

## THE ROLE OF PET OWNERSHIP IN PRESERVING MENTAL HEALTH AMONG OLD PEOPLE

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### Abstract

The overall object of the study was to find out whether older people with poor material and psychological situation who own cats show better mental health and higher levels of self-fulfillment compared with similar people who do not own cats. Material and psychological deprivation was assessed on a three-point scale (short, medium, and, long). Two additional scales were used, one Attitudinal Scale consisting of 5 levels and a Scale of the Ability to Cope with Life Difficulties – SACLD. The sample consisted in 75 cat owners and 50 non-cat-owners. All respondents were aged 62 – 86 years, living alone, with low incomes. Results show that cat-owners obtained better scores on the mental health questionnaire and presented a more flexible attitude towards the deprivations generated by the economical conditions.

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