



Annual Review of Cases 1997

The authors of this report Emma Magnus BSc (Hons) MSc, David Appleby dipCABC and Gwen Bailey BSc (Hons) would like to thank the members of the APBC who submitted data and Robin Walker MRCVS for his thoughts on the seasonality of the oestrus cycle in bitches

The APBC would like to thank Intervet UK Limited for their continuing support and interest in the APBC's Annual Review of Cases.

BREAKDOWN OF CASES SUBMITTED

	DOGS			CATS	
	Males	Females		Males	Females
No. Seen	769	453		61	38
% Neutered	50	60		95	92
No. Of Problems	1099	657		90	53

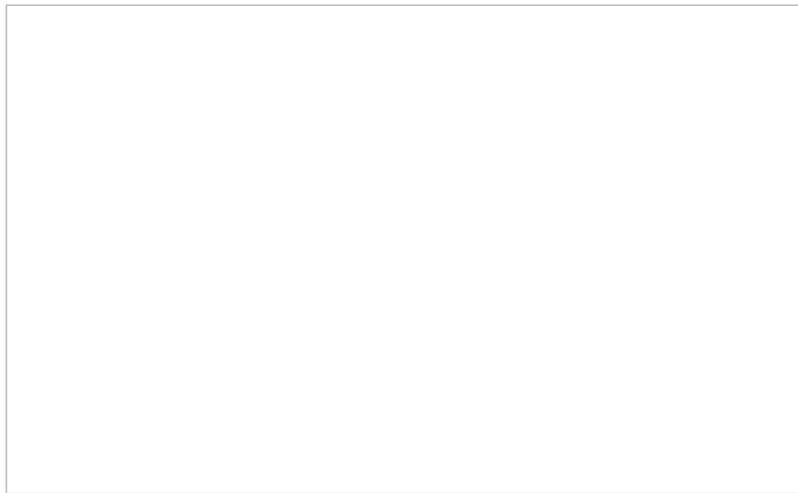
Average number of problems per dog – 1.43 (1.42 for males and 1.45 for females)

Average number of problems per cat – 1.44 (1.47 for males and 1.39 for females)

CANINE BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

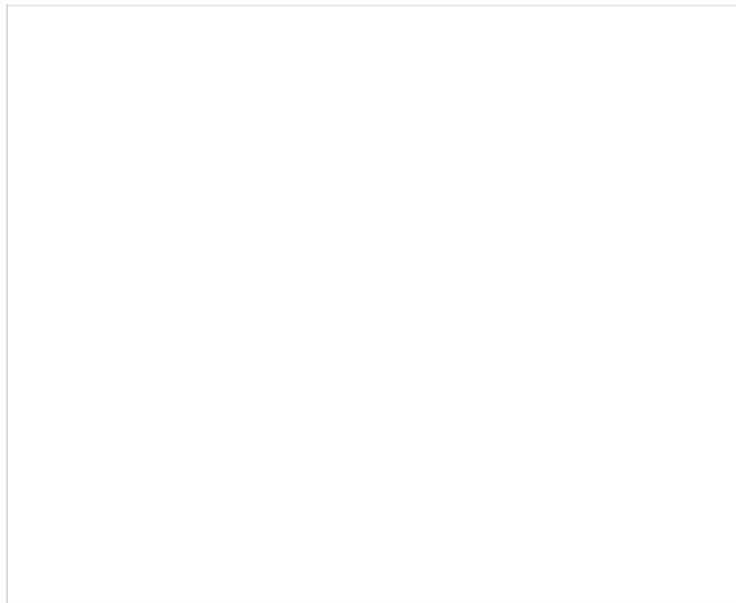
Most Common Pedigree Dog Breeds Referred Most frequent Kennel Club Registrations 1996

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. German Shepherd Dog | 1. Labrador Retriever |
| 2. Border Collie | 2. German Shepherd Dog |
| 3. Cocker Spaniel | 3. West Highland White |
| 4. Springer Spaniel | 4. Golden Retriever |
| 5. Labrador Retriever | 5. Cocker Spaniel |
| 6. Jack Russell Terrier | 6. English Springer Spaniel |
| 7. Golden Retriever | 7. Cavalier King Charles |
| 8. West Highland White | 8. Yorkshire Terrier |
| 9. Doberman | 9. Boxer |
| 10. Yorkshire Terrier / Boxer | 10. Staffordshire Bull Terrier |



AP – Aggression towards people **AD** – Aggression towards dogs **Sep** – Problems when separated from owners **AS** – Problematical attention-seeking behaviours **Fear** – Fears and phobias **Tra** – Persistent training problems **Toil** – Toilet training **Ch** - Inappropriate chase behaviour **Car** – Problems during travel **FG** – Food guarding Others – these behaviours included less common behaviours, for example repetitive behaviours, stealing or behavioural problems induced by ill health.

