

ASSOCIATION OF PET
BEHAVIOUR COUNSELLORS

ANNUAL REVIEW OF CASES 2005

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THE FUTURE OF VACCINATION

The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors in 2005

The APBC has continued to grow from strength to strength, in terms of membership numbers and activities. Membership numbers across the varying levels of membership stand at 281 and benefits of membership are being continually increased.

One of the major benefits to members is the online discussion forum, which is a closed list for members who can discuss interesting cases and pieces of research. From this the APBC archive has been created, which is not only unprecedented in the pet behaviour field, but a remarkable resource for the membership of the APBC. The most recent addition to the members-only website is the formation of a reference list.

The APBC continues to view high membership standards and accreditation as the way forward in this field and is sensitive to the fact that the issue of who treats behaviour problems in companion animals may yet be included in the Animal Welfare Bill and we will continue to monitor and respond to this issue.

Companion animals take the form of an assortment of species, and this was reflected in the various workshops and seminars held during 2005, which included studies on cats, rabbits, exotics and horses, as well as dogs. The 2006 programme will continue to offer variety in terms of level of knowledge and species chosen. If you would like to be notified of forthcoming educational events, please email info@apbc.org.uk and type Event Mailing in the subject box.

The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors has produced an Annual Review of Cases since 1994. The data, which represents a portion of the cases seen by the whole membership, provides useful information for both general and specific interest. The authors of this report, Emma Magnus BSc (Hons) MSc CCAB and David Appleby MSc CCAB would like to thank the members of the APBC that contributed their data.

The APBC would like to thank Intervet UK Limited for their continuing support and interest in this venture

Introduction

For the 2005 Annual Review of Cases, a representative sample (10%) of members of the APBC submitted data for 749 canine and 65 feline cases which presented a total of 1772 problems. The cases were categorised according to gender, species and the percentage of individuals neutered. This information can be seen below.

Table 1. Cases categorised by gender and species

	Male Dogs	Female Dogs	Male Cats	Female Cats
Total	486	263	30	35
% Neutered	62.6	59.5	100	94.3

The average number of problems per dog - 2.01

The average number of problems per cat - 1.55

Most Common Breed to be referred

Dogs

- 1 Mongrel
- 2 Labrador
- 3 German Shepherd Dog
- 4 Border Collie
- 5 Jack Russell Terrier
- 6 Cocker Spaniel
- 7 Springer Spaniel
- 8 Staffordshire Bull Terrier
- 9 Golden Retriever
- 10 Boxer, Dachshund and West Highland White Terrier.

Cats

- 1 Domestic Short Hair
- 2 Burmese and Siamese
- 3 Domestic Long Hair
- 4 Birman

Reviews of previous years have shown that the breeds most often referred closely mirrors kennel club registrations. During 2005, the top ten Kennel Club registrations were Labrador, Cocker Spaniel, English Springer Spaniel, German Shepherd Dog, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Golden Retriever, West Highland White Terrier, Boxer and Border Terrier.

Mongrels, Labradors and German Shepherd dogs were most likely to be referred for aggression problems. 38% of mongrel dogs showed aggression to people and 19.1% towards other dogs. 34.5% of Labradors showed aggression towards people and 24.1% towards other dogs. Nearly half (49.5%) of the German Shepherd Dogs considered for this report had been referred for aggression towards people, 24.8% showed aggression towards other dogs.

Domestic Short Hair cats were most likely to be referred for social aggression within the home or spraying urine in inappropriate locations.

