Pets and their fear of loud noises and fireworks

<1>
Accession Number
20133384461
Author
Curtis, T.
Title
Noise & storm phobias in dogs.
Source
Today's Veterinary Practice; 2013. 3(5):53-56. 13 ref.
Publisher
VetMed Communications
Location of Publisher
Glen Mills
Country of Publication
USA
Abstract
This article discusses the definition of fear and phobia, profiling of fears and phobia, treatment of storm phobia, therapeutic training, therapeutic products and therapeutic medications for dogs with storm and noise phobias.
Publication Type
Journal article.

<2>
Accession Number
20133375294
Author
Rixon, E.
Title
Beating the bangs!
Source
Veterinary Nursing Journal; 2013. 28(10):330-331. 3 ref.
Publisher
Wiley-Blackwell
Location of Publisher
Oxford
Country of Publication
UK
Abstract
With the firework season looming, followed closely by Christmas and New Year, we must think about how our pets will react to the loud noises and bright lights. This article outlines the practical steps that owners can take to help their pets throughout the party season and, in turn, help prevent fears turning into phobias.
Publication Type
Journal article.
The F word - taking the fear out of fireworks.

VN Times; 2013. 13(10):8, 10. 2 ref.

Development and validation of a novel laboratory model of sound-induced fear and anxiety in Beagle dogs.

Journal of Veterinary Behavior: Clinical Applications and Research; 2013. 8(4):204-212. 27 ref.

Disorders of fear and anxiety are significant behavioral and physiological concerns in veterinary medicine. Thus, the present studies sought to develop and validate novel preclinical laboratory models for the development of anxiolytics for the veterinary market. Specifically, noise-induced sensitivity and aversion using thunderstorm recordings on an open-field task in Beagle dogs was used to establish this model. This thunderstorm task was based on the open-field tests previously described for the dog, except that a thunderstorm recording, compiled from desensitization compact discs, played during the middle of the test was used to elicit anxious or fearful responses in laboratory dogs. Initially, we compared the behavioral response on this test with that on an open-field test, in which no sound stimulus was provided. When compared with the open field, the thunderstorm recording increased inactivity duration and frequency, which was related to freezing behaviors and near-door duration. This suggests that we can objectively characterize a fear and anxious response to noise. We then attempted to pharmacologically validate this model by testing 0.5, 1, or 2 mg/kg doses of diazepam on this behavioral outcome. In test-naive subjects, diazepam reduced the increase in inactivity seen at washout compared with that seen at baseline, suggesting that this paradigm may be useful for establishing the effect of drugs that reduce or prevent sensitization to fear-invoking events. In test-experienced subjects, diazepam reduced inactivity compared with both baseline and washout, indicating that this model may be useful for screening drugs counteracting fear and phobia, as well as anticipatory anxiety responses. Interestingly, diazepam stimulated behavioral activity as measured with the Actiwatch method. The test described here provides a laboratory method for testing therapeutics targeted at reducing either anxiety or fear related to noise sensitivity and aversion in pet dogs.
Fear responses to noises in domestic dogs: prevalence, risk factors and co-occurrence with other fear related behaviour.

Abstract

Behavioural signs of fear or anxiety on exposure to noises in owned domestic dogs have been suggested in clinical studies to be common and a significant welfare concern. In this study two approaches were taken to investigate the occurrence of, and risk factors for, these behaviours: a postal survey of dog owners to investigate general demographic factors (n=3897), and a structured interview of a sub-set of owners to gather more detailed information (n=383). Almost half of owners in the structured interview reported that their dog showed at least one behavioural sign typical of fear when exposed to noises, even though only a quarter had reported their dog as 'fearful' in the general survey. This difference indicates that even where owners recognise behavioural responses to noises, they may not interpret these as associated with altered subjective state in their dog. The difference in reported prevalence between the studies highlights the importance of methodological approach in owner questionnaire studies investigating behavioural signs. Owners most commonly reported fearful responses to fireworks in their dogs. Response to fireworks, gunshots and thunder frequently co-occurred, suggesting that responses to one loud noise are likely to generalise to others. However, responses to these types of noise did not commonly co-occur with separation related behaviour or behaviours indicative of fear or anxiety in other contexts. In contrast, responses to other, less salient, noises, such as traffic and TV noises did co-occur with other signs of fear or anxiety. Fear responses to less salient noises may therefore reflect fearful personality characteristics, while those to very salient noises, such as gunshots and fireworks, may reflect specific exposure and experience. General risk factors for owner-reported fear of noises in the combined postal and interviewed populations included breed, with twelve breeds or breed types having a reduced risk compared to cross breeds; age, where risk increased with age; and origin, where dogs living with the owner who bred them had a reduced risk as compared to dogs purchased from breeder by a second owner. For the interviewed subset only, risk factors for specific fears included time of acquisition, and early exposure to particular noises. The results suggest that characteristics of dogs, early environment, and exposure to specific loud noises are involved in the development of fear responses to noises. Interestingly, less than a third of owners sought professional advice about treatment for their pet's response to noises.