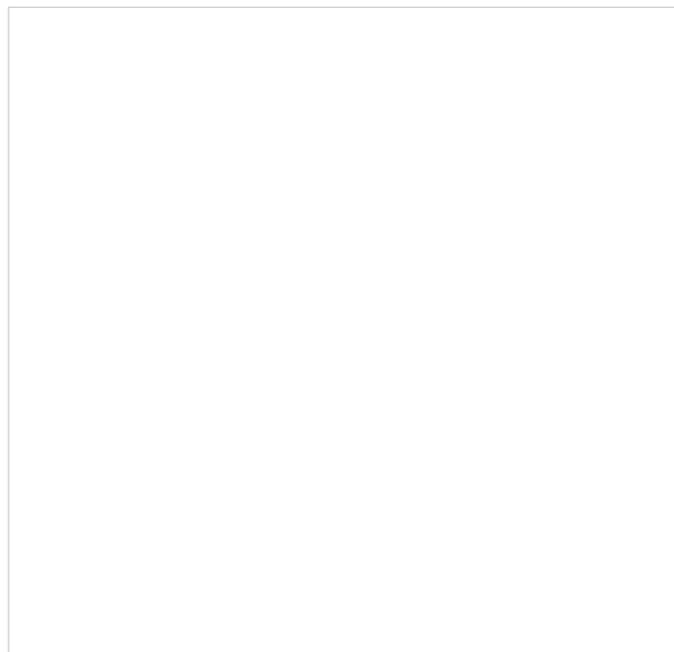
[Index](#)



Key to graph

AP – aggression to people AD – aggression to dogs Sep – separation problems Fear – fears and phobias.

In 1997, 484 (40%) of the 1222 dogs referred had been obtained from a kennel or kennel-type environment. For each common behavioural problem there is a higher incidence of referral in dogs reared in a kennel environment as a puppy. Over the last few years there have been several links between the lack of stimulation that is often apparent in these environments and the development of certain behavioural problems.

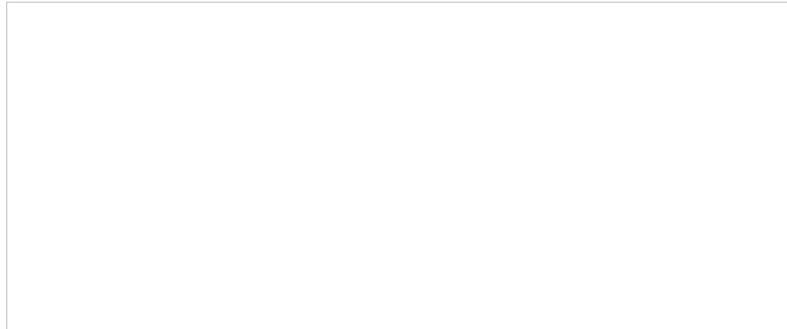


Key to graph

AP – aggression to people AD – aggression to dogs Sep – separation problems Fear – fears and phobias.

30% of the dogs referred were reared with another dog during the first year of their life but once referred most dogs (64%) were the only dog in the home. The effect of a canine companion during the first year of a dog's life on the likelihood of referral appears to be quite limited. There was a far greater rate of referral for aggression towards people if the