Analysis of canine behaviour problems

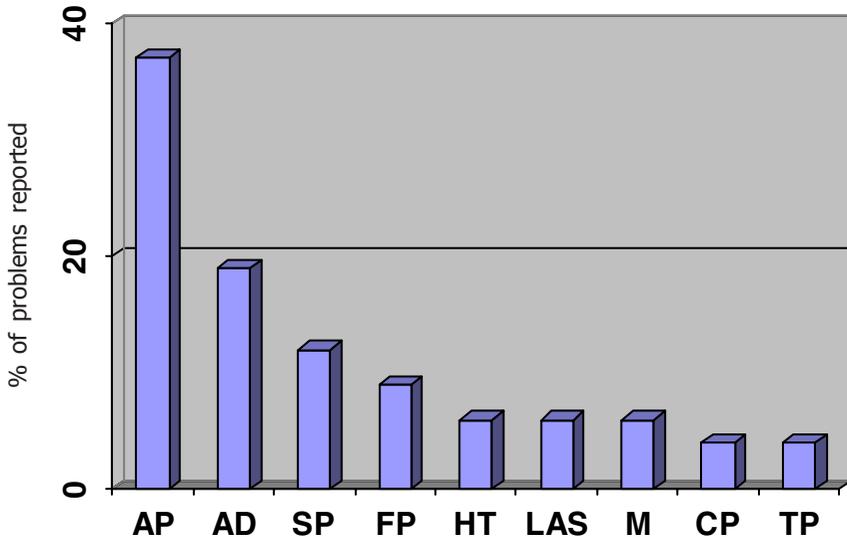


Figure 1: Breakdown of canine problems reported. Key: AP = Aggression towards people; AD = Aggression towards dogs; SP = Separation problems; FP = Fears and phobias; HT = House training problems; LAS = Learned attention seeking behaviours; M = Miscellaneous problems, such as car travel, coprophagia, repetitive behaviours and over-activity; CP = Chasing problems and TP = Training problems

As can be seen from Figure 1, 56.4% of the problems treated involved aggression. 19.4% were directed to dogs, 21.4% towards people outside the family group whilst the remaining 15.6% of aggression was directed towards family members.

Environment obtained from

Of 749 canine cases sampled for this report 36.7% (275 dogs) were obtained from a location where they had been reared in an out-building such as a kennel, 32.4% (243 dogs) were obtained from an environment where they had been reared within the home environment. 23.6% (177 dogs) were obtained from a rescue environment, 2.8% (21 dogs) were obtained from a puppy farm and the remaining 4.5% (33 dogs) were obtained from a pet shop, were found as a stray or the owner did not know the environment their dog was reared in.

Analysis of feline behaviour problems

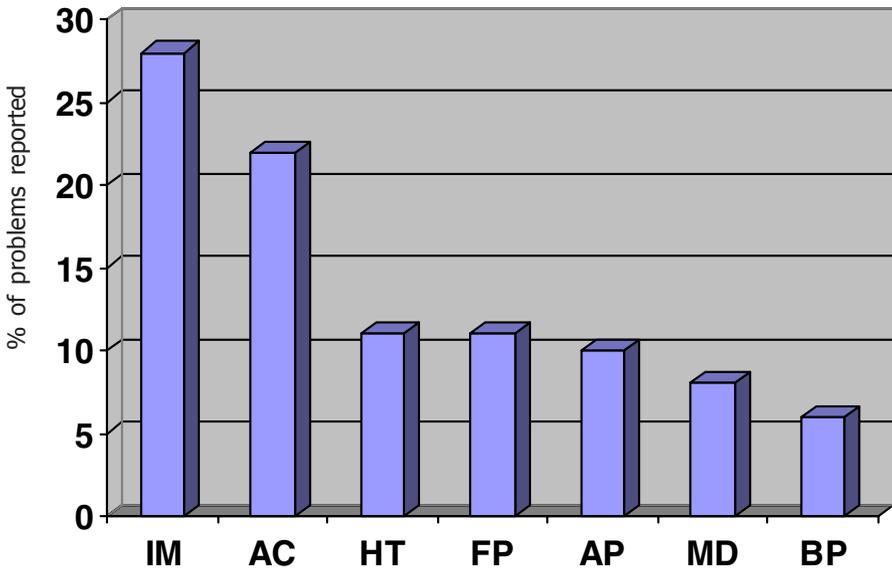


Figure 2: Breakdown of feline problems reported. Key: IM = Indoor marking; AC = Aggression towards cats; HT = House training problems; FP = Fears and phobias; AP = Aggression towards people; MD = Medical disorders and BP = bonding problems.

28% of the cats considered for this report were referred for indoor marking, which included spraying urine, squat marking, middening or scratching. A further 11% had house training problems - whether from a lack of appropriate training or a breakdown in training.

22% of the cats displayed aggression towards other cats, of which 86.4% was directed to other cats within the home. 11% of cats were referred for fearful or phobic behaviours of which 82% were towards visual stimuli.

