

Animal-Assisted Therapy for Adolescents with Mental Health Disorders: A Brief Intervention Creating a Human-Animal Bond

Kodrigo Klaverol*

Department of Biotechnology Health Center, Catalan Institute of Health, Lleida, Spain

Abstract

Mental health disorders among adolescents have become a significant problem globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that globally, 10-20% of children and adolescents suffer from mental disorders. Adolescents with mental health disorders, including anxiety, depression, and other related conditions, often face significant challenges in their daily lives, including academic difficulties, relationship issues, and social isolation. In recent years, animal-assisted therapy (AAT) has gained popularity as a non-invasive and non-pharmacological intervention to support adolescents with mental health disorders. This article discusses the effectiveness of AAT in supporting adolescents with mental health disorders, creating a human-animal bond, and potential therapeutic outcomes.

Keywords: Dietary pattern • Diabetes mellitus • Adolescence

Introduction

Animal-assisted therapy is a therapeutic intervention that involves the use of animals to help improve physical, social, emotional, and cognitive functioning. The animals used in AAT vary from domesticated animals such as dogs, cats, and rabbits to more exotic animals such as dolphins, horses, and even llamas. The therapy sessions are designed to create a safe and comfortable environment that fosters a positive relationship between the animal and the client. The therapy is facilitated by a trained mental health professional and an animal handler, who work together to identify specific therapeutic goals and objectives for the client. AAT can be delivered in a variety of settings, including schools, hospitals, mental health clinics, and other community settings.

Literature Review

The human-animal bond is the relationship between humans and animals based on trust, mutual respect, and emotional connection. AAT aims to create and foster this bond between the client and the animal, which can have a positive impact on the client's mental health. Studies have shown that interacting with animals can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as increase feelings of happiness, joy, and relaxation. The human-animal bond can also increase social connectedness, self-esteem, and overall well-being. For adolescents with mental health disorders, creating a human-animal bond can provide a safe and non-judgmental space for them to express their emotions and feelings [1].

AAT has been shown to be an effective intervention for adolescents with mental health disorders. AAT can be used as a complementary treatment in conjunction with other therapies or as a standalone treatment. AAT has been used to treat a wide range of mental health disorders, including anxiety,

depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Reduced stress and anxiety: Interacting with animals has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety in adolescents. AAT sessions can create a safe and calming environment for adolescents to relax and unwind. Improved social skills: Adolescents with mental health disorders often struggle with social skills, which can lead to social isolation. AAT can help improve social skills by providing opportunities for positive social interactions with animals and other people [2].

Discussion

Increased empathy and compassion: Adolescents who participate in AAT have been shown to develop increased empathy and compassion towards animals and other people. **Improved self-esteem:** Adolescents with mental health disorders often struggle with low self-esteem. AAT can help improve self-esteem by providing a non-judgmental and supportive environment. The impact that being Black in a racialized society may have on one's mental health at that period is not taken into account in this limited view of Black women's experiences as mothers. Black racial identity, a construct, was added to the theory for this investigation. The racial identity of Black individuals who reside in the US- their affiliation with Black racial groupings is known as racial identity. In Black adults, having a Black racial identity has been linked to psychological suffering but not during the postpartum period [3-5].

The study looked at the ideas of maternal functioning and maternal mental well-being (the presence or absence of which are crucial in understanding the process of becoming a mother. The maternal-infant link is influenced by the ideas (such as maternal functioning, and Black racial identity even though they are all focused on the mother The postpartum women became close and formed By appropriately responding to the infant's needs, the infant's attachment/security is also nurtured This theoretical adaptation guided this analysis to allow the proper selection of constructs and the relationships. The period of time this cross-sectional study covered was from. Four gynaecology clinics in four distinct areas of Lebanon were used to find participants. At each of these gynaecological clinics, data were gathered by study-unrelated staff who served as assessors. Each married Lebanese woman over the age reduced symptoms of depression: AAT has been shown to reduce symptoms of depression in adolescents with mental health disorders.

Reduced symptoms of ADHD: AAT can help reduce symptoms of ADHD by providing a calming and structured environment. **Improved cognitive functioning:** AAT has been shown to improve cognitive functioning in adolescents with mental health disorders, including [6].

*Address for Correspondence: Kodrigo Klaverol, Department of Biotechnology Health Center, Catalan Institute of Health, Lleida, Spain, E-mail: kodrigoklaverol@cgiar.org

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Conclusion

Animals can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as increase feelings of happiness, joy, and relaxation. The human-animal bond can also increase social connectedness, self-esteem, and overall well-being. For adolescents with mental health disorders, creating a human-animal bond can provide a safe and non-judgmental space for them to express their emotions and feelings.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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