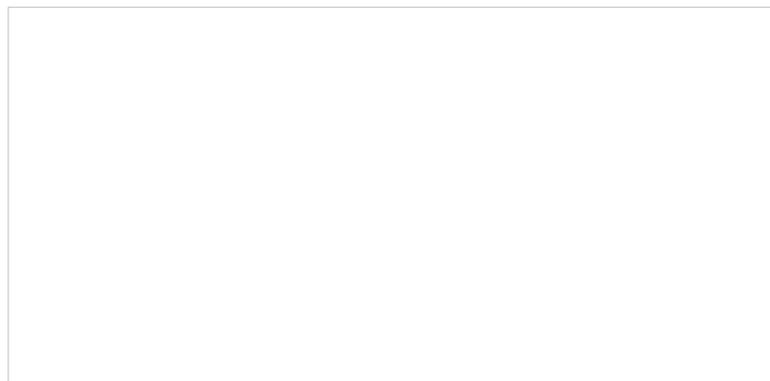
dog had been reared alone since a puppy. However the presence of another dog did not appear to effect the development of aggression towards other dogs or fearful behaviour. Of the cases of aggression towards dogs, 33% of them were caused by fear in a dog that had a canine companion as opposed to 54% in those that had not. These figures support the advice of behaviourists to socialise puppies with as many different dogs and types of people as possible. Relying on the existing dog as the sole means of socialising a puppy is unlikely to prevent behavioural problems developing.



Key to graph

AP – aggression to people AD – aggression to dogs Sep – separation problems Fear – fears and phobias.

There was a higher referral of aggression towards dogs, separation problems and fearful behaviours in dogs that had not been well socialised in the opinion of the counsellor. Of the cases of aggression towards dogs referred which were caused by fear most occurred in cases that were considered to be poorly socialised (52%) as opposed to those considered well socialised (29%).

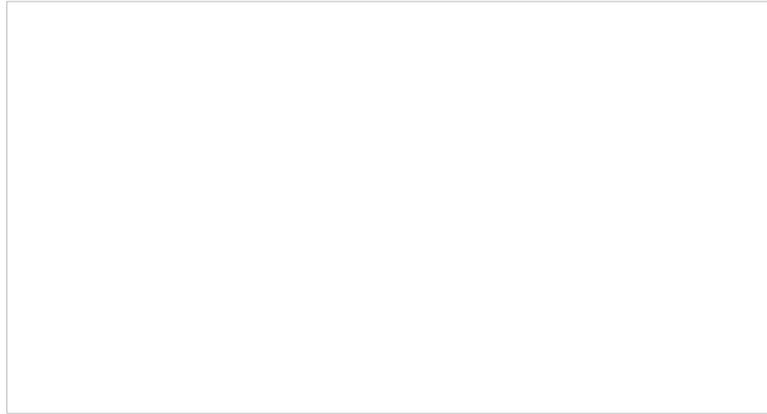


Key to graph

SA (p) – Status Aggression towards People in the Home FA (p) – Fear Aggression towards People Terr Ag – Territorial Aggression towards People RA (d) Rank Aggression towards Dogs within the Home. FA (d) Fear Aggression towards Dogs Encountered outside the Home SP (oa) Separation Problem caused by Over Attachment. SP (f) Separation Problem caused by Fear. SP (b) Separation Problem caused by Boredom. Fear – Fears and Phobias

This graph shows several interesting trends. Status aggression towards people in the home was less likely to be referred if there were three or more dogs within the home but rank related aggression between dogs in the home was more likely if there were three or more. Fear aggression towards people was more likely to occur if there was more than one dog within the home.

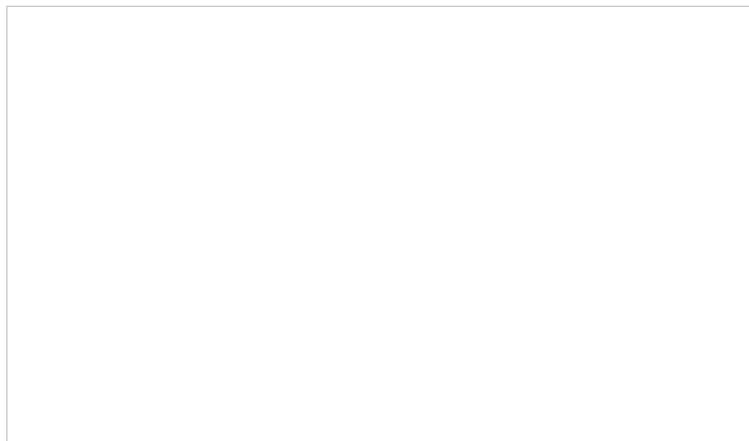
Fear aggression towards other dogs was less likely if there were two dogs in the home. Separation problems due to over-attachment and those that were fear-related were less likely to occur if the dog was one of three or more.



Key to graph

AP – Aggression towards people **AD** – Aggression towards dogs **Sep** – Problems when separated from owners **AS** – Problematical attention-seeking behaviours **Fear** – Fears and phobias **Tra** – Persistent training problems **Toil** – Toilet training **Ch** - Inappropriate chase behaviour **Car** – Problems during travel **Others** – these behaviours included less common behaviours, for example repetitive behaviours, sexual behaviours or escapology.

