

Pet Therapy, Stress & Exam Performance

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Background & Literature Review

- Shown to reduce anxiety and stress
 - Decrease BP & pulse (Luptak & Nuzzo, 2004) (Barker, Knisely, McCain, Schubert & Pandurangi, 2010)
 - Cancer patients (Johnson, Meadows, Haubner, & Sevedge, 2008)
 - Children with separation anxiety (Weston, 2010)
 - Antepartum women on bed rest (Klemm, Washington, Bradley, Bucher, Collins, Lyons, Seckel, & Urban 2010)
 - Elders (LeRoux & Kemp, 2009)
 - Inpatient & outpatient setting (Coakley and Mahoney, 2009)
- Spark
 - Young (2012)



Purpose of the Research

- Research gap
- Studying the effect pet therapy can have on nursing students' perceived stress and exam performance



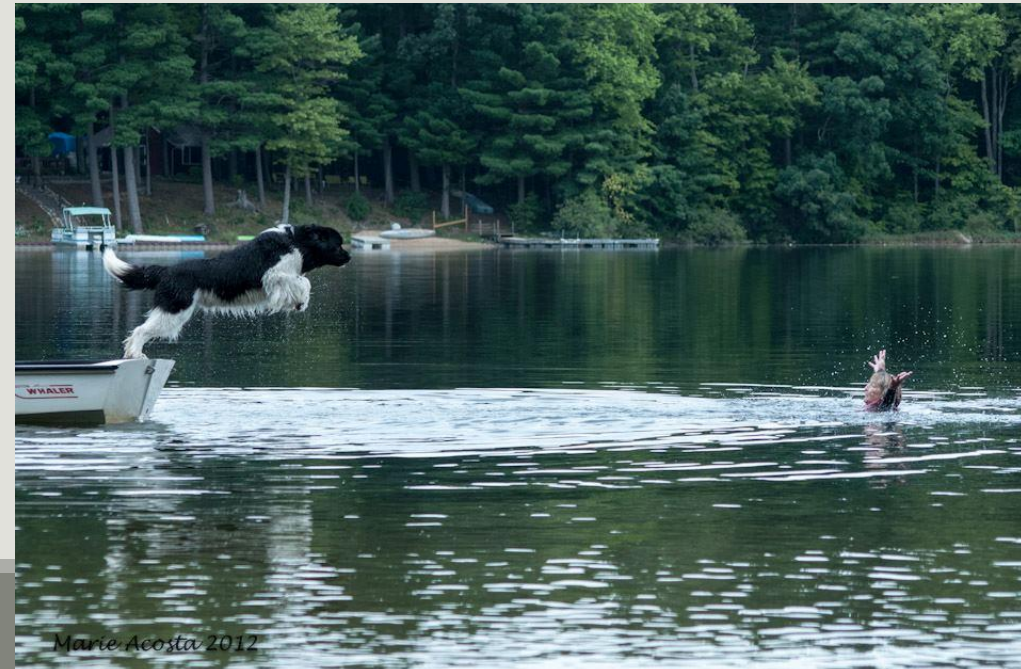
Tested Hypotheses

1. Exposure to pet therapy will reduce perceived stress rating.
2. Exposure to pet therapy will increase exam scores.



Design & Methods

- Experimental Research design
 - Control & Experimental groups
 - Randomization
 - Independent variable: Exposure to pet therapy; dependent variables: perceived stress & exam performance
- Sample & Recruitment
 - Junior level WMU Nursing students
 - Assembly Day
 - Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria



Instruments & Measures

- Demographics Survey
- 10-item Perceived Stress Scale
- Likert Scale
- Exam Scores



Data Collection Procedure

- Students met before each exam in their respective groups
- Enjoyed a light breakfast provided by the researchers
- Interaction with the dog (pet therapy group only)
- Quiet studying was allowed – no group study sessions
- Students filled out the scales during the last 5 minutes of the session

Sample Characteristics

- Intervention group (3) vs. control group (4)**
- 6 females; 1 male
- (5) 21-25 year olds; (1) 26-30 year old
- 7 Caucasian
- (4) single; (3) living with significant other
- All preferred dogs (1 liked both cats & dogs)
- (3) owned pets
 - (1) dog, (1) cat, (1) dog & cat



Missing Data

- Missing Data
 - Collection #2: 4 complete data sets; 3 incomplete data sets
 - Collection #3: 2 complete data sets; 5 incomplete data sets
- Communication error – no pet therapy dog
 - Collection #1

Pet Therapy & Perceived Stress

Group	Mean
Intervention Group	20.3333
Control Group	22.5000

Pet Therapy, Perceived Stress & Exam Performance

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
PSS Data Collection #4	Between groups	8.048	1	8.048	7.101	0.045
	Within groups	5.667	5	1.133		
Score of Exam #4	Between groups	0.762	1	0.762	0.057	0.821
	Within groups	66.667	5	13.333		

Discussion

- Students in the intervention group reported a lower mean PSS
- Students were less stressed in the intervention group when compared to the control group
- There was no impact found on exam performance – scores ranged the same across the groups

Limitations

- Sample size – attrition
- Incomplete/missing data sets



Nursing Practice

- Needs to continue to expand into more clinical areas and settings
 - Increase the number of licensed pet therapy dogs and pet therapists
- More research needs to be conducted



Future Research

- Larger sample size
 - Increases the power of the study
- Tracking throughout the program
- Expanding to other programs



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Questions?

