

Advancing the health of all family members through strategic, collaborative, and humane research



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Pets as family members – Harris Poll 2011

(n = 2,184 adults)

Seven in ten surveyed had a dog (69%) and half had a cat (51%)

92% of dog owners, and 91% of cat owners, considered their pet to be a family member

>50% of owners surveyed allowed the animal to sleep in their beds

33% of owners frequently purchased holiday presents for their animal

Does terminology matter? Pets vs. companion animals?



Pets or Companion Animals?

Saturday, Jun 29, 2013 12:00 PM MDT **Dog owners are now pet parents. People increasingly treat their dogs like canine children, and research on the interspecies bond says it's normal**

Randy Rieland, Smithsonian.com



I Am Not a Pet Parent

Torie Bosch

Slate's animal blog

Dec. 26 2013

Yet ... YouTube videos of cats are among most popular theme



Grumpy Cat

Pet? Companion animal? Ethicists say term matters

May 04, 2011 By KATHY MATHESON ,
Associated Press

"We do need to examine our language about animals because a lot of it is derogatory in the sense that it belittles them and our relations with them,"
journal co-editor Andrew Linzey said.
J. Animal Ethics



Companion animals as family members

- People often refuse to evacuate during disasters without their animals, sometimes risking their own lives or those of rescue workers
- PETS Act, 2006 (Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act) – requires state and local emergency preparedness operational plans to consider household pets and service animals





Dogs were first thing domesticated – before plants and other animals

Oxytocin facilitates social connections between humans and dogs

Many humans feel genuine friendship, love, and social attachment with dogs

A common brain network for emotion is activated when human mothers view images of their children or their dogs

Companion animals in research

- Generally, women are less inclined to favor animal research, and outnumber men in animal protection movement(s)
- > 80% of individual donors who funded research at Morris Animal Foundation were women
- Positive attitudes toward research dependent on type of research (e.g., cosmetic testing vs. research studies whereby the animal might also be helped)
- Children may be affected throughout their lifetimes regarding the positive or negative treatment of a pet



Considering the companion animal in clinical trials

Think “child patient”

- Is the trial designed to prevent disease or provide new therapies for animals?
- Who will serve as an independent advocate for the animal during a trial?
- Understanding that the animal cannot give consent, what are appropriate safeguards to ensure animal welfare is addressed?
- Should conventional therapies ever be delayed?
- What are the limits on tissue/blood collections?
- Do companion animals benefit (short-term or long-term) from clinical trial research (especially Phases 0 & 1)?



Considering the pet owner during clinical trials

Think “vulnerable population”

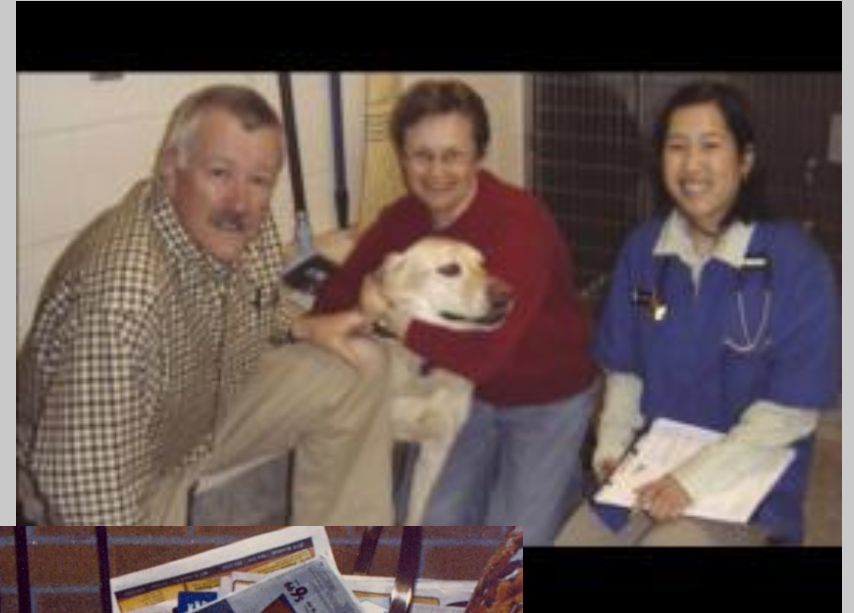
- Can a distressed/worried owner give true informed consent?
- Who could independently serve to address the emotional needs of an owner throughout the process?
- How might primary veterinarians be involved?
- How are owners surveyed after the end of a study to determine effectiveness of communications?
- How are communications effectively relayed to diverse populations?
- Dog defined as guide, loyal partner, best friend?



Michael Hingson and Roselle

What might happen if animals and animal owners are carefully considered?

- Pet owners become partners in research design and execution
- All family members are considered for future enrollment into well-designed clinical trials
- Disease preventions & gentler/efficacious therapies are advanced for both animals and people
- Enrollment, outcomes and satisfaction might all increase





Rising 14,692 feet into the air, the Matterhorn is located between Switzerland and Italy

It was the last Alpine peak to be summited – remained an impossible trek for decades (mostly from the Italian side)

Edward Whymper of London, an artist hired to make sketches of the mountains between Switzerland and Italy, asked a question on why the Matterhorn had never been attempted from Switzerland? Might the “terrible-appearing” face of stone from the northeast be an illusion?

July 13, 1865 – Whymper and six others set out on an unlikely journey that would amaze all – a hidden “staircase” of ridges leading them to the top. Whymper was 25 years old.



What are the illusions in research that need to be overcome? How can our professions increase collaboration, strategies and successful outcomes? How can people and animals both be helped?

Time for a new medical research model?

- We will learn from dogs and > 60,000 vertebrate species – tremendous evolutionary clues to prevent and treat disease in humans and beyond
- The health of our patients will be our first consideration; vulnerable groups and individuals will receive protection; the welfare of animals used for research must be respected ~ Declaration of Helsinki, World Medical Association
- We will treat dogs with considerable compassion, knowing that they trust us to do the right thing (human-animal bond)
- We will not prolong pain and suffering, able to provide humane euthanasia when necessary
- We will release all clinical trial information so that others might learn through reported successes and failures ~ WHO backs public trial result access, Science 17 April 2015
- We will advance the health of all family members through strategic, collaborative and humane research



***“Always the more beautiful answer who asks
the more beautiful question”***

E.E. Cummings