As in the 1994 Annual Report, bitches showed more fear and dogs displayed more aggression towards people, aggression towards dogs, attention-seeking and problems with training.



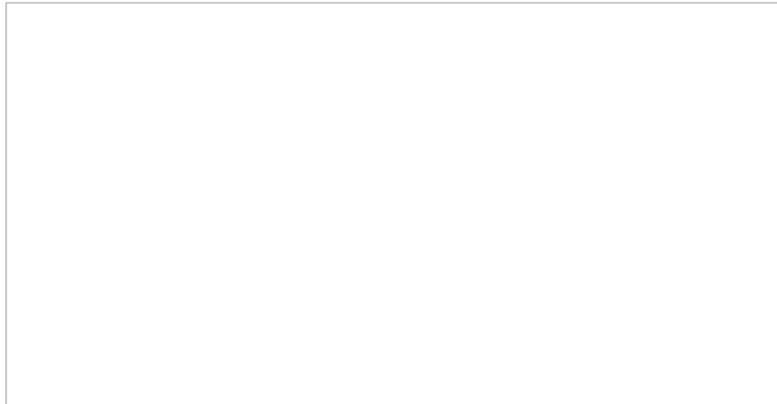
Key to graph

Status(p) – Status related aggression towards people within the home Fear (p) – fear aggression towards people Terr. – Territorial aggression towards people Others –various motivations including learned aggression and possessive behaviour Rank (d) – rank related aggression between dogs within the same home Fear (d) – fear aggression towards dogs Others –various motivations including frustration and learned aggression.

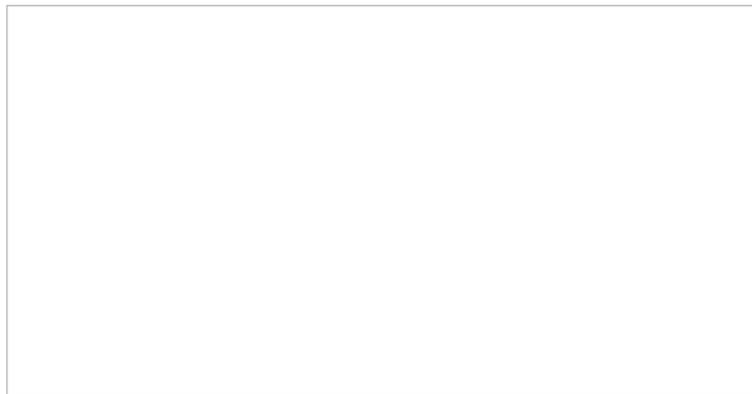
This graph clearly displays higher levels of aggression in dogs rather than bitches in each case.

The next 7 graphs illustrate monthly and seasonal trends for individual behaviours. The seasonal trends were arbitrarily determined by the average figure for the following groupings: -

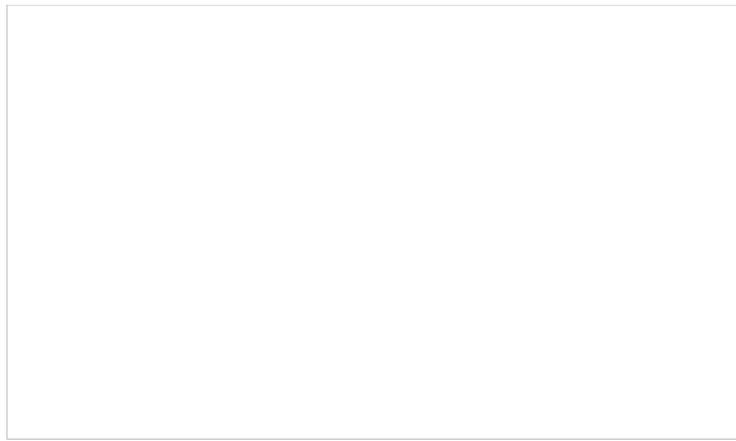
- Spring - March, April and May
- Summer – June, July and August
- Autumn – September, October and November
- Winter – December, January and February