The use of clonidine in the treatment of fear-based behavior problems in dogs: an open trial.

Abstract

Behavioural signs of fear or anxiety on exposure to noises in owned domestic dogs have been suggested in clinical studies to be common and a significant welfare concern. In this study two approaches were taken to investigate the occurrence of, and risk factors for, these behaviours: a postal survey of dog owners to investigate general demographic factors (n=3897), and a structured interview of a sub-set of owners to gather more detailed information (n=383). Almost half of owners in the structured interview reported that their dog showed at least one behavioural sign typical of fear when exposed to noises, even though only a quarter had reported their dog as 'fearful' in the general survey. This difference indicates that even where owners recognise behavioural responses to noises, they may not interpret these as associated with altered subjective state in their dog. The difference in reported prevalence between the studies highlights the importance of methodological approach in owner questionnaire studies investigating behavioural signs. Owners most commonly reported fearful responses to fireworks in their dogs. Response to fireworks, gunshots and thunder frequently co-occurred, suggesting that responses to one loud noise are likely to generalise to others. However, responses to these types of noise did not commonly co-occur with separation related behaviour or behaviours indicative of fear or anxiety in other contexts. In contrast, responses to other, less salient, noises, such as traffic and TV noises did co-occur with other signs of fear or anxiety. Fear responses to less salient noises may therefore reflect fearful personality characteristics, while those to very salient noises, such as gunshots and fireworks, may reflect specific exposure and experience. General risk factors for owner-reported fear of noises in the combined postal and interviewed populations included breed, with twelve breeds or breed types having a reduced risk compared to cross breeds; age, where risk increased with age; and origin, where dogs living with the owner who bred them had a reduced risk as compared to dogs purchased from breeder by a second owner. For the interviewed subset only, risk factors for specific fears included time of acquisition, and early exposure to particular noises. The results suggest that characteristics of dogs, early environment, and exposure to specific loud noises are involved in the development of fear responses to noises. Interestingly, less than a third of owners sought professional advice about treatment for their pet's response to noises.
Behavioral medications may be used to augment behavioral treatments for fear-based problems in dogs, particularly when the signs are severe or the feared stimulus is impossible to control. In some cases, a single pharmacologic treatment may not completely manage fear and thus multiple medications may be required. The objective of this study was to evaluate the use of an alpha-2 agonist clonidine for PRN (pro re nata) treatment of fear-based behavior problems in dogs that are hyporesponsive to other pharmacologic strategies. A total of 22 dogs of various breeds, age, and both genders determined to have fear-based behavior problems were divided into 2 groups, A and B, on the basis of their primary behavioral diagnosis. In group A, the primary diagnoses were separation anxiety, noise phobia, storm phobia, or a combination of these conditions. In group B, the primary diagnoses were fear aggression or a combination of fear and fear-based territorial aggression. Dogs in both groups were treated with PRN dose schedule of clonidine as well as behavior modification. In group A, the clinical outcome was compared with previous pharmacologic treatments according to owner assessments. Similarly, in group B, the clinical outcome was compared with previous treatments. In both groups, the most effective PRN dose of clonidine and any adverse effects were noted. According to global assessment by owners, 7 of the 10 owners (70%) in group A reported that clonidine was more effective as compared with the previously given medications. Of the 12 owners (92%) in group B, 11 reported that clonidine reduced the intensity of aggressive response of the dogs during the drug’s active phase. Only one adverse effect was reported and that involved a noise phobic dog displaying increased sound sensitivity. The results suggest that PRN use of clonidine may be useful in addition to being well tolerated for the treatment of fear-based behavior problems in dogs. Further studies are needed to evaluate the efficacy and safety of clonidine in dogs.

