



Therapy Dog Trainer General report



General report about the situation of AAA/AAT in European countries

Research for the Te.D project



Education and Culture DG

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1. Introduction

Today modern societies face enormous problem when it comes for providing adequate health care and the fight with the development of civilization diseases. More and more people suffer from diseases which had not occurred so often till now or even from such diseases about which no one had ever heard of. Never before so many children were born with allergies, immune system diseases, genetic disorders. Similarly when it comes to seniors, on the one side their age is connected with health problems but on the other their development did not start at such early age as it starts now. Even with such developed medicine and medications (third generation drugs) doctors have problem with reducing the number of new cases.

Patients on the other hand are looking for new ways of treatment. For many centuries there is a discussion whether listen to the doctors or use natural medicine. Both options have their supporters and opponents (in both environments of doctors and patients) who present their opinions in every possible form (academic research and articles, articles in regular press, discussions on public forums both in real life and in the Internet).

Regardless which option somebody supports it must be admitted that both are developing really quickly and both contribute to new forms of therapy. Some of those methods combine traditional medicine and are associated with the use of natural methods, also with the use of animals. One of such forms is animal assisted therapy (AAT) and animal assisted activities (AAA).

Main aim of this report is to compare the situation of AAA in different European countries. To present if there are legal regulations or restrictions when it comes to conducting animal assisted therapies and other activities. To find out which good practices could be implemented in all partner countries and also what there is to improve in national strategies that deal with such topic.

The use of animals for therapeutic and educational purposes fits into the broader context of the relationship man-animal, a relationship with ancient roots. In recent years approaches that rely on the use of pets both for therapeutic and educational purposes were re-evaluated and



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implemented considerably due to the change of the role of animals in today's society and thanks to a series of documents / rules that have started to give general indications about AAA.

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is the strategic incorporation of human-animal interactions in a therapeutic process. The approach is grounded in the human-animal bond in goal directed interventions as an adjunct to an existing therapy (Chandler 2005). AAT intervention includes or incorporates animals as part of a therapeutic process (Kruger and Serpell 2006). AAT as an adjunct to counseling sessions was found to reduce stress and anxiety levels, and promoting emotional projection and identification of feelings (Reichert 1998). AAA is a related modality of AAT utilizing goal directed activities aimed at improving quality of life via the human-animal bond (Gammonley and Yates 1991).

AAT and AAA in Germany for example are a grass root movement and as such not yet recognized or accredited by national bodies, health care institutions or other public bodies. Nevertheless, they are widely practiced but without generally accepted quality standards. Scientific research in the near past has shown that in therapy as well as in pedagogy AAT and AAA can have significant successes but the way to a formally recognition as accredited profession and health measure depends on the willingness of the actors to put up with the requirements of developing and implementing quality policies, guidelines and standards according to established principles of quality in health care and education.

The Delta Society (Pet Partners) is one of the most important american organization which deals with AAA/AAT and wants to develop common regulations for all institutions and organizations that conduct such therapies. That society has established some guidelines for registration and certification of animals for AAT and AAA. However, the requirements include specific goals and objectives that not always correspond with European standards and possibilites.

Most of European countries have problem when it comes to the lack of legal regulations and accreditations of different national bodies. That movement has a lot of volunteer workers who are trying to develop this method of therapy and make it more popular and in result more legally oriented. In this part of the world fighting for the rights and proper conditions of working as therapists just started but they develop very quickly.



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This report is build from national reports prepared by partners in Te.D project. Its aim is to show the differences in attitude toward AAA in European countries and to present what problems are common in each country. As a result it will be easier to find together the solution for the most common issues.

2. National Situation of AAT/AAA in European Countries.

This is the right place to present the national situation of AAT/AAA in all countries that are working to prepare TE.D course. The most influential activities and decisions within each country, the biggest problems faced when starting similar courses, solutions proposed by partners etc. This will show what kind of chances for political and social discussion do we have at this moment and what should be done to promote AAT/AAA in Europe.

2.1. Germany

Animal assisted therapies have their origin in Anglo-Saxon countries. In Germany they became prominent only in the 1990s. Before there was little interest in the human-animal-topic. Only in therapeutic horse riding Germany was a pioneer in practice and research. In the 1980 first doctors and psychologists advised the implementation of animals in geriatric institutions, elderly homes, hospitals, in case of psychosomatic disorders instead of pharmaceuticals and in schools. Also from the 1980 date the first systematical studies about the issue. Germany for long time lagged behind the development in other countries. Only a few years ago organizations were founded which provide information and advice about concepts, methodology and suitable animals.¹

In Germany there are no common standards or ethical guidelines for animal assisted therapy. The scientific assessment of this issue lacks behind practical development. Scientific

¹ Tiere als Therapie, Kynos Verlag, 2007.





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findings are most often found in gerontology and etiology. Acceptance of findings depends on the reputation of the scientists in their specific field. Or to put it differently, working scientifically in this field can be a hindrance for a scientific career. A better networking between the scientific field and in the practical field is needed. However, at universities there are a lot of diploma and masters dissertations about the issue, but they are not systematically collected. In general the number of scientific works on the issue in Germany is rising rapidly. A lot of scientific disciplines are rediscovering the issue but the interdisciplinary is only at the beginning. Research is restricted to fields of public interest in which private sponsors can be found. They are mainly old people and children and not so much people with disabilities or prisoners. The same is for publications. They are placed not in scientific publications but in more common in general interest magazines. Thus the issue loses scientific seriousness.

Current development concerning dogs in AAA and AAT

With the growing number of dogs in animal assisted therapy the stakeholders came to the conclusion that general quality standards were needed to reach sustainable recognition and acceptance of therapy-dog-teams. Especially since expressions like “Therapydog” and “Therapy-dog-team” are not protected terms. Around 2000 a lot of associations, institutes and other stakeholders started working on criteria for training, forms of training and examination guidelines. But a common basis till today couldn’t be established. This is due to the fact that the scene is split up into small initiatives- as a result they don’t know each other or don’t talk with each other, an atmosphere of competition is prevailing. The first network in Germany was established in 2005 the “Forschungsgruppe TiPi” (animals in pedagogy) at the curative university of Cologne. This is a first national initiative, whose concept can be a basis and role model for further animal assisted therapy areas. The need for international and national exchange led to first transnational symposiums, for example in 2005 a first symposium of experts from Germany, Austria and Switzerland was held. The declared goal was to intensify the horizontal dialogue and exchange between scientific institutions. The first European umbrella association was also founded in 2005. The “European Society for Animal Assisted Therapy” (ESAAT) wants to harmonize quality



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standards in animal assisted therapy throughout Europe. Common minimum requirements of training and competence shall also be established on the Brussels level. Because of differences concerning various aspects, especially quality management of training standards and their structural organization and implementation some of the members split to form another international organization in 2006 called “International Association for Animal Assisted Therapy” (ISAAT).

Research

Dr. Anke Prothmann, did ten years of research on animal assisted therapy at the children and youth psychiatric clinic of the University Leipzig. She has published several studies on the issue. A 2010 study on the status of animal-assisted interventions in pediatric hospitals in Germany shows the following results.

Objective & Method

330 clinics and departments of pediatrics in Germany were asked to participate. We developed a multiple choice questionnaire and addressed it explicitly to the chief physicians and clinic directors as they play an important role in the integration of AAI in a clinical setting. The questionnaire contained 23 items pertaining to existing application of animals in any therapeutic context, possible objections and barriers to the implementation of animals in pediatric hospitals and individual information.

Results

229 (71,1%) institutions responded, 8 questionnaires returned due to delivery problems. In 2009 only 38 hospitals (11,8% out of 322 clinics) offer animal-assisted interventions for their patients. But in contrast to this poor result 89,5% of the responding clinic directors and head physicians estimate strong positive effects of AAI on the patients. 58,3% assume also valuable effects on the parents. We also asked the raters to assess the efficiency of animal-assisted programs in their clinic if available. 44,7% of the chief physicians evaluated the interventions as medium and 36,8% as highly effective. 5,3% could not assess the effectiveness of AAI. Dogs and horses are predominantly used species in animal-assisted interventions, 82,5% after tests



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concerning their attitude as therapy assistance animals. 70% of them had a specific training before. Nearly 80% are under constant veterinary control.

82,5 % of the participating hospitals responded that they don't use animals or pets currently. But out of these 39,6% of clinic directors are principally interested in AAI. For clinicians and managers the most relevant obstacles were 1st hygienic concerns, 2nd additional burden for the clinical staff and 3rd potential health risks, such as allergies and injuries. 62,5% of the chief physicians who were principally interested in AAI wish more information about AAI, whereas 69,0% of those clinicians who are principally not interested in AAI were also not interested in further information.

Conclusion

- Currently (2009) only 11% of all children's hospitals in Germany offer animal-assisted interventions for their little patients. Although it should be stressed that in children's clinics there is a strong interest in offering AAI in these facilities. Nearly all responding clinic directors (89,5%) assume strong beneficial effects on their little patients, parents, and medium effects on the staff.
- 40% of clinic directors without AAI currently are interested in more information about AAI. Individual pet ownership of clinic directors (and the resulting individual attitude towards pets) is highly significantly associated with the availability of AAI in clinical settings.
- To increase acceptance of AAI among pediatricians in children's hospitals scientific evidence of AAI should be published preferably in main scientific journals for the respective field (e.g. pediatric journals).²

Another study from 2005 about animals in psychiatric pediatric hospitals has come to the following conclusions:

² Prothmann A & Tauber E: Pets in pediatrics – current status of animal-assisted interventions in pediatric hospitals in Germany, 12th International Conference on Human-Animal Interactions, IAHAIO, Stockholm 2010.





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The use of an animal as a co-therapist for diagnostic or interventional processes taking place in abundance that exceeded expectations. However, a lack of basic guidelines for animal-assisted therapies can be observed. Against the backdrop of a universal content orientation of criteria that should apply for any therapeutic approach, it appears that half of the facilities that meet these are quite little. It is also important with regard to the protection of patient and animal in therapy seems to be a special training of the animals. In about two thirds of the animal based operating facilities this is available, but mostly isolated for horses. Even if an aptitude of the other animals is probably given these qualifications, in terms of quality, at least for large animals and dogs seem desirable. Overall, on the basis of the number of persons, which advocated for the integration of animals in their own facility, a growing openness to the subject can be registered, although a number of barriers prevail for which in other places solutions already have been found. Positive note in this context is that the therapeutic efficacy of a human-animal interaction is provided in any response of the theoretical advocates in question. So the conclusion is permissible that the limits exist in the implementation framework and economic factors. This shows what amount of information is still necessary in order to achieve a broader acceptance of animal-assisted therapy and generally the effectiveness of a human-animal interaction, so that the survey has met our expectations. ³

“In addition to the need for further research, we recommend based on the identified demand the implementation of further qualifying training also within public education, and the establishment of networks of information and / or counseling.” ⁴

³ Henning K, Reschke K, Ettrich C, Prothmann A: Tiere in der stationären Kinderpsychiatrie- eine Bestands- und Bedarfsanalyse in Deutschland, 4th Research Festival of Life Sciences, University of Leipzig 2005.