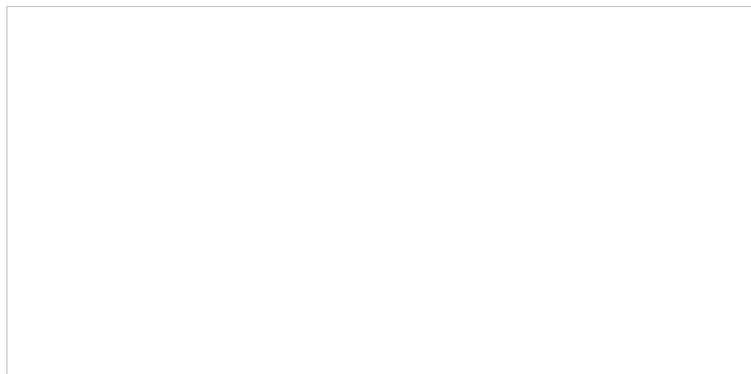
The above graph indicates the referral of behavioural problems in dogs, not their occurrence. The peaks in February and November could indicate availability of the owner to see a counsellor, pre- and post- Christmas problems or owner intolerance. The lows in April and August undoubtedly correlate with holiday periods. The slight rise in June may arise due to increasing periods of time spent outdoors and hence more opportunity for interaction with other members of the community.



This graph shows an increase in the referral of these cases during the winter months, which is consistent with cases of rank-related aggression between dogs in the family. The low points in April and August are consistent with the lower numbers of cases referred in these months.



The data presented in this graph shows very little monthly or seasonal change.



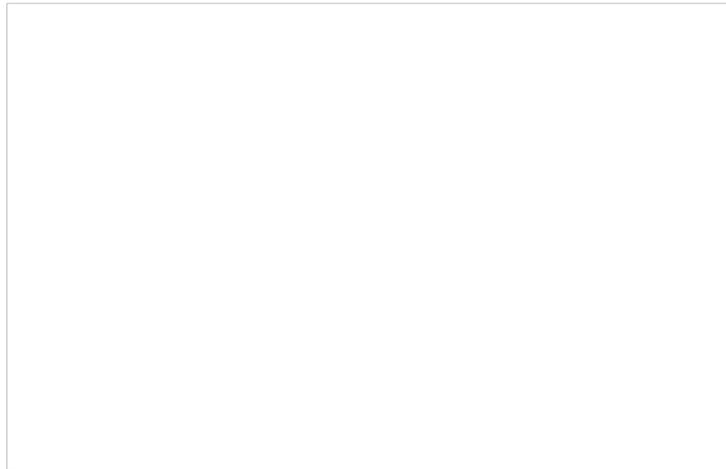
This graph follows a similar pattern to the graph published in the [1994](#) Annual Report. In addition, there is also a correlation with the [1996](#) Annual Review, which suggested a lower incidence in the referral of aggression between cohabiting male dogs in the summer months (June, July and August), and a marginally higher incidence between cohabiting bitches in spring (March, April and August).

It is commonly believed that dogs experience oestrus cycles twice yearly, in the spring and again in the autumn. Several studies indicate that dogs as a group cycle throughout the year. In one study of approximately 1500 cycles in 450 bitches (Christie and Bell, 1971), proestrus began most frequently in February. 160 cycles began in February whilst August had the fewest cycles with approximately 110. The level of activity seen in the early portion of the year was not equalled later in the year, but the time between October and January had more oestrus cycle activity than the relatively quiescent period between June and September. The slightly increased seasonal activity during the February to May period might be the result of some environmental cue stimulating the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis. In a review of almost 90,000 litter registrations, the primary peak in births was seen in the month of May (Tedor and Rief, 1978). This finding agrees with the previously noted reports, in which proestrus was seen most commonly in February. Breeding seasons must depend on both genetic and management factors.

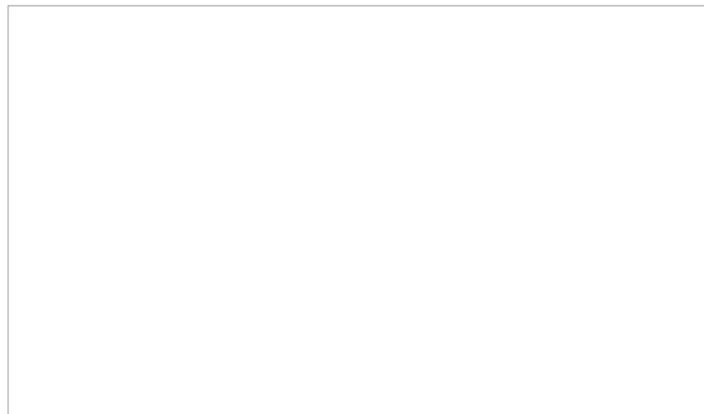
Tedor and Rief, 1978 J AM Vt Med Assoc 1978. May 15;172(10):1179-1185. Natal patterns amongst registered dogs in the United States

