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PET DOGS HELP OLDER ADULTS STAY ACTIVE

New study finds that adults aged 65 and over walk more if they own a dog

BRUSSELS, BE (June 9, 2017) --- For older adults, owning a dog increases the likelihood of achieving World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended levels of physical activity according to a [study published recently](#). Physical activity is known to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, multiple cancers and depression. This research adds evidence to show that owning a pet dog can help support health as people age.

“We all know that as we get older we tend to slow down a little” says Professor Daniel Mills, project leader. “By staying active we can improve our health and other aspects of our quality of life. Factors driving higher levels of physical activity in adults are not well defined. We were interested in assessing whether dog ownership has the potential to improve the health of older adults though increased activity”.

The University of Lincoln and Glasgow Caledonian University Study, published in BMC Public Health was conducted in collaboration with the WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition, part of Mars Petcare and funded through an ISAZ/WALTHAM award. Researchers used a specific type of activity monitor for the first time to objectively gather activity data of dog-owning and non-dog owning study participants.

“Dog owners were found to walk over 20 minutes more a day and this additional walking was at a moderate pace” says Dr Philippa Dall, lead researcher. “For good health WHO recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a week. Over the course of a week this additional 20 minutes walking each day may in itself be sufficient to meet these guidelines.

Our findings represent a meaningful improvement in physical activity achieved through dog walking”.

“This study indicates that dog ownership may play an important role in walking among older adults. We found an objective method to monitor activity worked very well and recommend that future research in this field also include dog ownership and dog walking as important variables to consider” says WALTHAM researcher Nancy Gee, a co-author of the study. “Even if dog ownership is not the focus, it may represent an important factor that should not be ignored”.

About the WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition:

The WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition is the fundamental science centre for Mars Petcare and focuses on the nutrition and wellbeing of dogs, cats, horses, birds and fish, and their benefits to humans. Located in Leicestershire, England, WALTHAM™ expertise and knowledge informs the development of innovative products that meet the needs of companion animals in a practical way. The centre recently celebrated its half century and has pioneered many important breakthroughs in the field, publishing over 600 peer-reviewed scientific papers. Today, WALTHAM continues to collaborate with the world’s foremost scientific institutes, driving Mars Petcare’s vision to create ‘A Better World for Pets’ and delivering the science that underpins leading Mars brands such as PEDIGREE®, WHISKAS®, ROYAL CANIN®, BANFIELD Pet Hospital, IAMS®, PERFECT FIT®, CESAR®, NUTRO®, SHEBA®, DREAMIES® and EUKANUBA®.

www.waltham.com

About the University of Lincoln

The University of Lincoln is a top 50 UK university (Complete University Guide 2017) and recognised as one of the country’s leading young universities (Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2017). We have some of the most satisfied students in the UK, placed in the top 10 for student satisfaction in the National Student Survey 2016 with several of our courses ranked number one for their subject areas. We are known for our pioneering approach to working with employers, winning a Lord Stafford Award and a Times Higher Education Award. Graduate prospects are strong with 95 per cent of Lincoln’s most recent graduates in work or further study six months after finishing their course and almost three quarters in graduate level roles. In the Research Excellence Framework 2014, more than half of our submitted research was judged to be internationally excellent or world leading.

About Glasgow Caledonian University

Through the education we provide, the research we conduct, and the social and economic benefit we deliver, Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) is the University for the Common Good.

GCU has modern campuses in the heart of Glasgow, London and New York, and educational partnerships in Bangladesh, Mauritius, Oman and South Africa.

Our 20,000 students experience a transformative education, which combines employability and entrepreneurialism with social responsibility. Ranked first for degree completion in Scotland for a modern university, 96% of our graduates are in work or further study within six months of graduating.



The top modern university in Scotland for research power, GCU is helping to build inclusive societies, support healthy lives and develop sustainable environments.

We are Scotland's first accredited Living Wage University Employer and a member of the UN Global Compact, the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative.

Our annual economic contribution to the UK is estimated at £1 billion, while our social benefit as the University for the Common Good is evident in communities at home and across the globe.

Find out more at www.gcu.ac.uk and follow us on Twitter @CaledonianNews.

About Mars Petcare

Mars Petcare is the world's leading pet nutrition and health care business that strives to make A Better World for Pets every day. Mars Petcare believes that pets make our lives

better and that pet ownership brings joy and benefits which should be accessible to everyone. Mars

Petcare has a total of 41 brands in our portfolio, including billion dollar brands

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And the WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition, a leading scientific authority on pet nutrition and well-being.

Mars Petcare has more than 40,000 Associates worldwide. www.mars-petcare.com

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