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Abstract:

Animal hoarding not only presents significant welfare issues for the animals involved, but also for the hoarders and people in the surrounding community. Existing studies on the issue have primarily been undertaken in the USA and little is known about animal hoarding in other countries, including Australia. It has been estimated that the per-capita prevalence of animal hoarding in Victoria, Australia, is similar to that in the USA, but in order to design effective intervention strategies, the extent of the issue and its characteristics need to be identified. This study analyzes data from 22 recent cases of animal hoarding from a number of agencies in Victoria. The demographics and living conditions of animal hoarders in Victoria and the USA were found to be similar. In contrast, the animals involved in hoarding cases in Victoria were in a better condition than the animals in the USA, with behavioral issues being the leading animal welfare concern in Australia. Behavioral problems resulted in euthanasia of the animals in 45% of the cases studied. All of the agencies included in this study call for a greater involvement or support from human mental health services to fully address the root of the problem. The information from this study can be used to help identify groups at risk to develop effective and appropriate means of prevention of, and intervention in, animal hoarding cases.

Keywords: [ANIMAL HOARDING](#); [ANIMAL WELFARE](#); [MENTAL HEALTH](#)

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