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Dogs in the Home Improve the Quality of Life of the People Living Inside

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Introduction

- Dogs are social animals and help humans build meaningful interactions with other people.
- Dogs can improve the quality of life of people beyond service animal expectations.
- Dogs can help every aspect of life including mental, physical, and emotional health.

Methods

- Various studies were drawn from in order to gain substantial evidence that dogs improve life. Such data as physical activity, developing allergies, quality of life, and general health were chosen.

Results

- Living with dogs was associated with a 90% reduction in developing food allergies (Marrs).
- Owning a dog meant an additional 22 minutes of time spent walking per day (Pedersen, Saltin et al.).
- Decrease in the frequency of headaches, painful joints, hay fever, inattention, and dizziness (Fine).
- Significantly increased chances of conversation with others (Fine).

Conclusions

- Dogs are beneficial in the home from day 1, protecting children from developing food allergies.
- Physical exercise becomes a regular part of a person's daily routine.
- There is an ease of physical ailments due to the presence of a dog nearby.
- Regular social interaction occurs.

Sources

- "Chapter Two: IT'S MORE THAN JUST PUPPY LOVE: Relationships That Support Our Health and Well-Being." *Our Faithful Companions: Exploring the Essence of Our K*
- *inship with Animals*, by Aubrey H. Fine, Alpine, 2014.
- Marrs, Tom, et al. "Dog Ownership at Three Months of Age Is Associated with Protection against Food Allergy." *Allergy*, vol. 74, no. 11, Nov. 2019, pp. 2212-2219. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1111/all.13868.
- BK. Pedersen, B. Saltin, et al. "The Influence of Dog Ownership on Objective Measures of Free-Living Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour in Community-Dwelling Older Adults: a Longitudinal Case-Controlled Study." *BMC Public Health*, BioMed Central, 9 June 2017,

Dogs in the home improve the quality of life of the people living inside.

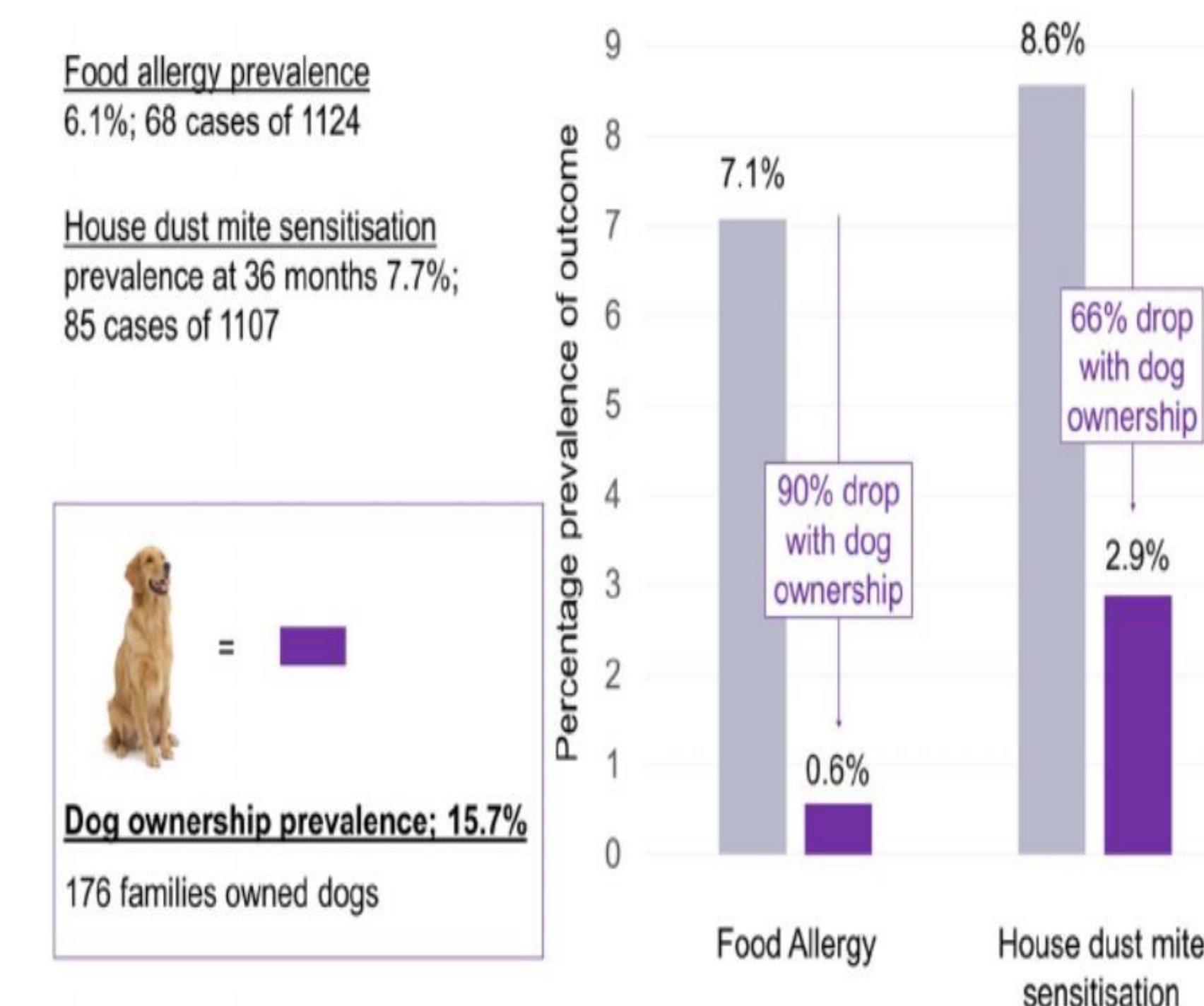


(Fine, credit to the unlisted photographer)

Additional Insights

Although a lot of the studies used were self-reporting, the overall trend of every study was that dogs improved the quality of life of the people. Regardless of underlying problems that people faced, dogs always helped the situation to improve.

Graph 1: Allergy study (Marrs).



HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL BENEFITS OF PETS: WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

- Petting an animal causes decreases in blood pressure and/or heart rate (Eddy, 1996; Friedmann, Beck, and Lynch, 1983; Shioh, Sorek, and Torkel, 2003)
- Stroking a pet can lower heart rate (McGreevy, Righetti, and Thomson, 2005; Vormbrock and Grossberg, 1988)
- The presence of a pet dog or cat can lower levels of heart rate and blood pressure in stressful situations such as completing mental arithmetic (Allen, Blasovich, and Mendes, 2002).
- The risk factor for coronary heart disease was significantly lower for pet owners than non-owners, particularly for males (Anderson, Reid, and Jennings, 1992)
- Lower levels of serum triglycerides (high levels of which are associated with increased risk for heart attacks in elderly pet owners compared to non-owners) (Dembicki and Anderson, 1996)
- Pet owners had significantly lower systolic blood pressure; pet owners had significantly lower plasma triglycerides (Jennings, 1995)
- Walking with a dog increases and enhances the opportunities to initiate and sustain chance conversations with strangers than walking alone (McNicholas and Collis, 2000; McNicholas et al., 2001)
- Pets can reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation (e.g. Headley, 1998)
- Women living entirely alone were more lonely than those living with either pets or other people (Zaslloff and Kidd, 1994)
- Elderly people with pets have also been shown to have fewer symptoms of depression than those without pets (Roberts et al., 1996)

Figure 1: List of health benefits (Fine).