⁴ Dr. Klaus Fitting Dahlmann, Dipl. Heilpäd. Stephanie Reuter: Perspektiven Tiergestützter Pädagogik und Therapie, , Forschungsprojekt TiPi, Universität Köln, 2005.





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2.2 Italy

The use of pets for assisted activities has been recognized as an official care with the President of the Council of Ministers Decree on the 28 of February 2003.⁵ This Decree has established for the first time in the history of our country the role that an animal can have in the emotional life of a person and the therapeutic value of pets. Nevertheless, in Italy there is currently no specific legislation on the subject, although there have been some initiatives at regional levels. This legal gap has led to a plethora of initiatives that use animal for therapeutic purposes.

The definition of worth methodological tools and guidelines regulating such practices is needed by all professional groups working in this field in order to safeguard both human health and the welfare of animals used in therapies. It should be emphasized that the people involved are most frequently represented by the elderly or children, particularly vulnerable and in need of customized interventions, especially in the case of specific diseases. In Italy today the situation is extremely heterogeneous. There is no clear legal definition regarding the procedures and minimum requirements necessary to start activities with animals. This is due to the fact that it is up to the single regions to issue laws and rules about it. This led to the creation of a heterogeneous landscape of workplace self managed and often self certified, with operational methods often very different from each another.

At the same time, the already existing training is neither coordinated nor regulated. Moreover the information regarding the AAI is also still insufficient and the scientific research is just at the beginning.

The therapeutic/educational employment of animals started in Italy 20 years ago from the European and USA researches of the '60. There is no exact date but it is commonly agreed to locate the Interdisciplinary Conference on "The role of animals in today's society", held in Milan on

⁵ Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri n. 51; 03/03/03, Accordo Stato-Regioni sul benessere degli animali da compagnia e pet-therapy





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December 6, 1987, as the date on which in Italy we started to talk about AAI in an official manner. From that moment on, there was a revival of cultural initiatives at various levels: International Conference "Anthropology of a passion", dedicated to the human-animal relationship and the therapeutic role of animals, Milan 1991. SISCA (Italian Society for Applied Behavioral Sciences) , organized in 1997, in Padua. A conference entitled "Pet Therapy-getting better with animals" and in 1999 in San Patrignano a conference entitled "The dog helps man - the discovery of Pet Therapy."

At the same time we are witnessing an increase in activities involving horses, dogs and dolphins and, in more recent times, even donkeys. One of the main factors that has limited the development of AAI in Italy is certainly to be found in the fact that, at least until a few years ago, the activity was carried out almost exclusively by vets, who have had the honor to lead and spread the culture of animals in teaching contexts, but have not been able to engage in an important way doctors, psychologists, etc. depositories of care, education and re-education of people.

Until a decade ago, many works have been carried out. Nevertheless they were not coordinated nor adequately disseminated and shared and this has meant that much valuable information was lost.

The first interventions made in Italy consisted of visiting schools, 56%, nursing homes for the elderly, 33%,⁶. In schools the main goal was the dissemination of knowledge in the field of animal behavior. Meetings focused on ethological knowledge of various domestic species with particular attention to dogs. Later the main objective was compounded by the need to prevent attacks by dogs and prevent dropouts through specific education in schools.

In nursing homes for elderly, the goal was to foster interpersonal relationships, support the mood and make people have a good time. Only when even doctors and psychologists began to be interested in AAI, we began to implement projects and research of a scientific nature and

⁶ Cirulli F, Alleva E. *Terapie e attività assistite con gli animali: analisi della situazione italiana e proposta di linee guida*. Roma: Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rapporti ISTISAN 2007;07/35





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experience the effectiveness of AAI in more areas and especially to pay greater attention to the AAT (animal assisted therapy).

At the same time the need to take into account the point of view of the animals emerged. It was an ethical and juridical issue but also practical. The belief that the effectiveness of therapeutic practice was linked, in an important way, to the fact that the animal involved is a positive participant and has as such benefits from the practice to the point of being able to speak of a kind of interspecies "therapeutic alliance" became more and more important.

2.3 Poland

The idea to use animals for therapies developed from the belief that they are equipped with super powers and that their spirits have enormous impact on humans and their lives. Even during the ages of societies focused on hunting and gathering animals had their own special places. We can see them on the paintings on cave walls; we know legends and myths about animals. Nearly every culture had their own sacred animal (bull, cow, cat, scarab). The first mentioning about documented animal therapy was found in 18th century. Hospitals allowed their patients to associate with animals running free on the hospital green spaces. Even Freud was using his beloved dog during therapy sessions, because patients were more relaxed and wanted to say more about what was happening to them. Today therapies with animals require specially trained staff. People working with patients need to attend special courses, studies and need to have some practice before they will work with patients individually.

Before the situation of pet therapy in Poland will be analyzed in this report there should be information about attitude of Polish society toward animals explained. That is the main background when it is about working with them, so that should be cleared as well. In our culture animals and human beings have formed all types of connections (they domesticated them, they benefited from their work on the farms, they had them for food, or for products like milk, eggs and furs), however the attitudes towards animals might be very ambiguous. One of the sign of modern societies is that animals are used in the treatments of various disorders. But different species or



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even different individuals of the same species may meet with extremely different treatment. Some people consider their home dogs and cats almost as family members, while others are able to harass the same animal only "for fun". Moreover there are people who treat animals only as a product, rather than the living beings. So from one hand today treating small animals (like dogs and cats) as a part of own family became more and more popular. Dogs and cats have special place in the house. Very often a dog sleeping with his owner in his bed is perceived as something natural. Also today the companies who produce dog and cat food, clothes for them and other utensils earn such sums of money that their income is higher than income of firms that produce the same things for people. Animal food advertising on television is starting to look like presentation of separate stories, they are prepared by high-class specialists and they absorb huge sums of money. On the other hand there are exceptions and people who are treating animals only as a work force or source of meat, fur, skins etc. But what is changing today is that we hear more about animal rights and people who fight for them and their voice is becoming louder and louder.

You can also observe a new trend in Polish society when it comes to public opinion about animal rights. It is considered that animals have the right to live in dignity, without pain and in conditions that provide a peaceful existence. Pets are defended from violence, we can hear about court cases against those who mistreat animals. Watchdogs that are staying outside have the right to be provided with a shed and food. Farm animals must have access to water and food, and should be kept in barns or stables for them. The cattle and chickens which are breed for meat have to be killed in as humane manner as it is possible. We can observe the increase in numbers of laws and legal requirements when it comes to animals, also legal cases for abusing dogs, cats or horses. Animal rights were formerly identified with the care of them, which does not fully exhaust all evidence of this phenomenon. It's not just about protection against suffering, but also about the change of old beliefs within the society.

The Animal Assisted Therapy in Poland is still treated as something new and people do not have any strong opinions in favor or against this kind of practices for treatment of children and other groups of people who need such therapy. Before the full analysis of AAT/AAA in Poland will be started here will be presented what polish society thinks about animals today and what were



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the changes in that aspect during last years. That is one of the aspects which we should be proud of.

It is important to present the vision of polish society because different countries might treat animals in different ways which influence the usage of animals in all kinds of therapies. It should be remembered that animal therapy is based on human-animal relationship. Such relation should be based on certain principles and traditions that differ my depending on the country.

Analysis of different studies conducted in Poland concerning animals brought really interesting results. For example CBOS, which is Public Opinion Research Center in Poland, was dealing for some time with studies about animals in our country and reports prepared by them will be one of the main sources of information analyzed in the next pages.

A research report "Respect for animal rights in Poland" prepared by Joanna Lewandowska brought a lot of interesting materials for this part of analysis. Researchers for example asked if having animals in house- a cat, a dog, a hamster, birds or fish- is god or bad for them and their owners. The response of people asked this question is presented in the figure 1.

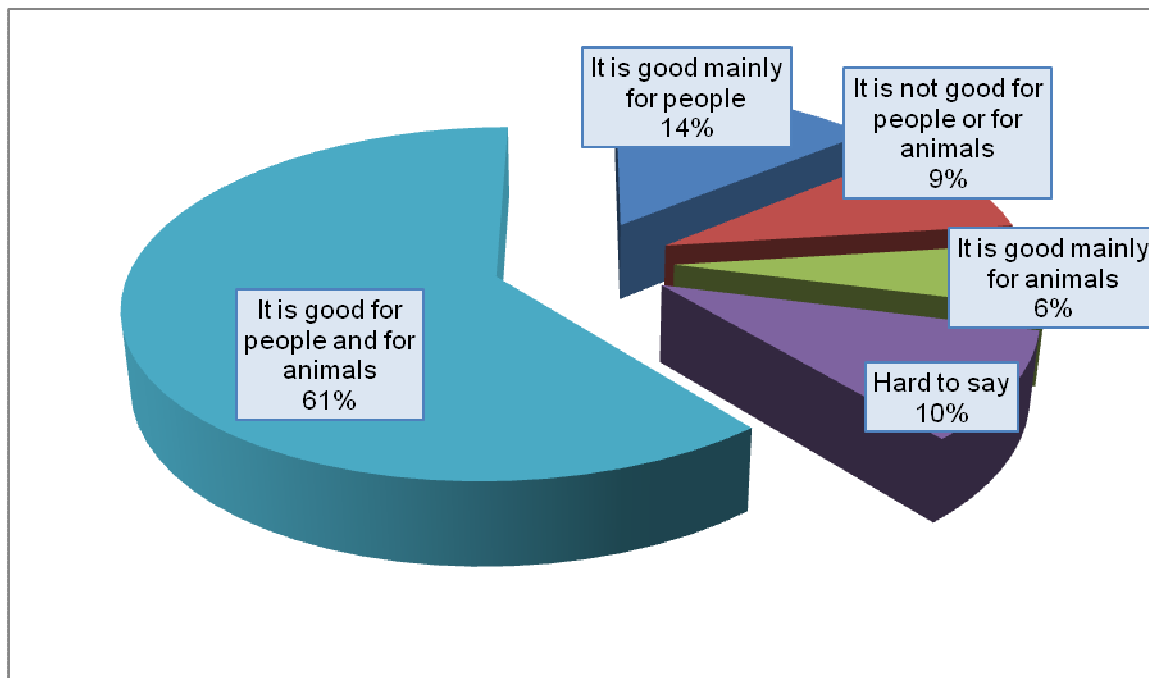


Fig. 1 Is having animals good for them and their owners? (Based on CBOS research from 2006).



