

Introduction

- Child Life Specialists use pet therapy in the hospital to help children increase coping skills during their stay. When children go home with a chronic illness, they no longer have that pet that was helping them cope.
- The goal of this literature review was to identify the effects that owning a pet has on children's coping skills who have chronic illness, based on the notion of the use of pets in the hospital setting.

Coverage

- All literature was found on the website for Volpe Library at Tennessee Technological University.
- Key terms used for research were: "pet therapy", "chronic illness", "pet ownership", "children", "coping skills", and "animals".
- Definitions:
 - Chronic Illness: Long-term health condition that does not have a cure.
 - Coping skills: The ability for one to use efforts to solve problems and minimize stress and conflict.



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Methodology

- Using the online database through Volpe Library, research articles were found to create literature sources that would be suitable for the topic.
- Once the literature was chosen, reviewing of the literature took place, and the methods and results were analyzed.
- From reviewing the literature, the results of all the relevant literature were summarized into a literature review.

Results

- Pet ownership can have positive and negative effects on children with chronic illness.
- Negative effects such as allergies, asthma, and disease transfer can occur with pet ownership and children.
- Positive effects have found to be increased coping skills in children through companionship, responsibility, activity increase, and source of comfort for the children.

Significance

- When a child is diagnosed with a chronic illness it is then required that they formulate coping skills that best work them t
- Based on Lazarus' Stress and Coping Theory, having appropriate coping skills will decrease stress.
- Pets are used in pet therapy at a hospital to increase coping skills in children with chronic illness. This same coping skill may be used in the home to increase coping after hospitalization.



Conclusions

- There is little literature involving children specifically with chronic illness and pet ownership in the home.
- Research shows that pets can have positive effects on coping skills for children and based on research from pet therapy in a hospital setting, can have positive effects on coping skills in children with chronic illness.
- Based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory, the home environment and the hospital environment are both experiences that are interconnected, therefore we can assume that if the coping skill had positive effects in the hospital, based on research, the same could apply at home.



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