

**Behavior of community dogs in two cities in Southern Brazil**

Larissa Helena Ersching Runcos<sup>1</sup>, Gisele Sprea<sup>2</sup>, Edson Ferraz Evaristo De Paula<sup>3</sup> and Carla Forte Matolino Molento<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Federal do Paraná, Rua dos Funcionários, 1540, 80035050, Brazil, <sup>2</sup>Prefeitura de Campo Largo, Avenida Padre Natal Pigatto, 925, 80.040-280, Brazil, <sup>3</sup>Prefeitura de Curitiba, Rua Presidente Faria, s/n, 80020290, Brazil; [larl.hr@gmail.com](mailto:larl.hr@gmail.com)

Some cities in Brazil are identifying community dogs and turning their condition official in a partnership between municipality and local community. Once dogs are vaccinated and receive medical attention, the risks of disease transmission are minimized. However, they can exhibit behaviors that may be considered nuisance. Our objective was to study and compare the behavior of community dogs in two cities in Southern Brazil. A total of 105 dogs were studied, 73 in Campo Largo and 32 in Curitiba, which corresponds to all community dogs registered in both cities. The behavior was studied through a questionnaire with caretakers and direct dog observation. The majority of dogs slept during the day (47.6%, 50/105); ran frequently (81.9%, 86/105); and played frequently (99.0%, 104/105). The minority of dogs was seen far from their living places (14.3%, 15/105). Community dogs in Campo Largo barked more frequently ( $P < 0.01$ ) and ran more frequently ( $P < 0.05$ ) than dogs in Curitiba. Display of territorial behavior was different ( $P < 0.05$ ): a higher proportion of dogs did not allow unknown dogs approach them in Curitiba (31.3%, 10/32) than in Campo Largo (15.1%, 11/73). Some dogs (18%, 19/105) had a history of biting aggression to other dogs. Of the dogs, 49% (52/105) jumped to play with their caretakers and 45.7% (48/105) displayed friendly behavior towards unknown people in the streets; 68% (72/105) chased vehicles, most frequently motorcycles. Bites toward people were described in a higher proportion ( $P < 0.05$ ) of dogs in Curitiba (9.4%, 3/32) than in Campo Largo (6.8%, 5/73). All behaviors that did differ between cities may be related to the environment in which the dogs were living. Community dogs in Campo Largo lived in neighborhood streets and in Curitiba lived in bus stations, which may be perceived by the dogs as a more delimited territory, and are characterized by greater people flow. Community dogs displayed mostly docile behavior and positive interactions with their caretakers, other people and other dogs. They can express most of normal dog behavior, which is positive for their mental health. However, some dogs presented behavioral problems, and it is necessary to study with more detail the problematic events in order to reach behavioral diagnosis and seek solutions, perhaps through behavioral modification. The viability of permanence of some of the dogs as community animals must also be considered. Funded by Fundação Araucária, CAPES, and Campo Largo Town Hall.