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Most of people said that having animal in the house is good as well as for them as for the animals. That response was chosen by 61% of respondents. That means that people are aware of the positive influence of having animal in their home, they are aware of the impact on children and the adult part of the family. In Poland the opinion about how animals influence human physical and mental health are really popular (positive influence on blood pressure, the reduce of stress, help with establishing relationships between animals and children, the development of nurturance and responsibility among young family members).

There were people who said that this situation is good only for owners (14% of answers). It may be related to the belief that animals should live free and not in blocks and skyscrapers/tall buildings- that are the most popular form of housing in our country. They might suggest that people sometimes treat animal as a type of fad. This response as well as the one saying that it is not good for both sides is saying that animals are a wild part of the environment and that they should live in the wild.

Additionally 10% of respondents could not decide how to answer that question. Ambiguity and diversity of these responses suggests that people wonder about the phenomenon analyzed here so that is positive change.

There was also question about how they think animals are treated in Poland. What should be stressed is that more than half of the society thinks that they are treated in a proper meaning good way (however only 4% said that for sure).

A big number of 38% said that animals are treated badly. Also here 10% could not decide how to answer that question. Similarly to the question before people are starting to realize that nothing is as clear as they thought and that people have the real influence on how animals are treated. And not only domestic animals but also those living in the wild or on farms. Results of that question are presented on figure 2.



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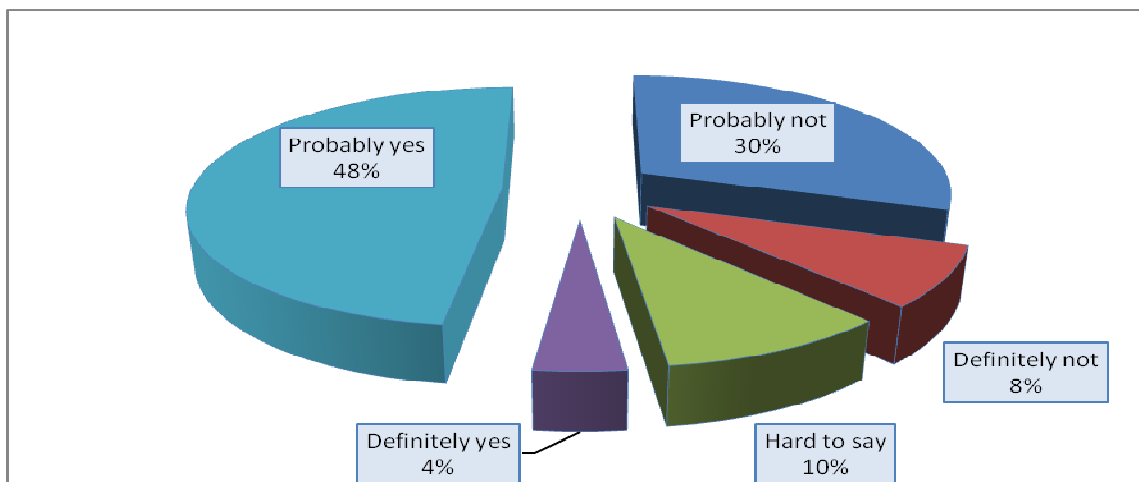


Fig. 2 Are animals in Poland treated in a good way (based on CBOS research from 2006).

One of the most interesting questions asked during that research was about how animals feel the pain. Do they feel it as human beings? Or do they feel less pain or maybe more than we do? That shows how animals and their existence are perceived in our society. Asking about something like pain stresses also the fact that today we think more about how treat animals in a proper way. That is because the awareness connected with animal rights increased. Answers to that question are illustrated by the figure number 3.

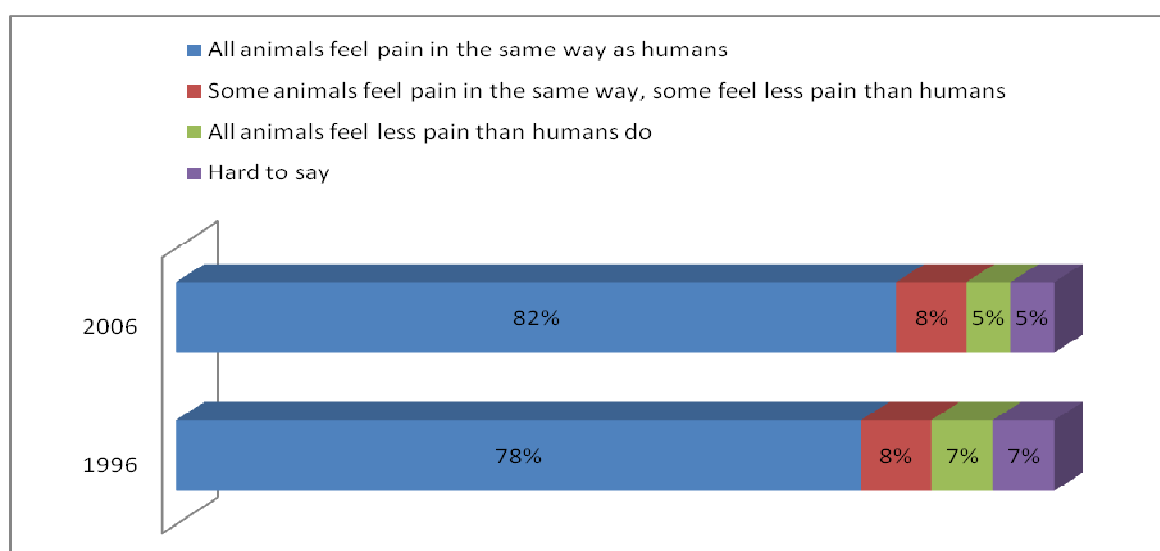


Fig. 3 Do animals feel pain as humans?





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This question was asked in 1996 and 2006 to compare the attitude for that topic. Most of people said that all animals feel pain in the same ways as humans. The good news is that their number increased during that decade. Only 8% of respondents declared that some animals feel pain in the same way, some feel less pain than humans. That number did not change during years. It might be connected with the division on domestic and farm animals and with their size.

The second good news is that number of people who think that all animals feel less pain than humans do decreased during those ten years. The same thing is when it is for people who do not know how to answer that question. It means that people start to wonder about such things and they note the fact that animals are similar to humans at least in some aspects.

One of the most controversial issues connected with animals in Poland is the one about which animals people can kill without consequences. The general law says that nobody can kill animals without a reason (for example life threatening situation). However people usually do not obey that right, especially those living outside the city, so additional restrictions had to be presented to the society. You can not kill any of the domestic animals, farm animals need to be killed in a humane manner and wild animals only during hunting seasons. Any violation of these rules is punishable by polish law.

CBOS asked one question about opinion which animals can be killed and in what situations. Respondents had to judge in which cases it is appropriate to kill animal and what kind. Answers are presented in table 1.

Table. 1 Respondents opinion about killing animals.

| In your opinion, people can kill: | Yes | | No | | Hard to say | |
|--|------|------|------|------|-------------|------|
| | 1996 | 2006 | 1996 | 2006 | 1996 | 2006 |
| | % | | | | | |
| Very sick animals, when you cannot help them | 89 | 88 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 3 |
| Dangerous animals that may be dangerous for | 69 | 72 | 20 | 20 | 11 | 8 |





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| | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| humans | | | | | | |
| Animals for their meat and skins or for other business needs | 91 | 67 | 5 | 27 | 4 | 6 |
| Animals that make damages | 62 | 59 | 27 | 28 | 11 | 13 |
| Animals without no use | 18 | 10 | 70 | 82 | 12 | 7 |
| All animals, with no special restrictions | 2 | 5 | 95 | 91 | 3 | 4 |

Also this question was asked twice, and that gave a deeper insight on presented opinions. Most of respondents said that it is ok to kill very sick animals, when there is no way to help them ease the pain. That proportion did not change during the decade. When it comes about killing dangerous animals that might be dangerous for humans answers have changed during that period. In 2006 more people said yes for killing them. One of the biggest changes is observed when looking on the next option: animals for meat and skins. In 1996 a huge number of 91% respondents declared that it is ok to kill animals for that reasons, however in 2006 there was 67% of "yes" to that question. Meaning that more and more people are aware that killing for skins is not appropriate. In our society more people- especially young one decides to engage themselves in the animal protection within this matter. We can observe also that in 2006 less people wanted to kill animals that make damages (for example in country on farms). Less people want to kill animals without any use like domestic animals. Also 91% of people said no for killing all animals with no special restriction. That brings hope, that animal situation will be better and better.

In Poland one of the controversial issues is the one connected with treating animals bred for meat. For example problems with their proper transport and way of killing are one of the main social concerns in the society. How to prepare things for them not to suffer more than it is





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needed. Earlier people did not consider such topics as important, and they did not try to ensure humane transport or they did not think about proper way of killing animals. Today when more and more NGO's are dealing with such topics, and when they raise social awareness in that topic people are fighting for better conditions for animals.

CBOS asked if it is important that animals should be treated in humane way during transportation and in 1996 and in 2006 most of asked people said yes (figures 4 and 5). Their answers during this decade did not change much so there is a lot to do in that matter, however most of people are aware that situation of animals prepared for meat is hard and that something should be done in that area.

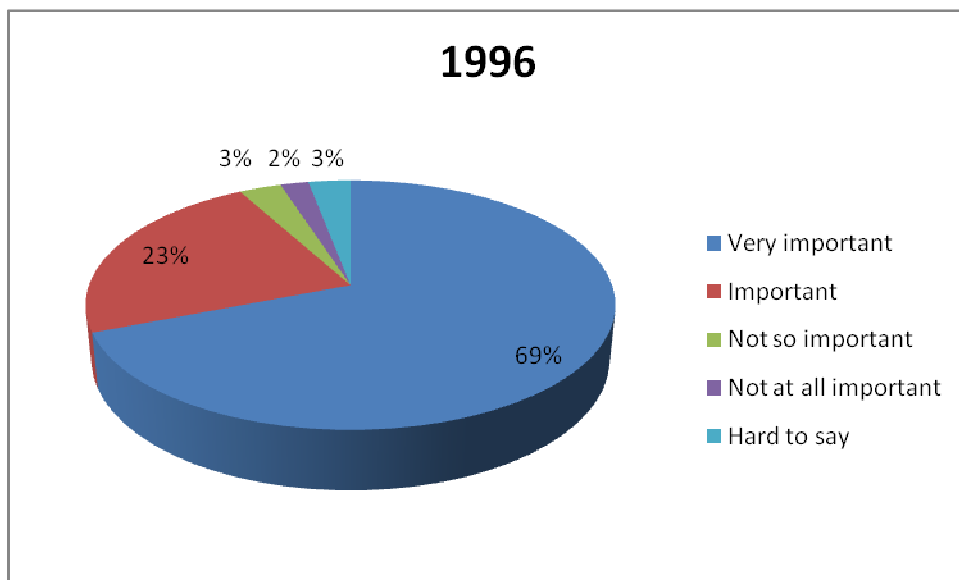


Fig. 4 Is it important to treat well animals during their transport to abattoir- questions asked in 1996?



