



Pressure distribution under three different types of harnesses used for guide dogs

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to evaluate the pressure distribution in three different types of harnesses for guide dogs (designated H1, H2 and H3). The dogs ($n = 8$) led a trainer through a course including a range of exercises (straight line, curve left, curve right, upstairs, and downstairs). All dogs were clinically sound and showed no sign of lameness. The pressure beneath the harness was determined by sensor strips and related to the gait. In all harnesses, the highest pressures were found in the right sternal region (H1 2.02 ± 0.6 N/cm²; H2 1.76 ± 0.4 N/cm²; H3 1.14 ± 0.5 N/cm²). In all other regions, the pressures were in the range of 0–1.32 N/cm². The right and left sternal regions were almost constantly loaded. Contrary to previous assumptions, the back regions had minimal loading. This investigation showed there are significant differences between the harnesses. A suitable harness is bound to reduce load to the guide dogs.

Keywords

Guide dogs; Harness; Pressure; Load; Kinematics