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Animal-Assisted Therapy in Long-Term Care: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

Patients residing in long-term care facilities face many changes and challenges. Many seniors have grown up with pets as part of their daily lives, and animals have provided them with companionship as they age. The purpose of this literature review is to assess the state of the science related to the use of animal-assisted therapy (AAT) with canines in long-term care facilities and their effect on the physical and mental health of residents. The introduction will give an overview of why this issue is of importance to Nursing. Next, the methodology section will cover the databases used in our search; our search terms (canine, dog, animal assisted therapy, nursing home, geriatric long term care, long term care, stress, depression, social isolation, withdrawal, grieving, loneliness, and anxiety); and the criteria used to select or reject the articles used in the literature review. Thirdly, the discussion section will discuss theoretical frameworks, the instrumentation used during data collection by the various researchers, sample sizes and limitations of the studies. The discussion section will also give a brief summary of the findings in the research articles used in this literature review. Lastly, the conclusion will show that the results of animal-assisted therapy on the physical and mental health of long-term care residents are promising, but inconclusive; further study is needed to prove the efficacy of animal-assisted therapy.
References