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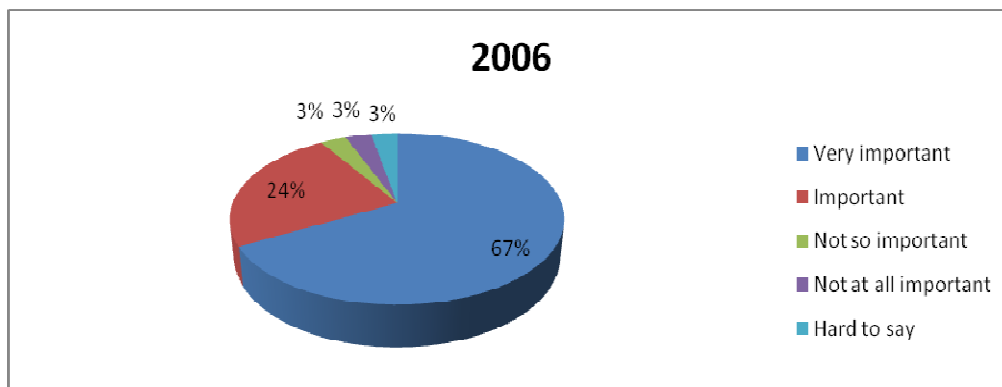


Fig. 5 Is it important to treat well animals during their transport to abattoir- question asked in 2006?

It is also interesting to find out what do people think when it is for treating other animals within the society. Answers connected with that issue are presented in table 2. Most of people who answered questions about treating animals in general said yes to keeping them in zoos (64%, only 24% said no) and drug testing on them (57%, only 30% were against such animal treatment). On the other side polish society said no for keeping animals in circuses (51% is against, 38% are accepting such situation) and for cosmetic and cleaning products testing on animals (58% against, 30% in favor). That means that our society approves testing on animals if it is necessary for our health or says “yes” for zoos where different species are kept but we say no for such inhumane things like cosmetic testing and circuses.

Table 2 Respondents opinion about treating animals in general.

| How do you think, is it right or wrong: | It is definitely ok. | It is rather ok | It is rather not ok. | It is definitely not ok. | Hard to say. |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | % | | | | |
| Keeping animals in zoos | 12 | 52 | 18 | 6 | 12 |
| Drug testing on | 13 | 44 | 19 | 11 | 13 |



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| | | | | | |
|--|---|----|----|----|----|
| animals | | | | | |
| Training and showing animals in circuses | 5 | 32 | 31 | 20 | 12 |
| Cosmetics and cleaning products testing on animals | 6 | 24 | 36 | 21 | 12 |

In the field of animal assisted therapy in Poland there are two terms used to describe the activities connected with this aspect. First is dogotherapy . This term was proposed by Maria Czerwińska and it means “natural method of treatment and rehabilitation with assistance of the dogs, with the aim of restoring health and well-being for all the people who need it, the sick, the disabled, and lonely elderly people” [Błaszczkowska, Kaźmierczak; 2008]. The other is kynotherapy which was introduced by Halina Wojciechowska, the chairwoman of the Polish Kynotherapy Association and which meant the strengthening the effectiveness of rehabilitation methods in which properly selected and trained dog is main motivator and which is carried out by a qualified therapist [Błaszczkowska, Kaźmierczak; 2008].

Those definitions stress the impact of animal in both cases, they indicate also that the whole therapy should be prepared and conducted by qualified and properly trained people. However, it is hard to find strict rules what this training should look like and who is the qualified trainer.

AAT/AAA are slowly developing in our country, however the dogotherapy and hippotherapy are the two most popular in our society. It is also connected with our landscape and structure of our country. The most popular animal therapies are connected with animals that might be kept in green areas, in the countryside, farms, lowlands that are main structures in our country. Here you can use animals whose maintenance is not so expensive (dogs, horses, donkeys, cats). The only type of AAA that is not present in our country is therapy with dolphins. For Polish conditions it is really expensive to prepare appropriate place for such therapy. A place appropriate both for patients, and animals. However, there are projects like the Upper Silesian Dolphin



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Therapy Center (Górnośląskie Centrum Delfinoterapii) which main aim is to conduct this kind of therapy. Today, they are still collecting money for the Center to build. There are also organizations who offer international rehabilitation for people interested in this kind of treatment with cooperation with Upper Silesian Center (in Ukraine for example <http://www.delfinarium.cba.pl/>).

2.4 Spain

In December 1987, Purina Foundation was created (nowadays known as Affinity Foundation) for the promotion of the role of domestic animals in society, through a campaign to raise awareness on animal dumping in partnership with the Spanish Association for Psychiatry. The program aimed mainly at individuals facing exclusion of all sorts: drug addicts, criminals or ill. In 1993, Bocalán Foundation was established, adding a scientific component through the introduction of ABA in the application of AAT and implementing AAT in intervention on autistic children. Since then, AAT begins to extend to the rest of Spain. The definition of Delta society on AAT and AAI is adopted in a generalized manner and AAI-dedicated associations appear: ANTA (National Association for Animal Assisted Therapies and Activities); AETANA (Spanish Association for Animal Assisted Therapies and Nature); AIAP (Dog Assisted Therapies Association) and a great number of companies and training centers focused on AAT exclusively, or as a complement to their activities – principally in canine schools and equestrian centers.

Domestic animals perception has changed a lot in the past 10 years. There is a greater conscience for their care and well-being that has directly influenced the impact they have on the lives of others. Similarly, seeing eye dogs and AAI, have been impacted. Schools, associations, foundations and private ventures connected with the field increased in number. 161 websites offering these therapies are found online and although many people put AAT in practice, fewer are those who have the relevant experience and some carry AAT with untrained dogs and on a voluntary basis.

A study carried out in Catalonia, where 50 polls were done, shows a wide knowledge of AAT's existence, but a lacking conscience in what it represents or how it is applied. It is directly linked to dogs, horses, dolphins and other pets.



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Similarly, several canine schools give AAT courses that give credit to the alumni training as technicians or experts in AAI and AAT. These include: Educan, Canaem, Dogtor Animal, CTAC, Humanymal and others, where Bocalán Foundation stands out. There are also universities that give such courses and there is a Master focused on AAT at the University of Seville, the UAM, Oviedo University, Zaragoza University, the UCM and the UAB.

One of the most notable changes in AAI with dogs is the evolution in canine training in Spain, with the improvement in training techniques through the clicker training and the Behavioral Analysis as well as the performance at work and the options it provides during therapy sessions. It should also be highlighted the importance that the introduction of AAI has in specialized centers of particularly vulnerable groups: centers for the elderly, centers for special education, circular compounds etc... Also, the increasing interest and support from associations of parents with underprivileged children such as the APNA (Association of Parents to Autistic Children).

2.5 United Kingdom

In the UK AAT/AAA is a goal directed intervention in which an animal meeting specific criteria is an integral part of the treatment process. The therapy is delivered and/or directed by a health or human service provider working within the scope of his/her profession. AAT is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional and/or cognitive functioning. It is provided in a variety of settings and may be group or individual in nature. The process is documented and evaluated. AAT is provided by a health or human service professional that includes an animal as part of his/her practice. The professional has identified specific goals for each client, and progress is measured and recorded (Delta Society 2006).

AAT/AAA is not new in the UK but is still carried out informally in the majority of cases, the emphasis being on social interaction and improving feelings of well being. We have limited clear strategies to take AAT/AAA forward; however there is an increase in interest by general practitioners and those seeking additional and/or alternative approaches.



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3. National bodies in charge of the AAT/AAA in each partner country

One of the main aims of this report is also to present national bodies that are in charge of the AAA/AAT in each partner countries engaged in this project. That was one of the biggest problems if it was for gaining information from partners. That is because most of them do not have any national institutions that deal mainly with animal assisted activities. This type of therapy is often treated as a part of the rehabilitation of the disabled people if it is for legal aspects in European countries. That is why if you are looking for some regulations about AAA you can find them mainly in education or health departments.

3.1 Germany

There are no national German bodies in charge of AAT/AAA. But there are several institutions which work for a recognition and accreditation of the training by health insurance institutions. Furthermore institutions offering training often refer to ISAAT, ESAAT or Delta Society as bodies providing standards of quality.

However Rainer Wohlfarth questions the usefulness of a formal recognition by the national health system. "For formal recognition "empathy", "esteem", "self-determination" or "good arguments raised" don't count, but only a clear focus on empirically sound evidence of efficacy, and strict application of evidence-based quality assurance. It is understandable that especially in the field of animal-assisted therapy such considerations deter. And here it is at a crucial decision: EITHER you follow the path of a (formal) recognition of animal-assisted therapy in the social and health care system, then the systemic "rules" need to be observed. OR one is convinced that through professionalism and quality assurance "the real peculiarities of animal-assisted interventions get lost"."⁷

⁷ Wohlfarth, Rainer: Tiergestützte Therapie zwischen Profession, Professionalisierung und Professionalität. Online: http://www.tiere-begleiten-leben.de/uploads/media/tgT_und_professionalitaet.pdf, 2012.





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Also, further conditions for the acceptance of effective animal-assisted intervention like an inter-disciplinary basic understanding, a conceptual foundation, a structural basis of the area and the testing and evidence-base of interventions are missing. A growing awareness that evaluation and quality development are needed in this area exists, but they are only a rudimentary systematically applied. This has several reasons: quality management for animal-assisted interventions must cover a very diverse range of interventions, target groups and fields of work. The structural and financial framework for performance in this area is to a large extent still unclear which means for many projects and measures that no or at least no long-term financing is at hand so that a continuous quality improvement can hardly be realized. Many projects are carried out by voluntary workers or a small dedicated group whose human resource capacity is very limited and usually does not allow for in-depth, systematic quality management. Also between the providers exists some financial as immaterial competition, which prevents the exchange of or even a joint development of instruments for quality assurance.