Understanding true fear in dogs: updates on the genetics of noise reactivity and other canine behavioral concerns.

A case of canine noise fear: managing the problem using behavioural therapy in conjunction with the azapirone buspirone.
Fireworks and noise phobias: effective approaches.

Source
34th World Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 21-24 July 2009; 2009.
unpaginated.

Publisher
World Small Animal Veterinary Association

Location of Publisher
Sao Paulo

Country of Publication
Brazil

Publication Type
Conference paper.

Accession Number
20093282614

Author
Buchan, G.

Title
Fireworks and noise phobias: effective approaches.

Source
Veterinary Times; 2009. 39(41):26...29.

Publisher
Veterinary Business Development Ltd

Location of Publisher
Peterborough

Country of Publication
UK

Publication Type
Journal article.

Accession Number
20093282609

Author
Ackerman, N.

Title
Noise phobias and fireworks.

Source
VN Times; 2009. 9(10):20-21. 3 ref.

Publisher
Veterinary Business Development Ltd

Location of Publisher
Peterborough

Country of Publication
UK

Publication Type
Journal article.

Accession Number
20093053218

Author
Levine, E. D.; Ramos, D.; Mills, D. S.
Title
The treatment of fear of fireworks in dogs (Canis familiaris): a prospective study.

Source
Current issues and research in veterinary behavioral medicine. Papers presented at the 5th International Veterinary Behavior Meeting; 2005. :211-216. 9 ref.

Publisher
Purdue University Press

Location of Publisher
Indiana

Country of Publication
USA

Publication Type
Book chapter

Conference paper.

Accession Number
20093053176

Author
Estelles, M. G.; Mills, D. S.; Coleshaw, P. H.; Shorthose, C.

Title
A retrospective analysis of relationships with severity of signs of fear of fireworks and treatment outcome in 99 cases.

Source
Current issues and research in veterinary behavioral medicine. Papers presented at the 5th International Veterinary Behavior Meeting; 2005. :161-164. 3 ref.

Publisher
Purdue University Press

Location of Publisher
Indiana

Country of Publication
USA

Publication Type
Book chapter

Conference paper.

Accession Number
20083315639

Author
Ballamwar, V. A.; Bonde, S. W.; Mangle, N. S.; Vyavahare, S. H.

Title
Noise phobia in dog.

Source

Publisher
Veterinary World

Location of Publisher
Rajkot

Country of Publication
India

Abstract
Fear of thunderstorms and other forms of noise phobia are common problems in dogs. Administration of medications together with change in the pet's environment and use of behaviour modification techniques can help ease the fear in dogs. Moreover, do not give your pet any attention or reward when he is showing signs of fear. This will only reinforce the fearful behaviour.

Publication Type
Journal article.
Accession Number
20083253711
Author
Thorne, J.
Title
Firework fear - a holistic approach.
Source
VN Times; 2008. 8(10):24-25.
Publisher
Veterinary Business Development Ltd
Location of Publisher
Peterborough
Country of Publication
UK
Publication Type
Journal article.

Accession Number
20083193275
Author
Heiblum, M.
Title
Advances in the diagnosis and treatment of noise phobias in companion animals.
Source
Publisher
Israel Veterinary Medical Association
Location of Publisher
Raanana
Country of Publication
Israel
Abstract
This article defines fear and phobia in dogs and cats and describes the different types of phobias; diagnosis; environmental, behavioural and drug treatment and prevention of phobia. The development, clinical signs, drug treatment and desensitization to storm phobias are also discussed.
Publication Type
Journal Article.

