

The Latin Owner: profiles, perceptions and attitudes of Italian cat and dog owners towards their pet

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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Introduction

Nowadays animal companionship is an integral aspect of life in Europe, with approximately 81 million registered dogs and 99.2 million cats (1). This research aims to identify characteristics of dog and cat-owning households from a large cross-sectional web-based survey in Italy.

Material and Methods

Owners over 18 years old were asked information about themselves, their dogs, cats and their relationship with their pets. Data was analysed using Pearson's χ^2 tests and logistic regressions (SPSS).

Results

3,298 owners completed the survey, 31.8% and 40.3% of whom owned dogs and cats respectively, and 72.8% both. People aged 18 to 30 years were more likely to own a dog than older respondents. Compared to cat owners, dog owners were more likely to believe that their pets considered them to be conspecific group members, rather than "only humans". Dogs were more likely to be purebreds adopted for companionship. Cats were significantly more likely to be mixed breeds adopted because they needed a home. Dog owners were significantly more likely to rate other owners as an important source of information regarding handling and training than cat owners. Despite a similarly high prevalence of reported intraspecific aggression and noise reactivity among dogs and cats, dog ownership significantly increased the likelihood of the owner's actual willingness to change a pet's behavior. Cat ownership increased the likelihood that owners would consider surgical sterilisation as an option to correct behaviour.

Conclusion

These results may be useful in helping behaviour practitioners address population changes in terms of human-pet bonds and plan prevention and treatment strategies.

Reference: Statista 2015. Available at

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/198100/dogs-in-the-united-states-since-2000/>