Another important point is the lack of empirical evidence of effectiveness. It is often postulated that scientific evidence that animal-assisted interventions are effective already exists. This must be countered by the fact that the empirical foundation of animal-assisted interventions is yet very unsatisfactory, especially for animal-assisted education. Thus, a variety of studies shows methodological problems such as small sample sizes, little meaningful research designs or lack of control groups. That a science-based discussion of this topic is necessary is shown by a variety of case studies and surveys consistently reporting promising successes.

In the absence of strong empirical evidence, target values' for the quality of animal-assisted interventions therefore need to be found in other ways: for example, by expert consensus or through the identification of best-practice examples.

Criteria, guidelines and standards

General criteria for animal-assisted interventions were developed by the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO). With the Prague guidelines for the use of animals in animal-assisted activities and therapies in 1998 first principles were



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published and at the same time they are of importance for quality management. Despite these requirements, no common understanding of quality has evolved, especially since accepted guidelines and standards are lacking. To make matters worse, there is no consensus about the terminology. LaJoie (2003) has identified 20 different definitions and 12 different terms for the field of animal-assisted interventions. In German-speaking countries, there are also many terms, such as animal-assisted therapy, animal-assisted education, animal-assisted support measures, animal-assisted interaction, animal-assisted activity, animal-assisted human care, animal-assisted special education, multi-professional animal-assisted intervention, Cane pedagogy or Canetherapy to only name a few. Even the use of the adjective 'animal based' is not consistent; 'animal-carried', 'animal-assisted' or 'animal-accompanied' are used likewise. Which criteria (e.g. basic profession, type and extent of training, intervention methods, determination of objectives; species used) must be met for applying a particular term is not clearly defined. Yet to make animal-assisted interventions a recognized way of healing or educational method including appropriate fees, it is essential that consensus within definitions is found.

For the determination of guidelines or standards legal requirements that are found in various law books are decisive. If for areas of animal assisted work a remuneration - for example by health insurance – is aimed for, then animal assisted services that are paid for by the statutory health insurance, need to reflect the state of scientific knowledge, and are provided in professional quality and economically (§ 2 SGB V). The providers, that is the experts for animal-assisted interventions, also are required to safeguard and develop the quality of services they provide (§ § 70, 135a SGB V), and adhere to the effectiveness and efficiency principle (§ 12 SGB V). In the area of special education (§ 93 Federal Social Assistance Act), the financing of such services depends on existing proof of quality assurance and documentation procedures as well as cost effectiveness.

Only in the last years first attempts to define quality criteria have been made, but a development into policies, guidelines and standards is missing, leading to weaknesses in quality assurance (e.g., incomplete process documentation, lack of indicators to determine the achievement of objectives; competing effectiveness concepts) are. Thus, one can still find animal-





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assisted interventions that make no objective definition. We cannot be state with certainty which interventions are most effective, how well the interventions are adjusted to the specific setting and the target group or how effectively they have been implemented, therefore, Currently, five different types of animal-assisted interventions can be determined (animal assisted therapy, animal-assisted education, animal-assisted human care, animal-assisted support, animal-assisted activity). According to the established principles of quality in health care and education, it is essential that clear targets exist in the form of defined support, educational or therapeutic goals. Since this is not yet considered essential for animal assisted activities, animal-assisted support and partly also for animal-assisted education these quality standards are generally not met. Here rethinking seems necessary in order to bring increased professionalism on the way.

The discussion about quality in the relatively young and dynamically developing area of animal assisted intervention is just beginning. The essence of professional practice and professional autonomy is the definition of quality criteria and standards. Here the transparency of the services, the demand suitable target group orientation, professional skills, the participation of the client, the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures and above all our animals and the human-animal relationship are in the spotlight. For the field of animal assisted intervention, the decision of pro or contra quality management is a key decision for further development: either the move towards greater professionalization - and thus a first step towards a recognition of animal-assisted professional work by the payers - or animal-assisted interventions remain a grass roots movement that will continue to lead a niche existence in the education and health care.⁸

⁸ Wohlfarth, Rainer, Bettina Mutschler & Eva Maria Bitzer : Qualitätsmanagement bei tiergestützten Interventionen. Veröffentlicht in: Strunz, Inge A. (2011): Praxisfelder der tiergestützten Pädagogik. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Hohengehren.





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3.2 Italy

In 2009, with the Ministry of Labor Health and Social Policy Decree, at the headquarters of the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie nearby Verona and Vicenza the National Reference Centre for AAI - Pet – therapy is started up.

There are many public and private organizations that have been working for several years with Pet Therapy, both in terms of training, research and implementation of activities, these include universities, associations, and health services. Some example to follow Aicote (Rome), Aiuca (Lecco), Antropozoa (Florence), ANIRE (Milan), Anucss (Rome), Auriga (Rome), Dogs For Life (Trento), Cave Canem (Padova), Center Pet Therapy Health Authority 4 "Alto Vicentino "(Vicenza), Equestrian Rehabilitation Center" Vittorio Di Capua "Niguarda (Milan), Equestrian Rehabilitation Center Villa Buon Respiro (Viterbo), Cooperative" Lesignola Laboratory (Reggio Emilia), Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Pisa), Faculty 'of Veterinary Medicine (Sassari), Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Teramo), Polo zoo-anthropological (Trieste). SIUA (Bologna). A more comprehensive list can be prepared once the census of the structures has been finished.

3.3 Poland

In Poland there is no public body that deals only with AAA. There are many public and private organizations that have been working for several years with Pet Therapy, both in terms of training, research and implementation of activities connected with animal therapy. All regulations when it comes to defining who can work as therapist with animal are prepared by Health and Education Minister. Their regulation will be described later. Education Minister describes what kind of studies people need to finish to become therapist, however they are not specifying what conditions you need to fulfill to work with animals. That is because no until 2009 there was the first recognition that pet therapist is a job and it needs legal restrictions and structuralization within the field of education and health.



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There are many private institutions that deal with animal therapy and activities for example: CZE-NE-KA, Husky Team, Dogtor, Ama Canem, Ami, Polish Hippotherapy Association or Polish Kynotherapeutic Society. They are the main body for organizing structures of working with animals and disabled people.

3.4 Spain

No public organization regulates the AAI's, although some autonomic laws exist on guide dogs to some extent. Nonetheless, there is a law at the national level of Social Corporate Responsibility by which big corporations must direct a part of their benefits to social and charity work. This can enable the inclusion of AAT through private firms that practice it in public and private centers. There are also several associations and non-profit organizations that promote and regulate these practices.

The associations that need to be highlighted, due to their activity in the field of AAT's are:

- AIAP (Association for dog assisted interventions), functions as a non-profit at the national level. Its mission is to promote and to raise awareness on AAI's with dogs and other animals. It also works to let the general public know more about dogs used in social work.
- ANTA (National Association of animal assisted therapies and activities). Non-profit. Its mission is to promote the therapeutic and scientific use of AAT's and guide dogs to help the physically and intellectually challenged as well as the elderly and people in prisons.
- AETANA (Spanish Association for Animal and Nature assisted therapies)
- Affinity Foundation



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3.5 United Kingdom

There is no national body solely for AAT/AAA research , administration, audit or quality setting that is funded from central government or otherwise. We do have a large organization that achieves a large number of animal interactions through a network of volunteers on an informal basis. They provide a comprehensive support pack for those volunteers and are currently progressing their support materials. Dogs are assessed against a set of criteria before being allowed into providing AAT. This is an unpaid service to the user.

4. National policies, strategies and initiatives implemented to promote and improve the AAT/AAA

4.1 Germany

Actors fighting for accreditation are:

- Forschungsgruppe TiPi at the University of Cologne

Students, postgraduates and employees of the department of therapeutic pedagogy. Main objective is empiric research mostly in pedagogy but open to other scientific areas.

- Deutscher Berufsverband für Therapie- und Behindertenbegleithunde e.V., professional organization aiming at fostering qualitative training, accreditation of trainer of therapy- and handicapped dogs as profession, reimbursement of AAT/AAA by health insurance.
- Therapiebegleithunde Deutschland e.V., professional organization aiming at professionalization of therapydog's use in therapy, pedagogy, psychology, medicine and other related professions. Membership is exclusive to therapists, educators, psychologists, doctors and other related social and care professions. The task is to standardize and assure quality of training, scientific accompaniment and promotion of the use of therapy assistance dogs. Furthermore recognition of the method of the use of therapy assistance



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dogs by health insurance and a legal framework and protection for the term “therapy assistance dog”.

- Interessengemeinschaft Therapiehunde e.V. (therapy dog interest group) is an association derived from Association Therapy Dogs Switzerland, both are orientated at the quality standards of Delta Society, USA, education of therapy dog teams in southern Germany.
- Berufsverband Tiergestützte Therapie, Pädagogik und Fördermaßnahmen e.V., professional organization aimed at quality insurance, development of quality standards in animal assisted work. Connection between practice and science, networking, funding, public recognition of ISAAT and ESAAT certified professionals. Professionalization of practice through development of certification system.
- ESAAT- European Society for Animal Assisted Therapy, European umbrella organization for AAT, founded 2004 in Vienna, engaged in the research and advancement of animal assisted therapy and lays great emphasis in the promotion of the therapeutic, pedagogical and autogenetic effects of the relationship between man and animal. Furthermore ESAAT was founded with the aim of setting basic rules for education and training in the field of animal assisted therapy and to standardize education and training within the EU and if possible in other countries too. Attaining professional recognition in the field of animal assisted therapy in Europe is another basic ESAAT aim.
- ISAAT, International Society for Animal-Assisted Therapy, founded in 2006 in Zurich by representatives from universities and private institutions in Japan, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland, goals are to ensure the quality control of public and private institutions which offer continuing education/training in animal-assisted therapy, animal-assisted pedagogy and other AAA to benefit people by establishing an independent approval procedure; 2) to promote official recognition of a) animal-assisted therapy as a valid therapeutic intervention, b) animal-assisted pedagogy as a proven method, and c) animal-assisted activities as a simple, but throughout the history of mankind often used activity for autogenesis (remaining healthy); and 3) to attain official recognition of persons, who have



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studied in such institutions, either as animal-assisted therapists/counselors, animal-assisted pedagogues, or as specialists for animal-assisted activities.

4.2 Italy

In Italy we started speaking about AAA/AAT in 1987 during a Conference held in Milan, but we had to wait till 2003 when the Italian government and laws spoke about the issue. With the State-Regions Agreement on the welfare of pets and pet therapy signed 6 February 2003, the Italian Regions and the State undertook to "facilitate the maintenance of contact of individuals, elderly and children in particular, whether they are residents at residential facilities, such as nursing homes and sheltered accommodation or admitted to institutions of care, with a pet they own or with animals still employable for the "pet therapy."

