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EDITOR'S LETTER

Understanding Aggression

Approximately 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs in the United States each year, and more than 800 000 dog-bite victims require medical attention, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dogs with unaddressed behavioral problems not only threaten public health but are more likely to be surrendered and euthanized. In this issue, Drs. Julia Albright and Kevin Pflaum discuss **canine aggression and how it can be managed**, revealing how far our understanding of behavioral disorders in dogs has progressed (p. 82). While aggression in dogs can have various underlying causes, understanding the neuroscience behind it can provide valuable insights into its origins and potential solutions. Aggression in dogs has come to be understood as a psychological disorder with its roots in anxiety. However, the key to whether an act of aggression is seen as a part of normal behavior or an underlying manifestation of anxiety is the situation in which the act occurs. Just as with human anxiety, imbalances in neurotransmitters such as serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine can influence a dog's behavior. It has been interesting to watch the long-standing progression of understanding that has taken place in human medicine with respect to causes and manifestations of anxiety and to now see veterinary medicine playing catch-up. Most of the understanding of the mechanisms of action of the drugs used to assist with anxiety management in people has come from animal trials; therefore, it is probably a catch-up that's long overdue. Most of these medications in humans help control short-term behaviors that result from anxiety, giving time for us to learn how to modify our behavior to remodel our brain to become less anxious. Understanding that medications are therefore only part of the solution should help us modify our behavior toward aggressive dogs in our practice.

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Animal Cruelty Detection and Response

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) carried out a nationwide survey that included veterinarians, veterinary nurses/technicians, and support staff to understand how often employees are seeing cases of suspected animal cruelty, what types they are seeing, and what determines whether they respond with education and/or with reports to law enforcement.



CORRECTION

The article titled "Radiographic Diagnosis of Small Intestinal Mechanical Obstruction" in the July/August issue mislabeled the L5 vertebrae and rib width in Figure 2. We regret the error.

What We're Up To

Today's Veterinary Practice

Editorial Advisory Board member Camille Torres, DVM, DABVP, DACVIM (Nutrition), is among the contributors of the **Purina Institute Handbook of Canine and Feline Clinical Nutrition**. The newly released handbook offers the veterinary team a resource for managing many common conditions. The chapters are broken into sections with key takeaways, making it a quick reference for the busy practitioner who wants to incorporate nutrition into the management plan for their patients. This

new edition incorporates nutritional management strategies using the most up-to-date information on how nutrients play a role in health and disease. The book also features communication tips to assist the practitioner with talking points as well as a chapter dedicated to communicating with clients about nutrition to improve compliance. By combining medical management strategies with communication tools, this book offers a resource for the veterinary team that would like to include nutrition in every case.