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A dental chew containing L-theanine (VEGGIEDENT® Zen) can help relax dogs when given before a stressful event: A double-blinded, cross-over study

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VEGGIEDENT® Zen (Virbac, Carros, France) is a new dental chew combining the features of a dental chew (VEGGIEDENT® FR3SH™, Virbac, Carros, France) with the addition of L-theanine, known to support relaxation. In order to assess the relaxing effect of these chews, a double-blinded, cross-over study was performed on 30 owner's dogs prone to stress during visits to the veterinarian. At the first visit to the vet, the owner had to fill out a questionnaire concerning the behavior of the dog to get a general stress score (based on 19 different behavioral signs scored from 0 to 5) and an anxiety score (0 - 5) during four events: car ride to the clinic, visit and exam, procedures (blood pressure, heart rate, sham injection) and car ride back home. The veterinarian filled out the same questionnaire for the events at the clinic. Two weeks later, the dog was given one VEGGIEDENT® Zen™ (group 1 - 15 dogs) or one control chew without L-theanine (group 2 - 15 dogs), 2 hours before the visit to the vet and the same procedures were performed as during the screening visit. Two weeks later, the dog received the other chew before the third visit to the vet and the procedures were repeated again. A paired Student's t-test or a non-parametric sign test was used to compare the values obtained in the different conditions.

The results with significant differences are presented in the table below.

Therefore, VEGGIEDENT® Zen™ could reduce some signs of stress and anxiety during the visit to the veterinarian. The blood pressure was also significantly reduced when VEGGIEDENT® Zen™ was given compared to the visits when no chew or the control chew, with no L-theanine, was given prior to the visit. These data suggest that VEGGIEDENT® Zen, with L-theanine, could help relax the dog.

Biography

Dr. Pike graduated from Colorado State University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2003. After graduation, she was commissioned as a Captain into the United States Army Veterinary Corps. It was taking care of the Military Working Dogs returning from deployment that spurred her interests in behavior medicine. In 2011, Dr. Pike started a Residency program under the mentorship of Dr. Debra Horwitz, DACVB. In October 2015, Dr. Pike passed the ACVB certifying examination. Dr. Pike is chief of the Behavior Medicine Division at the Veterinary Referral Center of Northern Virginia in Manassas (a suburb of Washington DC) where she sees referral behavior cases. Dr. Pike is a clinical instructor for the on-line education system "E-training for Dogs" and a member of the Fear Free Advisory Committee. She was recently named one of the "Top Veterinarians of Northern Virginia" by NoVa Magazine for the second year in a row.

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