This agreement was then inserted into the President of the Council of Ministers Decree of the 28 February 2003, providing, each one within their own skills, the adoption of provisions aimed at the use of pet therapy for the treatment of elderly and children. The two regulations give to the Regions the responsibility to issue specific and additional laws for Pet Therapy.

In 2005, the Veneto region as the first region in Italy issues the Regional Law n. 3 dated 03 of January 2005 about "Measures on complementary therapies (smile therapy and pet therapy)" in which the pet therapy is defined as a set of activities and therapeutic practices carried out alongside the traditional medical therapies, with the use of animals. The law then goes on to other topics concerning the training of the workers, the method of application and the need to carry out a proper research.⁹

From this law, which, however, is effective only within the Veneto region, a working group was created with the aim to identify specific guidelines.¹⁰ This working group involved different

⁹ Legge Regione Veneto n. 3; 03/01/2005. Disposizioni sulle terapie complementari (terapia del sorriso e pet therapy).

¹⁰ Decreto Giunta Regionale Veneto n. 4130; 19/12/2006. Interventi assistenziali e terapeutici che prevedono il coinvolgimento di animali – Linee Guida.





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professionals like doctors, vets, psychologists, educators, professional dog trainers, etc., have the task of "defining the procedures and responsibilities for the design, prescription, administration and evaluation of assets and care practices, therapeutic and rehabilitative involvement with animals, implemented together with the traditional medicine therapies and defining operational standards applicable throughout the region related to the activities and practices with care and treatment of animals involved by applying the principles of LR 3/2005. (Regional Law) "

In 2005 the opinion of the National Bioethics Committee on the bioethical issues related to the use of animals in activities related to health and human well-being was released.¹¹ In this document four types of human-animal relationships for the purpose of human well-being and health are taken into consideration: a sick human beings living with an animal in their own home or in a nursing home; training and employment of an animal who aids a disabled person in his/her daily life; the assisted therapy with animals and the assisted activities with animals. Later, other regions have issued similar laws to give specific guidelines about the AAI: Apulia Region, the Regional Law n. 11 of 21 May 2008, the Autonomous Province of Trento, Provincial Law no. 4 of 28 May 2012; The autonomous Region of Valle D'Aosta, Resolution no. 1731 of 24 August 2012; Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Regional Law n. 154 of 22 March 2012.

In 2009, with the Ministry of Labor Health and Social Policy Decree, at the headquarters of the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie nearby Verona and Vicenza the National Reference Centre for AAI - Pet – therapy is started up . The main activities of the National Reference Centre are a) promoting the research to standardize operational protocols for the behavioral and health control of the animals used in the programs of AAI (animal assisted intervention); b) strengthening the collaboration between human and veterinary medicine to identify synergies and operational research to guarantee an improvement of the results of activities carried out in the area of interest; c) improving the knowledge about the applicability of such interventions with certain categories of patients (elderly, children with autism, mentally

¹¹ Comitato Nazionale di Bioetica (C.N.B.). Problemi Bioetici relativi all'impiego di animali in attività correlate alla salute e al benessere umani. 2005.



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disabled); d) the organization and management of training programs; e) data collection and dissemination of information to the international scientific community.¹²

In November 2011, a working group specifically established has developed a draft of national guidelines, presented at the Fieracavalli (horse fair) the same year. This document gives indication on the correct and uniform application of AAI and defines the different areas of interests. It differs and defines what is meant by AAA, AAE and AAT, underlying four basic principles which cannot be ignored: the need for a multidisciplinary team, the importance of training for workers, as well as the protection of the patient/user and the animal.¹³

4.3 Poland

As it was mentioned before there are no strict regulations if it is for legal requirements for people who want to work as therapists with animals. For example, when it is for therapy with dogs they are conducted by people with at least secondary education, or higher education connected with pedagogic and teaching children. Today very often Foundations require however from future therapist some courses organized by institutions which specialize in such therapies. Love for dogs is not all it takes.

In 1992 Polish Hippotherapy Society was founded, and that is the main body which works on legal regulations for therapists working with horses, legalization of the professions such as hippotherapy instructor (in 2009 added into the Polish main classification of occupations). To offer therapy with high quality standards it wants to train its therapists using their own original program. Validity of licenses issued after participating in it will last for 5 years. License renewal for

¹² Decreto Ministero del lavoro, della salute e delle politiche sociali; 18/06/2009. Istituzione di nuovi Centri di referenza nazionali nel settore veterinario.

¹³ Cavedon L. I progetti del CRN in relazione ai bisogni dell'utenza. Seminario L'attività scientifica e sperimentale del centro di referenza nazionale per gli IAA. Montecchio Precalcino 2012.





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the following years will require the professional activity and participation in vocational education presented by Association.

In 2011, in cooperation with the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw three-semester post-graduate studies in the field of hippotherapy started. They are dedicated for graduates of higher education connected with the field of "therapy", who hold at least one year of work experience.

To sum up, it all depends from the complexity of the structure of institutions dealing with all kind of animal assisted therapies. However, there are few regulations that should be obeyed and that are connected with the field of therapy. For example:

- The Act of 21 August 1997 on the Animal Protection- describes how animals should be treated under the Polish law.
- Polish classification of occupations and specializations- here we can check which therapists are described in Polish law (for example you can find here hippotherapy instructor, kynotherapist/dogotherapist but no others described in report).
- The Act of 27 July 2005 Law on Higher Education- main regulations for all kinds of studies.
- National Education and Sport Minister Regulation from 13 June 2003 about changing the teaching standards for various fields of study and levels of education- here we can find what standards should fulfill people after pedagogic and other similar studies to work with children.
- Health Minister Regulation from 30 September 2002 on the acquisition of the title of specialists in areas of health care- regulations for physiotherapists.
- Health Minister Regulation from 30 August 2009 on the guaranteed benefits in the field of rehabilitation- here we can find the requirements for people who want to work as therapist.

4.4 Spain

There are no policies about AAI in Spain, but there are some regional policies for the assistance dog:



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-Andalucía: “Ley 5/1998, del 23 de Noviembre, relativa al uso de perros guía por personas con disfunciones visuales en el territorio de Andalucía.”

-Cataluña: “Ley 10/19913, del 8 de Octubre, reguladora del acceso al entorno de personas con disminución visual acompañadas de perros lazarillo” “Ley 19/2009, de 26 de Noviembre, reguladora del acceso al entorno de personas acompañadas de perros de asistencia.”

-Comunidad Valenciana: “Ley 12/2003, del 10 de Abril, de la Generalitat, sobre Perros de Asistencia para Personas con Discapacidades.”

-Galicia: “Ley 10/2003, del 26 de Diciembre, sobre el acceso al entorno de personas acompañadas por perros de asistencia.”

-Illes Balears: “Ley 5/1999, de 31 de Marzo, de Perros Guía.”

-La Rioja: “Ley 1/2000, de 31 de Mayo, de Perros Guía acompañantes de Personas con Disfunción Visual.”

-Navarra: “Ley Foral 7/1995 , de 4 de Abril, reguladora del régimen de libertad de acceso, deambulación y permanencia en espacios abiertos y otros delimitados, correspondiente a personas con disfunción visual total o severa y ayudados de perros guía.”

-País Vasco: “Ley 10/2007, de 29 de Junio, sobre Perros de Asistencia para la Atención a Personas con Discapacidad.”

-Región de Murcia: “Ley 3/1994, de 26 de Julio, de los disminuidos visuales y perros-guía.”

The main role in Spain has the Therapy Congresses and Animal Assisted Education promoted by the Affinity Foundation that puts together benefits and results of AAI's. Universities, association, professionals and families pitch in this initiative.

4.5 United Kingdom

As previously mentioned we do not have a legal framework for animal interactions, only guidelines produced by charities and foundations.



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Pets As Therapy is one of these (PAT), a national charity founded in 1983. It is unique in that it provides therapeutic visits to hospitals, hospices, nursing and care homes, special needs schools and a variety of other venues by volunteers with their own friendly, temperament tested and vaccinated dogs and cats.

Since its beginning **over 22,000 PAT dogs have been registered** into the Pets As Therapy scheme. Every year some of these retire and new dogs, having first been examined and passed on health, temperament, suitability and stability grounds, join Pets As Therapy.

Today there are currently around **4,500 active PAT visiting dogs and 108 PAT cats at work in the UK**. Every week these calm friendly dogs and cats give **more than 130,000 people**, both young and old, the pleasure and chance to cuddle and talk to them. The bedsides that are visited each year number approximately half million. (www.petsastherapy.org.uk). Activities can include teaching the animal something new, engage in play with the animal and other types of appropriate interactions, learn about and practice care, grooming and feeding of the animal, and receive appropriate affection and acceptance with the animal, discuss how the animal may feel in certain situations, and learn gentle ways to handle animals.

AAA through PAT provides opportunities for motivational, informational, and/or recreational benefits to enhance quality of life through spontaneous interaction. AAA is delivered in a variety of environments by volunteers in association with animals that meet the specific criteria. AAA activities involve animals visiting people.

The same activity can be repeated with different people, unlike therapy that is tailored to a particular person or medical condition (Delta Society 2006).

Research continues to validate the work undertaken in the community by voluntary Pets As Therapy visitors and their dogs. Once dogs get through the assessment and health check procedure and each has come forward with two character references, their local volunteer Area Co-ordinator or allocated contact waits to be contacted to activate the visiting process. Area Co-ordinators maintain regular contact with every unit in their region. They also hold the list of establishments keen to be matched with a suitable new recruit when one becomes available.



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5. The Therapy Dog Trainer

5.1 Germany

The following training course for therapy assistance dog team is accredited by ESAAT and offered by F.I.T.T. (Freiburg Institute for animal assisted therapy).

Duration & Content

32 hours theory, 32 hours practical training Theoretical and practical examination and 3 accompanying assistance visits.