Accession Number
20083121694
Author
Levine, E. D.; Mills, D. S.
Title
Long-term follow-up of the efficacy of a behavioural treatment programme for dogs with firework fears.
Source
Veterinary Record; 2008. 162(20):657-659. 17 ref.
Publisher
British Veterinary Association
Location of Publisher
London
This short communication describes a one-year follow-up of 38 dogs that were involved in an eight-week treatment trial investigating the efficacy of using noise recordings, in conjunction with dog-appeasing pheromone (DAP) for desensitization and counter-conditioning of dogs with firework fears. The goal of using the noise recording and DAP was to help teach the dogs not to be fearful of noises by using a medium (a sound recording on a CD) over which the owners could control the level of exposure, according to the dog's ability to cope, in order to build up its tolerance steadily. The results of the initial investigation revealed that the majority of dogs showed behavioural improvements when exposed to real fireworks up to three months after the initial eight-week treatment programme. The current study (12 months after the initial eight-week programme) collected follow-up information in November 2005 during Bonfire night. Of the original 38 dogs that completed the training programme, 30 were exposed to fireworks on Bonfire Night. The median total severity fear score for the 30 dogs was significantly lower in November 2005 compared with August 2004 (baseline). The global fear scores provided by the owners also decreased significantly from August 2004 to November 2005 (global fear scores of 8 and 5, respectively, P<0.001) and there was a positive correlation between the global fear scores and total severity fear scores (P<0.001). The majority of owners were satisfied with their dog's improvement. In summary, it appears that an eight-week training period of desensitization and counter conditioning with a noise recording, and the use of DAP for firework fears can result in significant reported improvement in the long term, and so should be used as a routine part of treatment plan for firework fears in dogs.
dogs with >1 of these conditions. Responses to noise were different from those to thunderstorms, possibly because of the unpredictability and uncertainty of thunderstorms.

**Publication Type**
Journal article.

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**<18>**
**Accession Number**
20013054858
**Author**
Seksel, K.; Lindeman, M. J.
**Title**
Use of clomipramine in treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder, separation anxiety and noise phobia in dogs: a preliminary, clinical study.
**Source**
**Publisher**
Australian Veterinary Association
**Location of Publisher**
Artarmon
**Country of Publication**
Australia
**Abstract**
A study was undertaken to assess clinical responses in 24 dogs diagnosed with one or more of three behavioural disorders (obsessive-compulsive disorder, separation anxiety and noise phobia) to a treatment regimen that included clomipramine and behaviour modification. A detailed behavioural and clinical history was obtained for each dog. Obsessive-compulsive disorder was diagnosed in nine cases: primary presenting complaints were tail-chasing, shadow-chasing, circling and chewing; one case was diagnosed with concurrent separation anxiety. Separation anxiety was diagnosed in 14 cases: presenting complaints included destruction, vocalization and escaping in the absence of the owner; four cases also exhibited noise phobia. The study also included one dog diagnosed with noise phobia only and another with inappropriate fear responses. Clomipramine (1-2 mg/kg b.i.d.) was administered orally. The dose was increased incrementally to a maximum of 4 mg/kg if needed. A behaviour modification program was also designed and the owner was instructed on its implementation. Dogs continued medication for at least 1 month after clinical signs disappeared or were acceptably reduced, then withdrawal of medication was attempted by decreasing drug dosage at weekly intervals. The presenting clinical sign was largely improved or disappeared in 16 dogs, 5 demonstrated slight to moderate improvement and the behaviour was unchanged in 3. Withdrawal of clomipramine was attempted in nine cases, but was was successful in only five dogs. Clomipramine was effective and well-tolerated in controlling signs of obsessive-compulsive disorder and/or separation anxiety and/or noise phobia in 16 of the 24 assessable cases, when used in combination with behaviour modification.
**Publication Type**
Journal article.

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**<19>**
**Accession Number**
20013032011
**Author**
Iversen, B.
**Title**
Treatment for New Year fear [of fireworks in dogs]. [Danish]
**Source**
**Publisher**
Danske Dyrlaegeforening
**Location of Publisher**
In a questionnaire survey relating to the New Year period 1999-2000 in Denmark, a positive response to treatment with clomipramine for controlling fear associated with the noise of fireworks was recorded in 32 of 45 dogs. The response was best in those dogs in which treatment had started on or before December 3. Treatment from the beginning of December, at 2 mg/kg body weight twice daily, is recommended. Administration of diazepam or acepromazine on New Year’s Eve had no additional beneficial effect.

