Exploring the need: Case studies in sterilization policy and practice around the world

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• Zoonotic disease
  • Rabies
  • Leishmaniasis
  • Hydatid disease (echinococcus)

• Safety: Dog bites

• Nuisance

• Welfare
  • Poor physical condition
  • Inhumane management (culling, inadequate shelters)
Where are they coming from (and what should we do about it)?
"Overpopulation"
Stray dogs?
Standard tools for dog population management (DPM)

- Vet clinics
- Rabies vaccination
- Sheltering
- Adoption and fostering
- Sterilization (TNR)

- Capacity building
- Rescue and rehabilitation
- Campaigning/legislation
- Education and outreach
- Behavior Change campaigns
Standard tools for dog population management (DPM)

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Key Questions to target sterilization activities

- What are we trying to achieve?
- Which animals are our target?
- Where do they come from?
- Will they live long enough for sterilization to be worthwhile?
Norway

“It’s not the dog’s need”

“Neutering can never be a substitute for the proper training of the dog”

- Low dog:human ratio
- Virtually no shelter euthanasia
- More dog-dog aggression?
The need:
• Owner-directed solutions
• Reversible
• Nonsurgical

“It’s not the dog’s need”

“Neutering can never be a substitute for the proper training of the dog”
Bali, Indonesia

“People don’t even notice dogs’ suffering. They walk right past.”

- Endemic rabies, tourist complaints, stray dogs on beaches and streets
- 3% unowned “stray” dogs
- 40-70% households own at least 1 dog
- Skewed sex ratio toward males in some areas
- Few small animal vets
- No safe sterilization training at local vet school
Bali, Indonesia: Response to dog welfare intervention

After 1 year of intervention
6.8% sterilized

• Roaming dog density reduced
• Skin conditions reduced by 17%

• Citizens who believe owners are responsible for caring for a sick dog:
  47% → 92%

• Citizens who disagree with culling:
  66% → 90%
Bali, Indonesia: Response to dog welfare intervention

The need:
• Reduces unwanted breeding behaviors
• Can be combined with other priority treatments
• Easy to train, maintain standards
• Permanent and reversible options ideal
• Few side effects requiring veterinary oversight
• Assistance with drug registration
Bosnia & Herzegovina

- 3-16% dogs sterilized
- 30-52% dogs allowed to roam freely
- Many dogs owned for hunting, herding
- No-kill law
- 22-50% puppies reported abandoned
- 28:72 female:male ratio amongst owned dogs

Your shelter isn’t the answer, my sterilization campaign is!

We want to be self-sufficient, but what are you going to give us?
Bosnia: Response to “Humane Community Development”

- All communities selected sterilization as a priority intervention
  - Mostly large animal vets
  - Limited access to gas anesthesia
  - One vet per community

- Sterilization clinics serve as source of motivation and community energy
Bosnia: Response to “Humane Community Development”

The need:
- Long-lasting: 8+ yrs
- Does not reduce working drive
- Requires little veterinary follow-up
- Cheaper than surgical sterilization – community events possible
- Can be done by a single trained professional
India

- Unowned dogs breed successfully on the street
- Endemic rabies
- Dog-feeding by locals common
- Little or no veterinary care provided to most street dogs
India: Mixed success with ABC-R

- Reduced dog density in locations of consistent TNR effort over long period
- Improved skin and body condition of street dogs reported
- Reports of improved human-dog interaction
- Reduced maternal aggression
- Safety/Quality concerns in TNR operations
India

The need:
• Effective, permanent sterilant
• Can be administered with rabies vaccine
• Reduces breeding behaviors
• Easily administered safely (no holding period)
• Economical
What issues might be impacted by sterilization activities?

✓ Community conflicts and security concerns
  • By improving street dog health and overall appearance
  • By reducing dog-dog aggression (maybe) and maternal aggression
What issues might be impacted by sterilization activities?

✓ Community conflicts and security concerns
✓ Human attitudes toward roaming/problem dogs
  • By demonstrating communal activity to solve “the problem”
  • By improving dog appearance and desirability
What issues might be impacted by sterilization activities?

✓ Community conflicts and security concerns
✓ Human attitudes toward roaming/problem dogs
✓ Community engagement
  • By galvanizing volunteerism around a visible activity/effect
  • By symbolizing “seriousness” of intervention
What issues might be impacted by sterilization activities?

- Community conflicts and security concerns
- Human attitudes toward roaming/problem dogs
- Community engagement
- Reduce wildlife conflict
  - Reduce interbreeding opportunities with wild canids
What issues might be impacted by sterilization activities?

- Community conflicts and security concerns
- Human attitudes toward roaming/problem dogs
- Community engagement
- Reduce wildlife conflict
- Improve population stability
  - Improve owner retention by improving dog condition & desirability
  - Improve street dog longevity
  - Reduce ready supply of puppies creating “replacement” mentality (?)
What issues might be impacted by sterilization activities?

- Community conflicts and security concerns
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- Community engagement
- Reduce wildlife conflict
- Improve population stability
- Disease control
  - By stabilizing vaccinated population
What issues might be impacted by sterilization activities?

- Community conflicts and security concerns
- Human attitudes toward roaming/problem dogs
- Community engagement
- Reduce wildlife conflict
- Improve population stability
- Disease control
- Improving human-animal relationship
  - Improve dog desirability
  - Reduced roaming which may decrease opportunity for human-animal bond formation
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- Community engagement
- Reduce wildlife conflict
- Improve population stability
- Disease control
- Improving human-animal relationship
Impacts

✓ Does the planned intervention address the community’s key concerns?
✓ What additional measures are needed to ensure the efficacy of the investment?
✓ Do owners understand the impact of treatment?

Targets

✓ Which dogs are targeted and why?
✓ Who can give consent and provide follow-up?

Safety & Feasibility

✓ Is it safe?
✓ Does it require oversight or follow up?

Sustainability and community engagement

✓ Who will sustain the effort?
Thank you!