Theoretical content

- My job as therapy dog - training and operation
- From puppy to young dog
- Dog behavior: social behavior and communication dog behavior: learning behavior and stress
- Anatomy and first aid
- General information
- Demonstration therapy dog team in action pedagogy 1 - Kindergarten / Application AAP (animal assisted pedagogy)
- Pedagogy 2 - School / Application AAP (animal assisted pedagogy)
- Communication in therapeutical situations physical disease patterns / Application AAT
- Psychological disease patterns / Application AAT
- Law, hygiene, ethics
- Organization of AAT Practical content



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Practical content

- Acceptance of closeness and harassment
- Working under Distraction
- Exercises of closeness and distance
- Handling / behavior in and with groups
- Accustomization to unusual patterns of movement
- Accustomization to unusual environmental stimuli

Certification

differs depending on professional qualifications of the training participant :

target group 1:

all therapeutic, educational and health professionals will receive the title "certified therapy assistance dog team." Upon successful completion of the seminar

target group 2:

interested people without specialized vocational training in therapeutic and educational-medical area receive upon successful completion of the seminar the title "certified visiting dog team for therapy support activities"

The certificate must be renewed once a year through a follow-up. This is necessary because even certified dogs from accidents, injuries or illnesses may change their behavior and thus the suitability may no longer exist. The follow up can also be made in dog schools authorized by us

5.2 Italy

The animal trainer is the one who deals above all with the management of the animal within the AAI session. To be able to act in an appropriate manner requires training and a



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continuous improvement so that each project can be conceived, planned and implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible, in accordance with the user's and animal's needs. To access this training, you have to have at least a high school degree.

The animal trainer, during the training will get excellent skills with respect to the animal, both from the behavioral point of view and the well-being point of view since during the session he/she is the one mainly dealing with the management of the animal in all aspects.

In relation to the patient / user he/she is supposed to have a good knowledge of diseases. This will allow him to know how to manage him/herself and manage his/her animal in different conditions and especially what to ask the animal in relation to the specific situation. Moreover the animal trainer monitors the health and well-being of the animal, before, during and at the end of the sessions, in cooperation with the vet.

The animal trainer, should:

Knowledge: it refers to theoretical knowledge, the framework in which to place their own work;

know-how: it is the practical side, the management of the dynamics of the work settings, reading and acceptance of the emotions of the dog and people, reading the body language of the dog, how to guide the dog during the sessions;

To be: it is the ability to "be there" during the relationship, this implies a deep knowledge of themselves and the dog and the capacity to work in team.

The animal training should have a deep knowledge about:

1. In relation to the dog
 - a. the morphology of the dog;
 - b. the sensory system;
 - c. the bases for learning;
 - d. dog training fundamentals according to the relational model;



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- e. characteristics and behavioral requirements for a "social dog";
 - f. monitoring systems to detect the dog stress;
 - g. interaction between men and animals;
 - h. dog welfare;
 - i. health aspects.
2. In relation to the AAI settings:
- a. Deep knowledge of the different types of patients (disability, addictions, psychiatry, elderly, and conduct disorders, pervasive developmental disorder (autism spectrum));
 - b. Identify the activities to be undertaken to achieve the objectives of the project;
 - c. Knowledge of legal issues and insurance.
3. compared to different working environments
- a. school;
 - b. day care centers for people with disabilities;
 - c. nursing home;
 - d. home;
 - e. hospital;
 - f. external setting.

In relation to employment opportunities many associations have been created. The profiles inside these associations are different: psychologists, vets, professional educators, animal trainers, physical therapists, etc., everybody with a long experience in AAI



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5.3 Poland

The situation in Poland is very interesting, because more and more foundations and organizations are interested in developing courses and even studies connected with animal assisted activities or therapies.

As it was mentioned before in 2011, thanks to the cooperation between the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw and Polish Hippotherapy Association the three-semester post-graduate studies in the field of hippotherapy started. The main objective is to improve students' skills and acquire new ones in the field of conducting therapy with patients with various diseases and disorders.

Who can apply? Those who have completed higher education in the following areas: physical therapy (rehabilitation), medicine, nursing, physical education, psychology, pedagogy, special education, the occupational therapy and other related with therapies. Applicants should also have at least one year work experience in their field and possess a good state of health (with medical exams).

All who graduate receives a certificate of complementation of postgraduate hippotherapy studies. These studies allow people to conduct hippotherapy in different facilities. The organization of classes is as it was mentioned before divided into three semesters and includes 365 hours of teaching. Classes are conducted in the weekends, during the two-day sessions. Theoretical classes are held mainly in Saturdays and Sundays at the premises of the Academy of Physical Education owned by the HIPOTERAPIA which is a Foundation that helps disabled children. Most of the practical activities (riding camp, class inspections, and practices) in the patronage centers of the Polish Hippotherapy Association.

Classes are conducted by highly qualified specialists who use innovative programs and teaching methods (lectures, tutorials, workshops). Participation in all types of classes is mandatory. Activities and the whole studies end up with exam.



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The cost of such studies is about 8000 zloty per person. Price of the study includes also 10-day riding camp, where there are classes of the basic horse riding and the basic of working with horses.

5.4 Spain

The situation in Spain is confusing. It doesn't make a difference between the activity of professionals in the area – that have acquired their specialization in the last years, learning how to work with animals or simply including them in multidisciplinary teams – and people that practice it on a voluntary basis. As such, bad practices have arisen; making of AAI's a hobby or a way of making money. Two figures operate with AAI: the expert, qualified for the design of therapy sessions and identifying clear goal throughout the interventions and the technician, whose knowledge and experience in the training of animals is essential, he is the one responsible for training therapy dogs.

The tasks of AAI technician or trainer must be those of training the animal and work with it during the therapy sessions. For that effect, she must be very knowledgeable of the type of animal he/she is working with, in order to train it accordingly. But he/she must also know the collective of people with whom he/she is working so he/she can avoid unwanted situations and understand the task he/she is carrying out. He/she must also be fully aware of everything related to the animal's health and well-being, positive training based on the clicker method, the animal's nature, the interventions that can be done and how they can be done. At any rate, he/she is the one in charge of the animal's security during the session.

It's necessary to improve the training of therapy dog trainers in such aspects as health and well-being, training and handling. There are some wonderful professional out there, but some lack the necessary knowledge to perform well their duty. There are two types of trainer profiles: the ones who have a lot of experience with dogs and none in therapeutic interventions and the one with no experience with dogs. This leads to the point where the trainer becomes essential and must be trained accordingly.



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Although there are no legal regulations in Spain, AAI's have opened a new world to the field of therapeutic interventions. In the past years, animal well-being and canine training have been supported by many sectors of society, partly owing to their work assisting handicapped persons, the AAI's and promoting the education of domestic animals. For this reason, the role of therapy animals for AAI's has a deep importance for Spain. AAI's are beginning to be known, being a complementary part to therapy. Every year, new associations are created and AAT's are incorporated into their intervention therapies. A figure able to implement this becomes necessary.

5.5 United Kingdom

To provide safe and effective therapy the dog handler is key to the success of the intervention and almost certainly controls the range of interaction offered. To ensure a positive result certain planning needs to take place prior and during the therapy or activity session.

The main criteria are:

- Operate within agreed standards and policies for both trainer organization and the receiving organization.
- Have the ability to partnership work and work within a team.
- Pet assessment and suitability for the proposed working environment.
- Pet welfare considerations, a health and welfare check. Vaccinations, worming, fleas etc.
- How to minimize risk to the dog and monitoring signs of stress, unpredictable or aggressive behavior, excess heat, excess noise, medications (patient)
- Monitoring behavioral changes, reluctance to cooperate enter into a therapy session
- Consider the five freedoms at all times, freedom from hunger and thirst, freedom from discomfort, freedom from pain, injury and disease, freedom to express normal patterns of behavior, freedom from fear and distress.
- Ensure all health and safety law is met



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- Understanding the needs of the client group and their possible emotional and behavioral responses. These may include people who are confused, visual impairments, hearing impairments, wheelchair users, children, stroke victims, physical and /or mental disabilities, and bereavement.

The handler must also be aware of the Interaction between men and pet:

- Benefits and use of pet therapy
- How to build mutual trust between dog and handler
- Health and welfare requirements of dogs, preventing stress
- First aid for dogs
- Dog communication
- Approaches and interaction with pets
- Play, cooperation, and motivation activities.

6. Identification of best practices

6.1 Germany

Hunde begleiten Leben e.V. (dogs accompany life)

The aim of the nonprofit association is the professionalization of pet-assisted therapy and education through:

- Qualification of human-dog teams for social therapy services
- Project evaluation of the effectiveness of animal-assisted therapy and education.



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- Project evaluation of behavioral development of animals in therapy and education
- Education and training in animal-assisted therapy and education

Interdisciplinary - The initiative for this association is supported by members, which form an interdisciplinary team from various disciplines of health and other social services.

The activities of the association are:

- Animal-assisted therapy for children with obesity
- Animal-assisted therapy for canophobics
- practice days at schools
- Talks on animal assisted therapy and education
- Public relations (cooperation with radio, television, magazines)

The Freiburg Institute for Animal-Assisted-Therapy (FITT) was founded in August 2007.

Objectives of the Institute are:

- implementation of education, training and continuing education in the field of animal-assisted therapy and education
- Information on animal-assisted interventions through lectures and hands-on days
- Research on animal-assisted interventions
- Establishment of practical projects

The Institute is supported by the charitable organization "dogs accompany life - assistance dogs Freiburg"

6.2 Italy

The best practices are aimed at raising the quality of professional services and addressing key issues such as: interdisciplinary, action plan, constant monitoring of human health and animal welfare in the human-animal interactions (MOR Regional Operational handbook). This means that involved workers have to have a deep knowledge and be expert in the issue,



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planning and teamwork, integration between the knowledge of the dog trainer and the referent of intervention.¹⁴

The ongoing projects in Italy are:

- three-year research project on the prevention of bullying. Proposer: Ass. Gli Amici di Sari, Bolzano
- Experimental project on eating disorders (multicentric). Bodies involved: S. Orsola Bologna, Emilia Region, Faculty of veterinary Bologna, Veneto, Lazio, Umbria Regions.
- "The other half". Animals Assisted Therapy session for the guests of Day Centers (multicentre). Proposer: ULSS 4 "Alto Vicentino"
- All for one, one for all (multi) AAE session for primary and secondary school pupils Proposer: ULSS 4 "Alto Vicentino"
- "the third age" (multicentre) Animal Assisted Therapy for elderly of nursing homes for. Proposer: ULSS 4 "Alto Vicentino"
- Zoo-anthropology and school: a donkey as a teacher. proposer: Ass Un asino per amico – Trento.
- Experimental project of rehabilitation 'ADHD through the equestrian rehabilitation. Body will: Spinal Unit Niguarda, Milan
- Pilot study of rehabilitation with the donkeys during childhood. Proposer: Giovanni di Dio Fatebenefratelli, Roma
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the animal Assisted Activities session at the clinic of the University Hospital of Dentistry Meyer of Florence. Proposer: University Hospital Meyer, Ass. Antropozoa, Firenze;
- Animal Assisted Session in the rehabilitation of cognitive-behavioral disease Alzheimer's. Proposer: Department of Neuroscience and Maternal-Infant Sciences, Sassari