Of the 65 cases considered for this report, 43.1% (28 cats) were obtained from an environment where they reared within the home. 41.5% (27 cats) were obtained from a rescue society. 13.8% (9 cats) were obtained from a non-domestic environment such as a cattery or outbuilding.

75.4% (46 cats) were allowed free access outdoors by their owners, whilst 18.5% (12 cats) were kept indoors permanently. The remaining cats were mainly indoor cats but had some access outside.

Early experience

It is generally agreed that experiences during a sensitive period of behavioural development, from 2.5-3 weeks to 5 weeks in the dog (traditionally held to be until 12-14 weeks) and from 2 to 7 weeks in the cat have a profound and lasting effect by allowing or denying an animal to achieve its genetic potential for confident behaviour.

Although ongoing positive experience is also essential, exposure to benign novelty during this sensitive period is essential to the development of sound temperament as this forms the foundation on which subsequent behavioural organisation is based.

The animal's capacity to remain in emotional homeostasis develops throughout the sensitive period for behavioural organisation during which representations of stimuli are linked to associations of emotional state and resultant behavioural responses. For positive associations to be formed during the sensitive period it is necessary for puppies and kittens to experience the types of stimuli they will live with in later life and it is this that makes the environment they were raised in such a concern for members of the APBC and all those concerned with animal welfare.

Analysis of canine cases

143 puppies were obtained by the owner when they were under 8 weeks of age and 189 were obtained at 8 weeks of age. 46 puppies were obtained after 8 weeks of age and 12 weeks or under.

Of the 275 dogs obtained from breeders who reared them in an outbuilding such as a kennel, 48.8% were considered by the counsellor to have had a broad range of experience after being obtained by their owners. Of the 243 dogs obtained from breeders who were rearing their puppies within a home environment, 48.9% were considered to have had adequate experience.

659 of the 749 canine cases (87.9%) considered for this report were referred to a member of the APBC when they were between 6 months and 8 years of age.

Analysis of feline cases

36 of the 65 cases (55.4%) considered for this report were referred to a member of the APBC when they were over 4 years old. 32 of the 65 cases (49.2%) were obtained between 7 and 24 weeks (6 months), only 10.8% were obtained at 7 weeks or younger.

Incidence of dog bites

For the second year running, the authors considered the incidence of dog bites, the link with specific behaviour problems and the impact of early experience. Of the 749 canine cases, 139 (18.6%) were reported to have bitten at least one person. Of these 78 (56.5%) were neutered. Table 2 outlines the incidence of these bites.

Table 2 - Incidence of dog bites

One bite	66	47.5%
Two bites	31	22.3%
Three to ten bites	33	23.7%
Over ten bites	9	6.5%

To increase the significance of the data when considering smaller groups, the authors combined data from 2004 and 2005. The following table outlines the direction of the recorded bites of 277 canines. The bites are expressed as percentages of the overall number of bites.

Table 3 - To whom the bites were directed

	Adult member of family	Family member 10 - 18y	Family member 0 - 10y	Adult stranger	Stranger 10 -18y	Stranger 0 - 10y	Vet
1 bite	43.8%	8%	13.4%	24.1%	1.8%	5.4%	3.5%
2 bites	31.7%	8.3%	5%	40%	3.3%	11.7%	-
3 to 10 bites	44.9%	10.1%	10.9%	21.8%	1.4%	1.4%	9.5%
Over 10 bites	38.5%	11.5%	3.8%	19.2%	7.7%	3.8%	15.5%

Behaviour problems associated with dog bites

Of the 277 canines that were referred for having bitten, the majority of bites were directed towards an adult member of the family or an adult stranger.

Table 4 - recorded behaviour problems for dogs that had bitten

	One bite	Two bites	Three to ten bites	Over ten bites
AP in	22.2%	22.3%	35.4%	26.6%
AP out	33%	36.4%	40.9%	28.6%
AP other	5.4%	9.1%	10.5%	12.2%
AD in	3.2%	-	-	-
AD out	14%	9.1%	0.5%	12.2%
SP	1.4%	5%	1.7%	2%
HT	0.9%	2.5%	1.1%	-
FP	3.2%	5%	3.3%	-
CP	6.3%	2.5%	1.7%	-
Misc	10.4%	8.1%	4.9%	28.6%

Key: AP = Aggression towards people in or out of the home; AP other = Aggression towards people in or out of the home; AD = Aggression towards dogs in or out of the home; SP = Separation problems; HT = House training problems; FP = Fears and phobias; CP = Chasing problems; Misc = Miscellaneous problems were most likely to relate to training problems, attention seeking or medical problems.

