The Blue Dog: The development of a dog bite prevention programme

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The pet dog as a special friend, a playmate...

–Millot 1988, Triebenbacher 1998
Love, companionship and acceptance

– Millot 1988, Triebenbacher 1998
TRAUMA – DOG BITES

- 1,064,000 Dogs
  - Average
    - 11 dogs /100 persons
  - Lowest income
    - 19 dogs / 100 persons

- 33.6% of families
  - with children own a dog

- Kahn et al,
  - Journal of Pediatrics, 2004

- FOD Economie, algemene directie statistiek en economische informatie
  - Persbericht 31 juli 2007
  - (cijfers 2004)
–Evidence of **positive role** of pet dog
–in child development

- Children who grew up with a pet dog show **more empathy** towards peers, friends and family members, when compared to children who grew up without a dog

Need to devise **safe methods** of living with a dog to retain benefits & yet reduce risks
In Belgium, each year 1 person in 100 is victim of a dog bite

–Gisle et al 2001
Children are twice as often victim of a dog bite, then any other age group
The majority of dog bites in children happen at home with a familiar dog and a young child (med 5y).
Posttraumatic stress disorder after dog bites in children.

Peters V, Sottaiaux M, Appelboom J, Kahn A.

University Children’s Hospital Queen Fabiola, Brussels, Belgium.

Comment on:


Of 22 children who were victims of dog bite, 12 had symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder 2 to 9 months after the bite. Violent dog attacks inflicting multiple and/or deep wounds were associated with risk of posttraumatic stress disorder.
Dog bites in children represent an important health issue.

References:
- Chun et al. 1982
- Mathews et al. 1994
- Sacks et al. 1996
- Voelker 1997
- Weiss et al. 1998
- Ozanne-Smith 2000
- Sacks et al. 2000
- Mcheik 2000
- Lockwood 2001
- Overall & Love 2001
- Ozanne-Smith 2001
- Prescutti 2001
- SCHIRPT 2001
- Bernardo 2002
- Horisberger 2002
- Kahn et al. 2003
- Peters et al. 2004
- Kahn et al. 2004
- Schalamon 2006
- Healy et al. 2007
- Hon et al. 2007
- Messam et al. 2007
- Loewe et al. 2007
- Morgan 2007
- Shuler et al. 2007
- CDC 2008
- Gilchrist et al. 2008
- LNV 2008
- O’Sullivan et al. 2008
- Rosado et al. 2008
- Shuler et al. 2008
- Raghavan et al. 2008
- Daniels et al. 2009
- Langley et al. 2009
- Emet et al. 2009
- Patropek 2009
The target group for prevention:
Existing prevention programmes:

- Age group > 7 years
- Public place
- Precautionary behaviour towards unknown dog

–Chapman et al 2000
Lack in programmes aimed at preventing dog bites at home with pet dog & young children

–Foto Martine Verbocht
Blue Dogs don’t exist

–Soraya Verbeke, August 2003
Any dog is capable of biting a child

- No evidence of lower/higher tendency for aggressive behaviour, based solely on dog breed

The child’s age is the most important factor!!

Bernardo et al. 2002, Kahn et al. 2003, Shalamon
No evidence so far...
Young children mainly look at the dog’s **face** and ignore body postures.

- Young children often **confuse** frightened dogs and friendly dogs.

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Lakestani et al. 2005
Ongoing research University of Lincoln:
Meints, Racca & Hickey, in prep

Young children misinterpret

- baring teeth

- smile

Poster 113
My teeth are always visible

—Soraya Verbeke, August 2003
No evidence how to safely pet any dog. Depends on the individual dog, the child & the context.

- Be gentle with a dog
- Talk to him first
- First let the dog sniff
- Pet him gently on the back
- Pet him gently under the chin

-Reisner et al., 2007
Living Safely with your dog

- Hereditary factors
- Development
- Socialisation
- Education
- Physical & mental health
- Victim behaviour

- Risk factor “victim behaviour” should be considered within a context!

- 86% Interaction
  - Victim ➔ Dog

- 61-80% of victims did
  - NOT interact with dog

-Kahn et al 2003, Cornelissen & Hopster 2009
In 86% of the cases, an **ACTION** from the **child** triggers the bite

–Mathews 1994, Kahn 2003, Ozanne-Smith
“Leave the dog alone when he sleeps”
“Don’t bother the dog while he is eating”
“Don’t approach your face to the dog”
“Don’t chase the dog”

– Children’s safety can be improved by interactive training

– Detection of dangerous and safe situations – interpretation - action
Risk situations in the home with familiar dog

- Child behaviour
- Resources
- Interactions

Kahn et al 2003, Reisner et al 2007
Risk situations in the home with familiar dog

- Food
- Bones
- Toys
- Objects

- Hugging
- Petting, touching
- Approaching sleeping dog
- Waking dog
- Pushing dog from sofa
- Chasing dog
- Hitting dog

Script including common risk situations

–SAFE OUTCOME

–UNSAFE OUTCOME

–Kahn et al., 2003
to an interactive computer animation
Department Child Psychology
Team Dr Kerstin Meints

96 Children
Ages 3-4-5 & 6 years

Research financed by
1. Children learn from the blue dog scenes to make the safe choices

2. Parental support improves the learning
Most accidents happen when there is no active parental supervision

Parent awareness is crucial in influencing children’s behaviour
THE BLUE DOG TRUST

Partnerships with national veterinary associations

Austria
Belgium
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
France
Germany
Italy
Netherlands

Norway
Poland
Portugal
Serbia
Spain
Switzerland
UK
USA
1. Facial Proximity study

–Research supported by the Blue Dog Trust

–Co-funded by Waltham

–Poster 115

–Meints, De Keuster & Syrnyk, in prep.
Research supported by the Blue Dog Trust

Prof. Barbara Morrongiello
University of Guelph
(Canada)

Prof. David Schwebel
University of Birmingham
Alabama, US
3. Effectiveness of the Blue Dog in Real-life: a longitudinal study of children's behaviour with the family dog

–Meints & Lakestani, ongoing
Spreading a prevention message

- Further challenges

- Erm..
- quite a
- challenge
“Every dog is capable of biting a child.”

“The use of will lower the risk of your dog biting your child.”

Witte K., 1992
Sincere thanks to all who helped in the realization of the Blue Dog

– André Kahn
– 1944 - 2004
THANK YOU

Please visit us during the poster session

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