

Risk factors for unsuccessful dog ownership: An epidemiologic study in Taiwan

Hsin-Yi Weng^{1, a}, Philip H. Kass^{ a, }, Lynette A. Hart^a and Bruno B. Chomel^a

^aDepartment of Population Health and Reproduction, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616, USA

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Abstract

This retrospective study of 259 Taiwanese dog owners in 2004 addressed one of the major contributors to dog overpopulation in Taiwan: unsuccessful dog ownership. We found an inverse association between age of the dog at acquisition and risk of unsuccessful dog ownership: the younger the dog at acquisition the higher the risk. The incidence-proportion ratios (IPRs) of unsuccessful dog ownership for the owners who had a history of pet abandonment or losing a pet compared with those without such a history were 1.8 (95% confidence interval (CI) = 1.1, 3.0) and 2.1 (95% CI = 1.3, 3.3), respectively. Soiling (IPR = 2.0, 95% CI = 1.3, 3.1) and barking (IPR = 1.6, 95% CI = 1.0, 2.6) problems had the strongest effects on unsuccessful dog ownership among the post-acquisition variables studied. Preventing owners with a history of unsuccessful dog ownership from acquiring dogs was predicted to yield the largest reduction of risk of unsuccessful dog ownership among the investigated variables (population attributable fraction = 33%, 95% CI = 11%, 50%).

Keywords: Dogs; Overpopulation; Relinquishment; Pet ownership; Human–Animal bond; Taiwan

 Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 530 752 8631; fax: +1 530 752 5845.

¹ Current address: Department of Pathobiology, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois, 2001 S. Lincoln Avenue, Urbana, IL 61802, USA.

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