Of the 277 cases, dogs represented 211 cases (76.2%). 64.9% of these male dogs were neutered. This might suggest that the predominance of males is regardless of testosterone influence or lends support to the theory that castration results in a reduction in confidence. However it is also possible that castration had been tried in an attempt to resolve the problem prior to a consultation. Further study of the correlation between neutering and the context in which the aggression is displayed would be necessary for any real conclusion to be drawn.

39.7% (110 dogs) were considered to have been adequately socialised in the opinion of the counsellor. 36.1% (100 dogs) had been obtained from a non-domestic environment and 28.9% had been obtained from a breeder who reared the puppies in the home. 24.5% (68 dogs) were obtained when they were 8 weeks old and 33.6% (93 dogs) were obtained over 6 months of age. 63.9% (177 dogs) were the only dogs in the home and 56% (155 dogs) were living in the home with two adults and no children.

Incidence of aggression in cats

To increase the significance of the data when considering smaller groups, the authors combined data from 2004 and 2005. Of the 249 cases, 41 cats (16.5%) were referred for aggression towards people. Of these, 26.8% were recorded as biting during handling but only 5 (2%) were recorded as actually having bitten a person (usually their owner).

Aggression towards other cats was recorded 73 times (29.3%) with 63 cats (25.3%) referred for social aggression towards other cats in the home. Of these, 29 (46%) were living with other cat in the home, 21 (33.3%) were living with two other cats in the home and 13 (20.7%) were living in a home with three or more cats.

The cats that were recorded as showing aggression towards other cats in the home were as likely to be an indoor cat (33.3%) as to have free or limited access outdoors. 31 (49.2%) were obtained by the owners from a domestic environment and 23 (36.5%) were obtained from a rescue environment. 16 cats (25.4%) were obtained when they were between 9 and 12 weeks of age.

Toileting problems in cats

Of the 249 cases, 154 recorded a toileting problem. Of these 66 cats (42.9%) were considered to be exhibiting a toileting problem caused by a breakdown in their original toilet training.

81 cats (52.6%) had deposited urine within the home through spraying or squat marking. 5 cats were middening whilst 2 were considered not to have been toilet trained adequately by the owner.

Every cat recorded as displaying spraying or a breakdown in toilet training was neutered. 53% (35 cats) were born into a domestic home and 37.8% (25 cats) were obtained from a rescue home. More than half of these cats (51.5%) were living indoors with no access outside the home. 45.5% (30 cats) were living with one other cat.

99.9% of cats that were recorded as marking the home with urine by spraying or squatting were neutered. 53.1% (43 cats) were born into a domestic home whilst 30.1% (25 cats) were obtained from a rescue home or society. 42% (34) were given free access outdoors by their owners and a further 34.6% (28 cats) were given limited access outdoors. 61.8% (50 cats) lived with one other cat.

Single and multi cat households

Of the 249 cases 49 cats (19.7%) were the only cat in the home. 127 (51%) were living with another cat and 68 (29.3%) were living with two or more other cats.

Figure 3 explores the link between the number of cats in the home when a cat was recorded as exhibiting aggression, a fearful or phobic behaviour, a house training problem or indoor marking.

