple logistic regression was used to model the relationship between pet ownership and satisfaction with life while controlling for sociodemographic factors. The final model was stratified to detect interaction. Pet ownership was negatively correlated with satisfaction with life in the sample as a whole (AOR = 0.79, 95% CI = 0.72-0.87) and among those who were married, in common-law relationships, and/or lived with others, while no association was found among those who were widowed, single, or living alone. Among those who were both divorced and living alone, pet ownership demonstrated the potential for being associated with greater satisfaction with life (AOR = 1.24, 95% CI = 0.89-1.73). Overall, this analysis showed that the relationship between seniors and their pets is complex. Whether pet ownership correlates with satisfaction with life appears to depend on the presence and nature of other domestic relationships.

Keywords: [COMPANION ANIMALS](#); [PET OWNERSHIP](#); [PETS](#); [SATISFACTION WITH LIFE](#); [SENIORS](#)

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