A survey of owners' perceptions of fear of fireworks in a sample of dogs and cats in New Zealand.

AIMS: To establish reliable information regarding the behavioural responses of dogs and cats to fireworks in New Zealand; record interventions used by owners, and their perceived efficacies; and establish the prevalence of firework-related injury, and quantify owners' attitudes towards fireworks.

METHODS: A questionnaire targeting dog and cat owners was distributed via the Auckland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Animals Voice magazine and 25 veterinary clinics. The questionnaire covered demographics of animals, fear of fireworks, severity of the fear, and behaviours exhibited. Also included were treatments tried, source and perceived efficacy, prevalence of injury, and owners' attitudes towards the sale of fireworks for private use.

RESULTS: From a total of 8,966 questionnaires distributed, 1,007 valid questionnaires were returned, representing 3,527 animals. Of these 1,635 (46%) animals displayed a level of fear of fireworks recognisable to their owners. Owners of dogs identified a significantly higher fear response than owners of cats but the duration of these fear responses did not differ between species. Fear of fireworks frequently resulted in dogs exhibiting active fear behaviours, whereas cats were more likely to exhibit hiding and cowering behaviours. A significantly increased severity and duration of fear response over time in dogs and cats was associated with owners who comforted them when they displayed a fearful response. Only 141/890 (15.8%) of owners sought professional treatment from a veterinarian, animal behaviourist or animal trainer for their animals, with variable efficacy. Six percent (51/923) of animals had received physical injuries from fireworks. The majority (837/1,007; 83%) of respondents, regardless of whether they owned a fearful animal or not, supported a ban on the sale of fireworks for private use.

CONCLUSIONS: The results provide valuable information that is, as yet, unsubstantiated in New Zealand, although potential biases exist due to the non-random selection of respondents. Differences between dogs and cats were likely due to differing responses to fear-provoking stimuli between the species. Owner-reported increase in fearful response over time for comforted animals may indicate a negative impact on the longer-term psychological welfare of their animal.
CLINICAL RELEVANCE: The greater the awareness of effective treatment plans for animals that suffer from a fear of fireworks, the greater the possibility that this fear can be reduced. Wider dissemination of effective owner behaviour and treatment programmes for firework fears is needed to improve levels of professional treatment for dogs and cats.

Author
Mills D, Cracknell N.
Title
Treatment for fear of fireworks in dogs.
Source
Publication Type
Journal article.

Author
Sherman, B. L.; Mills, D. S.; Landsberg, G. M.; Horwitz, D. F
Title
Canine anxieties and phobias: an update on separation anxiety and noise aversions.
Source
Veterinary Clinics of North America, Small Animal Practice, 2008, 38, 5, 1081-1106,
Publication Type
Journal article.

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 behavioural 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.

Author
Mills, D
Title
Management of noise fears and phobias in pets.
Source
In Practice, 2005, 27, 5, 248-255,
Publication Type
Journal article.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has suggested that 15 per cent of clients are lost to a practice due to unresolved behavioural problems in their animals. It is therefore important that the general practitioner appreciates the basics of animal behaviour and its effective management. Noise fears and phobias are among the most common behavioural problems, but are frequently left untreated or ineffectively managed. In both humans and dogs, it seems that the treatment of fears and phobias is often left until they have developed into multiple problems. This further compromises an animal's welfare and also limits the prognosis. Early identification and intervention is essential and screening for these and other common behavioural problems should form part of an annual health check. Expertise in behaviour is not a prerequisite for this - simply asking an owner whether their animal has developed any fears or problem behaviours in the past year, and having appropriate procedures in place to deal with a positive response to this question, would be a useful routine in general practice. This article reviews current understanding about noise fears in pets, and provides guidance for the practitioner on how short-term alleviation and, where possible, longer-term resolution may be achieved.