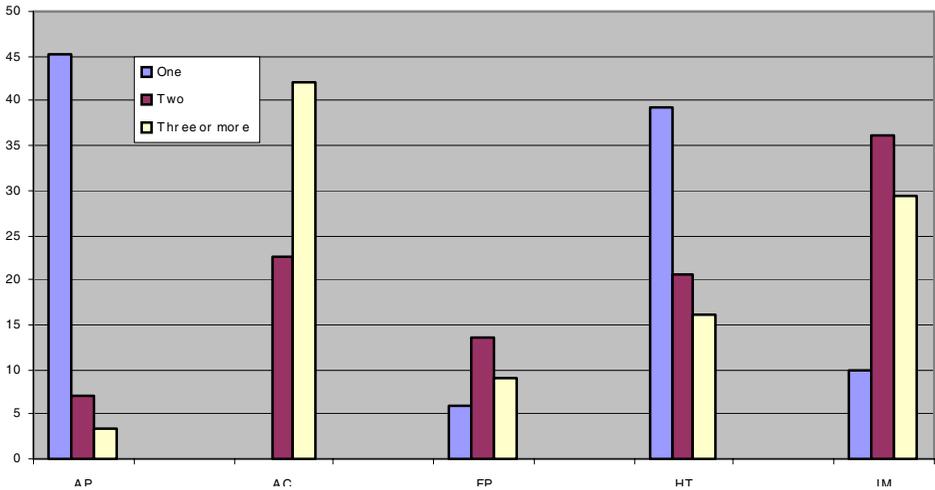


Figure 3: AP = Aggression towards people; AC = Aggression towards cats; FP = Fears and phobias; HT = House training problems; IM = Indoor marking.

The majority of cats (45.1%) referred for aggression towards people were single cats whilst aggression towards other cats was most likely in homes with three or more cats (42%).

There appeared to be no significant impact of single or group living on cats referred for fearful and phobic behaviours.

House training problems were most likely (39.2%) to be seen in cats living alone of whilst indoor marking was most common in houses with two cats (36%).

Summary of Review

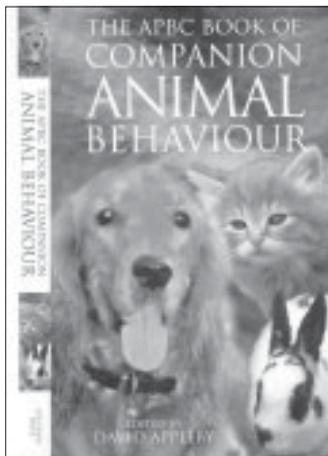
- The most common dog breeds to be referred to a member of the APBC were mongrels, Labradors and German Shepherd Dogs.
- The most common cat breeds to be referred were Domestic Short Hair cats, Burmese and Siamese.
- Over 50% of the problems treated in dogs were related to aggression.
- Approximately 40% of the cats considered for this report were referred for toileting problems.
- Domestic Short Hair cats ('moggies') were most likely to be referred for aggression towards other cats or spraying urine in inappropriate locations.
- 18.6% of the dogs considered for this report had bitten at least one person.
- The majority of bites were directed towards an adult member of the family or an adult stranger.
- Three-quarters of the cases of dog bites were from male dogs, 65% of which were neutered.
- Only 40% of the dogs referred for aggression were adequately socialised after being obtained by the owner.
- A third of the dogs referred for aggression had been obtained when they were over 6 months of age.
- Cats referred for aggression towards other cats were most likely to live in a home with three or more other cats.
- 45% of the cats referred for aggression towards people were living as the only cat in the home.
- More than half of the cats referred for problems associated with depositing urine in inappropriate locations were living indoors with no access outside
- Nearly all of the cats referred for spraying or marking behaviours had been neutered.

For all press enquiries, please contact the APBC Press Officer Inga MacKellar -
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To access copies of the APBC Annual Review from 1994 to 2004 visit

<http://www.apbc.org.uk/data.htm>

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Both titles are available from the APBC website (www.apbc.org.uk) or by calling 01386 751151

Would you like to become a member of the APBC?

The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors was founded in 1989 to promote and develop the profession of pet behaviour counselling and standardise the service provided. It aims to provide a network of specialist counsellors to whom veterinarians can confidently refer clients.

Members of the APBC have to have the highest professional standards, knowledge and expertise. For this reason, a rigorous selection procedure is in place to assess applicants wishing to join the Association as full members, to ensure they meet the Association's stringent criteria.

In light of the growing number of academic courses in the field of companion animal behaviour, and other biological sciences, coupled with the ever-increasing establishment of pet behaviour counselling as a profession, the Association offers four tiers of membership:

FULL MEMBERSHIP, STUDENT, PROVISIONAL, ACADEMIC

We welcome, and actively encourage applications from students and professionals who meet our criteria. For more information please visit www.apbc.org.uk/criteria.htm or call 01386 751151

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