

# DOG OWNERSHIP, DOG WALKING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL



Positive health benefits have been associated with dog ownership and this is often attributed to dog-walking.<sup>1, 2</sup> However, dog ownership may foster social capital<sup>3, 4</sup> which could also contribute to positive health outcomes.<sup>5, 6</sup>

A recent study\* examined the associations of dog ownership and dog walking with social capital in Japanese adults.

N=3606 residents from Minami-Izu, Japan, completed a self-administered questionnaire between October and November 2016. The questionnaire assessed dog ownership and dog walking, as well as social capital (social adhesion, and activities with neighbours).

53% female



52% aged 20-64 years



14% dog owners



56%

of dog owners walked their dog for at least 10 minutes per week

Young-to-middle-aged dog owners who reported walking their dogs reported significantly higher scores for activities with neighbours compared with non-dog owners.

The findings suggest there is a connection between dog walking and activities with neighbours among young-to-middle-aged Japanese adults.

## For more information:

Koohsari MJ, Yasunaga A, Shibata A, Ishii K, Miyawaki R, Araki K, Nakaya T, Hanibuchi T, McCormack GR, Koichiro O. Dog ownership, dog walking, and social capital. *Humanit Soc Sci Commun*. 2021 May 25;8(1):1–6.

## References:

1. Curl AL, Bibbo J, Johnson RA. Dog walking, the human–animal bond and older adults' physical health. *Gerontologist*. 2016;57:930–939
2. Cutt H, Giles-Corti B, Knuiman M, Burke V. Dog ownership, health and physical activity: a critical review of the literature. *Health Place*. 2007;13:261–272
3. McNicholas J, Collis GM. Dogs as catalysts for social interactions: robustness of the effect. *Br J Psychol*. 2000;91:61–70
4. Wells DL. The facilitation of social interactions by domestic dogs. *Anthrozoos*. 2004;17:340–352
5. Kawachi I. Social capital and health. In: Bird C, Fremont A, Timmermans S, Conrad P (Ed.) *Handbook of medical sociology* 6th edn. Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville. 2010;18–32
6. Fujisawa Y, Hamano T, Takegawa S. Social capital and perceived health in Japan: an ecological and multilevel analysis. *Soc Sci Med*. 2009;69:500–505



With support from:

