Practical Applications and New Perspectives in Veterinary Behavior

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Behavior problems are among the most common concerns for veterinary clients, and veterinarians need to be comfortable diagnosing and treating these conditions. Knowledge of animal behavior by veterinarians is critical for effective treatment of behavior problems, recognition and diagnosis of medical conditions for which behavior signs prevail, proper handling of veterinary patients, prevention of abandonment and euthanasia, preservation of the companion animal–human bond, and prevention of mental suffering. Successful patient management requires taking a thorough behavioral history, understanding the mechanisms underlying behavior changes, developing appropriate treatment interventions, and, in some cases, pharmacologic therapy.

Handling Behavior Problems in the Practice Setting 951
Gary M. Landsberg, Julie Shaw, and Jean Donaldson

The veterinary clinic plays a critical role in the prevention and treatment of behavior problems. If behavior problems do begin to emerge, the veterinary clinic can help determine who can advise and guide the owners most practically to improve or resolve the problem. This help might involve the veterinarian, a behavioral technician, a trained staff member, an appropriate trainer, or some combination of these persons. This article reviews how these professional roles might be integrated, depending on the complexity of the problem.

Preventing Behavior Problems in Puppies and Kittens 971
Kersti Seksel

There are many common issues that owners find problematic with their puppy’s or kitten’s behavior, such as eliminating in inappropriate locations, chewing, mouthing, growling, and biting. Many of these issues can be prevented or managed by helping owners understand normal canine and feline behavior and by teaching the puppy and kitten socially acceptable behaviors. The focus always should be on rewarding acceptable behaviors rather than punishing unacceptable ones. Puppy
Preschool and Kitten Kindergarten classes are an ideal avenue to introduce pet owners to modern, humane ways to train and socialize their pets to be a valuable part of today’s society.

**Addressing Canine and Feline Aggression in the Veterinary Clinic**

Kelly Moffat

Handling aggressive dogs and cats in the veterinary clinic can be frustrating, time consuming, and injurious for both employee and animal. This article discusses the etiology of the aggressive dog and cat patient and how best to approach these cases. A variety of handling techniques, safety products, and drug therapy are reviewed.

**Managing Pets with Behavior Problems: Realistic Expectations**

Debra F. Horwitz

Management solutions offer a useful tool for owners faced with behavior issues in their pets. In some cases management will improve the behavior and allow control. In other situations it may be only the first step in treatment. By offering management solutions, veterinarians can help owners with problem pets and begin the road to recovery.

**Canine Aggression Toward Unfamiliar People and Dogs**

Lore I. Haug

Aggression toward unfamiliar dogs and people is a common problem arising most commonly from fear and territoriality. A number of factors contribute to its development, including socialization deficits, hormones, and genetic and neurophysiologic components. These factors are discussed in this article, as are management and behavior modification approaches for controlling aggression.

**Expanding Families: Preparing for and Introducing Dogs and Cats to Infants, Children, and New Pets**

Laurie Bergman and Lori Gaskins

Once clients make a decision to expand their family with children or pets, veterinarians can be instrumental in providing education and support to make the additions successful. Veterinarians should remind clients to make changes in the household well in advance of the new addition’s arrival, to be patient, to make all introductions safe and controlled, and to reward good behavior. If problems arise, owners should be advised to separate those involved and get behavioral treatment as soon as possible. Through these simple steps, veterinarians can increase the likelihood that clients will be able to integrate new family members successfully.
Feline Fear and Anxiety
Emily D. Levine

Anxieties and fears play a large role in some of the more common feline behavior problems. The interaction between emotions and stress is complex but pertinent to the field of veterinary medicine, given the physical and emotional consequences of stress in animals. By thinking of behavior “problems” from the perspective of the animal’s emotional state, treatment plans can be implemented to reduce the states of anxiety and fears and safeguard against the physical consequences of a prolonged stress response.

Canine Anxieties and Phobias: An Update on Separation Anxiety and Noise Aversions
Barbara L. Sherman and Daniel S. Mills

Companion dogs commonly experience states of anxiety, fears, and phobias. Separation anxiety and noise aversions, as discussed in this article, are especially prevalent. Veterinarians are encouraged to recognize and treat such conditions on first presentation to address welfare issues and optimize successful management. New data suggest new treatment modalities, including behavioral management, pharmacotherapy, and species-specific pheromone use. Failure to treat can result in disruption of the human-animal bond and subsequent abandonment, relinquishment, or even euthanasia of the affected dog.

Canine Aggression Toward Familiar People: A New Look at an Old Problem
Andrew U. Luescher and Ilana R. Reisner

Dogs that are aggressive toward their owners have long been regarded as being dominant. This article presents scientific evidence that does not support this claim. Based on this evidence, the authors present an alternative explanation for canine aggression toward owners and outline a treatment plan.

Human-Directed Aggression in the Cat
Terry Marie Curtis

Feline aggression—between cats or directed at humans—is, after inappropriate elimination and urine-marking behaviors, the second most common reason cats are seen by behavioral specialists. For diagnosis and treatment it is important to determine the motivation for the aggression. The more common causes for human-directed aggression in cats include play, fear, petting intolerance, and redirected aggression. Other causes include pain and maternal behavior. Sexually motivated and status related aggression are much more rare. Treatment includes a combination of behavioral modification, environmental modification, and, in some cases, medication.
Obtaining a Pet: Realistic Expectations
Amy Marder and Margaret M. Duxbury

Millions of dog-human relationships fail each year—some from simple and preventable mismatches. False or unrealistic expectations of a dog's behavior are a common reason for failed human-animal bonds. Veterinarians can reduce the incidence of false expectations and thereby increase the likelihood of successful adoptions by offering preadoption counseling to help clients sort through the many factors involved in the process of successful pet selection, by preparing clients to take on the important tasks of puppy socialization and the management of the home learning environment, and by educating new owners about the needs and behavior of dogs.

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