Christie and Bell, 1971 J Small Animal Practice 1971. March 12(3):159-167. Some observations on the seasonal incidence and frequency of oestrus in breeding bitches in

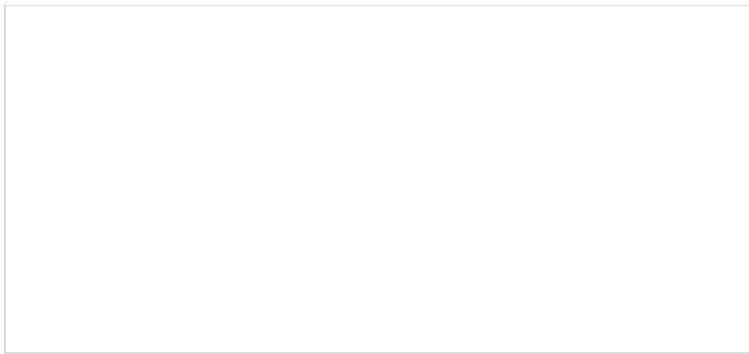
Britain.



This graph correlates with the seasonal data presented in [1994](#) in that there is very little difference between the seasonal data. The monthly data however shows several variations, which again could be attributed to the referral of cases. There is however an increase in referral in May which may reflect the increase in dog walking activities at this time of the year which would then motivate a referral for this problem.

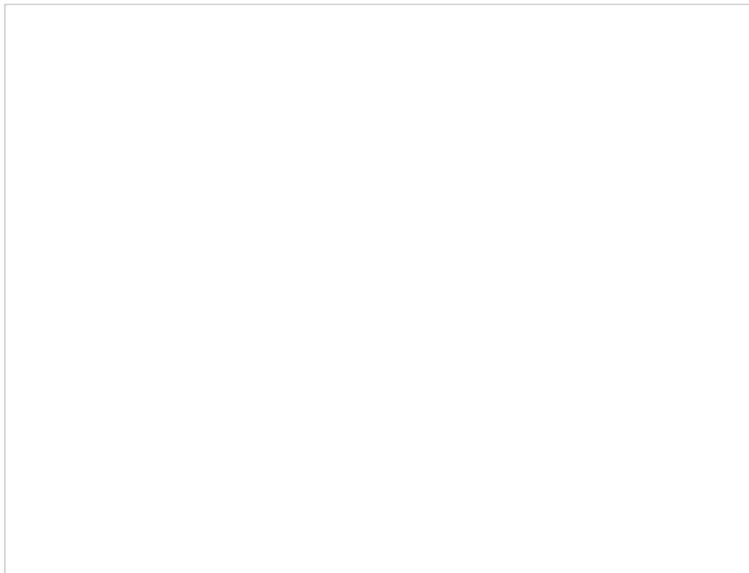


This graph combines three manifestations of this problem – destructive behaviour, a loss of toilet control and vocal behaviour. The most common motivation recorded was over attachment to the owner (49%), followed by fear-related separation problems (20%), boredom (12%) and ‘others’ which included insecurity and attention-seeking (19%). The graph above suggests an increased incidence of referral following the Christmas, Easter and summer holiday period, which is a similar monthly trend to that reported in 1994.