¹⁴ Cirulli F. Linee guida nazionali. Convegno nazionale Linee Guida Nazionali per gli Interventi Assistiti con gli Animali. Fieracavalli, Verona. 2011





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- Animal Assisted Therapy in the treatment of headache in children. Proposer: Salesi Hospital Foundation, Ancona
- Pilot project on the detection of the possible therapeutic effects of Animal Assisted Activities (AAT) in ex-preterm children (28-32 SG) who are 2 years old with limited mobility / attention problems with minor brain dysfunction. Proposer: ULSS 4 "Alto Vicentino"
- Study on the improvement of adaptability to the context and specific social skill learning in individuals who have suffered abuse and mistreatment through Animal Assisted Therapy with the dog (AAT). Proposer: C.E.R.R.I.S, Verona
- Experimental project of rehabilitation of children with cerebral paralysis by equestrian session. Promoter: Spinal Unit Niguarda, Milan
- Observational study on improving adaptability to the context and learning of specific social skills in people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in childhood followed in a Center of Diagnosis, Care and Research through Animal Assisted Activity with a dog (AAT). Proposer: Centre for the diagnosis, treatment and research for autism, Ulss20, Verona
- A research project focused on children with attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Proposer: Città degli Asini, Padua

6. 3 Poland

In Poland one of the most popular ways of conducting a project concerning AAA/AAE/AAT is to use European Union Funds and create individual project focusing on one of the target groups. To present how it is organized we would like to describe project prepared by the Friend Foundation- Foundation to assist the disabled. This project was called "The Pet Therapy as a way of supporting the development of a child with disabilities" and it was conducted from 1.09.2008 up to 30.11.2010. The target group was children with disabilities from Mazowieckie Region.

The main aim was to support disabled children through a general improvement according to their physical and mental dysfunction/disease and to give them an opportunity to reduce the isolation from the external environment, which in the future will limit their exclusion from social



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life. Animal Assisted Therapy with dogs was the main method of the work with children. Dog therapy Classes were held in special kindergartens (4 institutions were chosen), Association for People with Emotional Problems in Warsaw, Polish Association for the Mentally Handicapped in Warsaw and Children's Aid Society of the mentally handicapped from the Special Education Centre based in Pruszkow. Two of the kindergartens were specializing with concrete disabilities and they were for visually impaired children and mentally handicapped children, others dealt with all kind of mental, motor and emotional disorders. At the same time in the centre of the Foundation there were special meetings organized called "Good Night Show" aimed at disabled children not attending kindergartens and special integration.

The project includes measures to improve the situation of disadvantaged groups, particularly through the creation of opportunities for the most vulnerable or disadvantaged social groups and by supporting initiatives to increase social participation of marginalized groups and disadvantaged. The goal was to improve the functioning of the musculoskeletal system of children, improve cognitive functioning (including vision, hearing, memory, concentration, and attention, visual and auditory coordination) and to improve their ability to communicate.

The quantitative indicators of the project were:

- amount institutions participating in the project – 7,
- number of children enrolled for therapeutic activities (in kindergartens)- 220,
- number of children enrolled for therapeutic activities (in Foundation)- 20,
- number of hours of therapy conducted in kindergartens- 884,
- number of hours of therapy conducted in the center of the Foundation- 28.

Project had three main coordinators (project coordinator, administrative and office worker, and worker dealing with financial matters) and nine therapists with different education background:

1. pedagogue, therapist dealing with sensory integration;
2. special education teacher, specialization: pedagogy with intellectual disabilities;
3. physiotherapy technician, specialization: kinesytherapy, physical therapy and massage;



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4. special education teacher, conducts dog therapy classes;
5. psychologist, specialization: sensory integration;
6. psychotherapist and trainer, specialization: psychological therapy and education of youth and adults. Conducts individual and group therapy, workshops and educational training and development;
7. polish language teacher;
8. special education teacher, specialization: speech therapist;
9. trained musician, specialization: dog therapy and music therapy.

There were also 9 dogs involved in the project. It is said that project ended with success and there were next sessions planned apart from organized projects.

From the Dogtor Foundation (www.fundacijadogtor.org):

"Revalidation, rehabilitation, therapeutic, educational activities: dog therapy by conducting classes in Dogtor Foundation and cooperating institutions"

The main objective of the task is to support the wider process of rehabilitation of the disabled. Dogotherapeutic activities include assisting the rehabilitation of disorders of all types: physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, cognitive and social.

The activities are aimed at disabled people in Gdynia: the mentally disabled, with Down Syndrome, Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, cerebral palsy, ADHD. Part of the activities is addressed to people socially maladjusted, threatened with pathologies and emotional disabilities, hospice patients.

The project activities are co-financed by the City of Gdynia.

"The dog - my safe friend"



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The program includes educational activities in schools and kindergartens in the Tri-City and surrounding areas.

Field classes and school of donkey riding in agricultural farm in Bochnia (www.bochnia-parlament.com).

Course for becoming hippotherapy instructor (Polish Hippotherapy Society)
http://www.pthip.org.pl/oferta/informacja_o_kursach/

Hippotherapy Project for disabled children 2005-2009 (Polish Hippotherapy Society)
<http://www.heiferpoland.org.pl/>

Hippotherapy - the possibility of joint education, project from Leonardo da Vinci (2010-2012)

„Dog therapy by supporting the development of a child with disabilities„- series of classes about dog therapy for people in mazowieckie region (2008-2010). Classes conducted by Friend-Foundation supporting people with disabilities.

6.4 Spain

Project “Solidary Tracks” by the Bocalán Foundation and Solidaridad Carrefour Foundation, in collaboration with FEDER. It is a great scale project in which participate 131 children all over eight centers in Spain, in small groups from five to ten children, depending on the number of technicians who work during the sessions. They work with ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) with children who have Down Syndrome and Autism. Foresight for future recording of the session and the whole process is being currently under development. The centers are:

-El Molino, Cantabria

-Padre Apolinar, Cantabria



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- ANFAS, Navarra
- ANA, Navarra
- Rosa Montero, Madrid
- APAMA, Madrid
- PEOTEGD, Madrid
- Maria Corredentora, Madrid

One person coordinates the project, six people coordinate the AAT in the centers as experts, ten people working with dogs as technicians and twenty-eight people working as volunteers giving assistance to the teams.

The objectives are: to increase the concentration and alertness time span, motor imitation; impulse control; sensory stimulation; following of instructions; movement coordination; physiological activity reduction; receptive and expressive language; interaction with others; corporal scheme; daily life activities and the learning of new sequences of actions.

6.5 United Kingdom

In the UK there are several organizations that offer AAT and AAA with varying policies and quality control procedures. Although at present there is little joined up working and thinking to provide a key coordinating body. This very much reflects the range of services they offer, one may be very informal and fun whereas another may be a one to one intense session with somebody suffering deeply emotional or behavioral issues.

The best practice on an informal but structured framework is that of the PAT dogs' project. They provide a UK guidelines handbook with 24 fact sheets from application to enter onto their service, to planning visits and interactions. www.petsastherapy.org.uk

There are also many private therapists who operate on a more clinical level with backgrounds in human psychology and behavioral conditions. These tend to be paid for services with clients being on a longer term therapeutic program. Other projects/research include:



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- WELLIES. Improving wellbeing through interaction with plants, animals and the countryside. www.growingruralenterprise.co.uk
- Animals in mental health. http://www.tsh.scot.nhs.uk/Care_and_Treatment/docs/PARS%20-%20Animals%20as%20Therapy%20booklet%20-%20Aug%2007.pdf
- Dogs for the disabled <http://www.dogsforthedisabled.org/>
- Nurture Dogs <http://www.nurture-dogs.co.uk/>



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Conclusions

There is no doubt that many skills can be learned, improved and developed with the assistance of therapy with animals. Patient rehabilitation can be encouraged by such activities as walking or running with a dog or throwing objects for animals to bring them back. Many motor skills may be developed by petting, grooming, or just by feeding different animals. Patient communication skills are encouraged and improved thanks to animal response to either verbal or physical commands. Activities such as writing or talking might also be developed through the animal-human contact. Just the creative inclusion of an animal in the life or therapy of patient can make a major difference in the patient's comfort, progress and recovery from his illness. The only problem is when it comes to the fact who can be a therapist working with pets, how to choose proper pet and how to help and organize their cooperation.

Situation of AAA/AAT in European countries is still crystallizing and developing. It is connected with the attitude of the society towards animals and their functions in the society and from the practical use of therapy and its openness to all interested patients. It must be said that AAA/AAT in most of cases are not organized in any way. Legal aspects connected with that topic are really a matter of convention. The most relevant actors are NGO's and private institutions created mainly by animal lovers who believe in the healing feature of animals and those people who want to help patients for which there is no solution in traditional medicine. Those actors are the most involved in the work connected with legalization and formal structuralization of AAA/AAT. They want to work out and adopt common rules and restriction that can be used by all engaged in this form of therapy all over the world.

In most of presented cases there are no strict national policies, strategies connected with future development of animal assisted activities. There are only regional acts or acts connected with therapy itself that are the frame thanks to which people working with animals know how to function in the relation therapists-patients. However today it is more and more popular to talk



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about the legal structuralization of AAA and that topic is treated as main subject during recent conferences about therapies.

Although animal assisted therapy has been considered a new way of conducting therapies, way to deal with various disorders there has been criticism connected with the effectiveness of the process. Some doctors, scientists consider it as a temporary fix. They point out to the lack of longitudinal data or research that might say if there is evidence for long term improvement in patients undergoing the therapy. There are also discussions if the type of the animal is also important and has some influence on the patients. Some doctors say that leaving children with animals such as dolphins or horses is not a good way of healing because those animals are especially dangerous (dolphins with their environment, horses with their size and strength).

The other side of such therapies is connected with the fact that animals are suffering from continuous work and from working with people who might not know how to handle them (because of their conditions). Animals are deprived of their natural environment and are forced to work and earn money for people who have no experience with therapies etc. That is why there should be some legal way of ensuring proper therapies that fulfill all quality and legal requirements within each country where such therapies are conducted.

People working within foundations and NGO's have a lot of ideas about how the therapy dog trainer profession should look like and what regulations should be connected with this type of work. The main aim for future actions is to work out the best strategy to organize it in such a way that people all over the Europe could benefit from it. Courses should be adopted in all countries in similar structure, length and theoretical background.

The best example for the success of AAA/AAT is the presentation of best practices from all countries engaged in Te.D project. That shows that people working with animals as therapist have enormous knowledge and experience that must be developed in international cooperation. Using ideas from partner should be the basis of our work today because the difference in our



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experiences is the best source of innovation and creative ideas. That is the best way to eliminate weak sides of courses and studies on AAA/AAT.



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