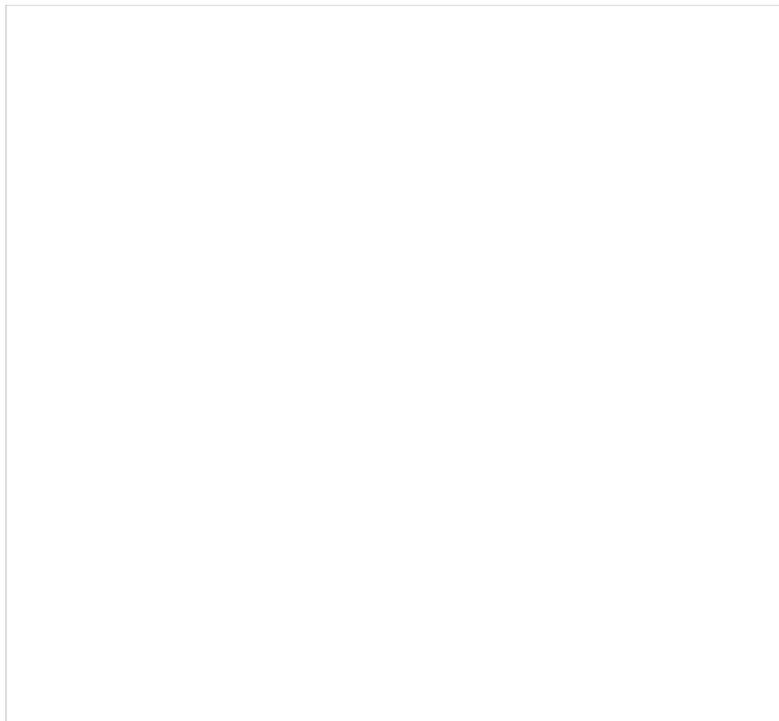
The monthly data in the above graph reflects the incidence of referral in each month.

FELINE BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS



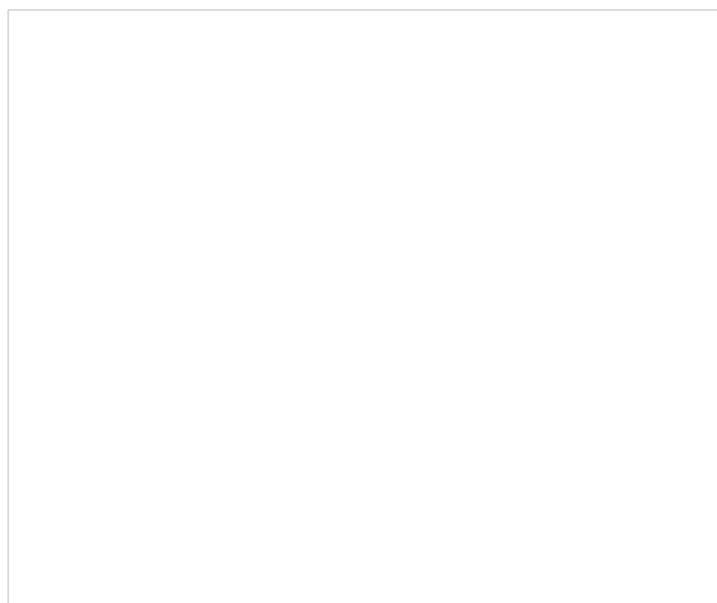
IM – Indoor marking i.e. spraying onto vertical surfaces, middening onto walkways and scratching
Others – behaviours including attention-seeking, pica, self-mutilation, anxiety and behavioural obesity
Ac – aggression towards cats
Ap – Aggression towards people
Toil – House training problems
Bond – bonding problems
Fear – fearful and phobic behaviour.

The increase in 'Other' behaviour patterns this year probably reflects a change in outlook of both the client and the veterinary surgeon that has resulted in many of the less common behaviour problems being referred for treatment.



IM – Indoor marking i.e. spraying onto vertical surfaces, middening onto walkways and scratching Others – behaviours including attention-seeking, pica, self-mutilation , anxiety and behavioural obesity Ac – aggression towards cats Ap – Aggression towards people Toil – House training problems Bond – bonding problems Fear – fearful and phobic behaviour.

This graph shows that as in 1994 female cats were referred for increased levels of fearful and phobic behaviour. In addition they are referred for a higher incidence of aggression towards other cats. Males were referred more for indoor marking problems (despite 95% being neutered), 'other' behaviours, aggression towards people, house-training problems and more problems of over or under attachment upon the owners.



IM – Indoor marking i.e. spraying onto vertical surfaces, middening onto walkways and scratching Others – behaviours including attention-seeking, pica, self-mutilation, anxiety and behavioural obesity Ac – aggression towards cats Ap – Aggression towards people

Toil – House training problems Bond – bonding problems Fear – fearful and phobic behaviour.

Cats living alone in the home appear to be more likely to show aggression towards people and less likely to be aggressive to other cats or show problems with indoor marking. Cats living in pairs are more likely to show behaviours falling within the 'others' category – particularly tail chasing and attention seeking. Cats living in a home with three or more cats appear to present problems of aggression towards people less and are particular candidates to display indoor marking.