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**Science Internship Program:
Applied Medicine**

Civic Education
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Science Internship Program:
Applied Medicine

Obtaining Animal Assisted Therapy for Geriatric Psychiatry Patients

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Abstract

- Animal assisted therapy can be used alongside other expressive therapies
- Good in group setting, especially for elderly patients with dementia (Kårefjärd, A., & Nordgren, L. 2018)
- Cleveland Clinic could seek as able to provide more access to trained animals through volunteer services (Brody, J. E. 2016, February 29)

Background

- Elderly psychiatric patients greatly benefit from social interaction (Kårefjärd, A., & Nordgren, L. 2018)
- Strict schedules and set group therapy times help with those who experience cognitive decline and **dementia** (Peluso, S., De Rosa, A., De Lucia, N., Antenora, A., Illario, M., Esposito, M., & De Michele, G. 2018 Swall, A., Ebbeskog, B., Lundh Hagelin, C., & Fagerberg, I. 2017)

Background (cont.)

- Expressive therapies
 - Dance/Movement, Recreational, Music (ADTA, AMTA, ATRA)
- Animal Assisted Therapy can be used to enhance expressive therapies
 - Group setting



Problem/Purpose

- Certified animals for animal assisted therapy are hard to come across especially for dementia care units
- Some people are not able to take the time to get their pets certified
 - Certification is also costly for people who would otherwise be willing to volunteer

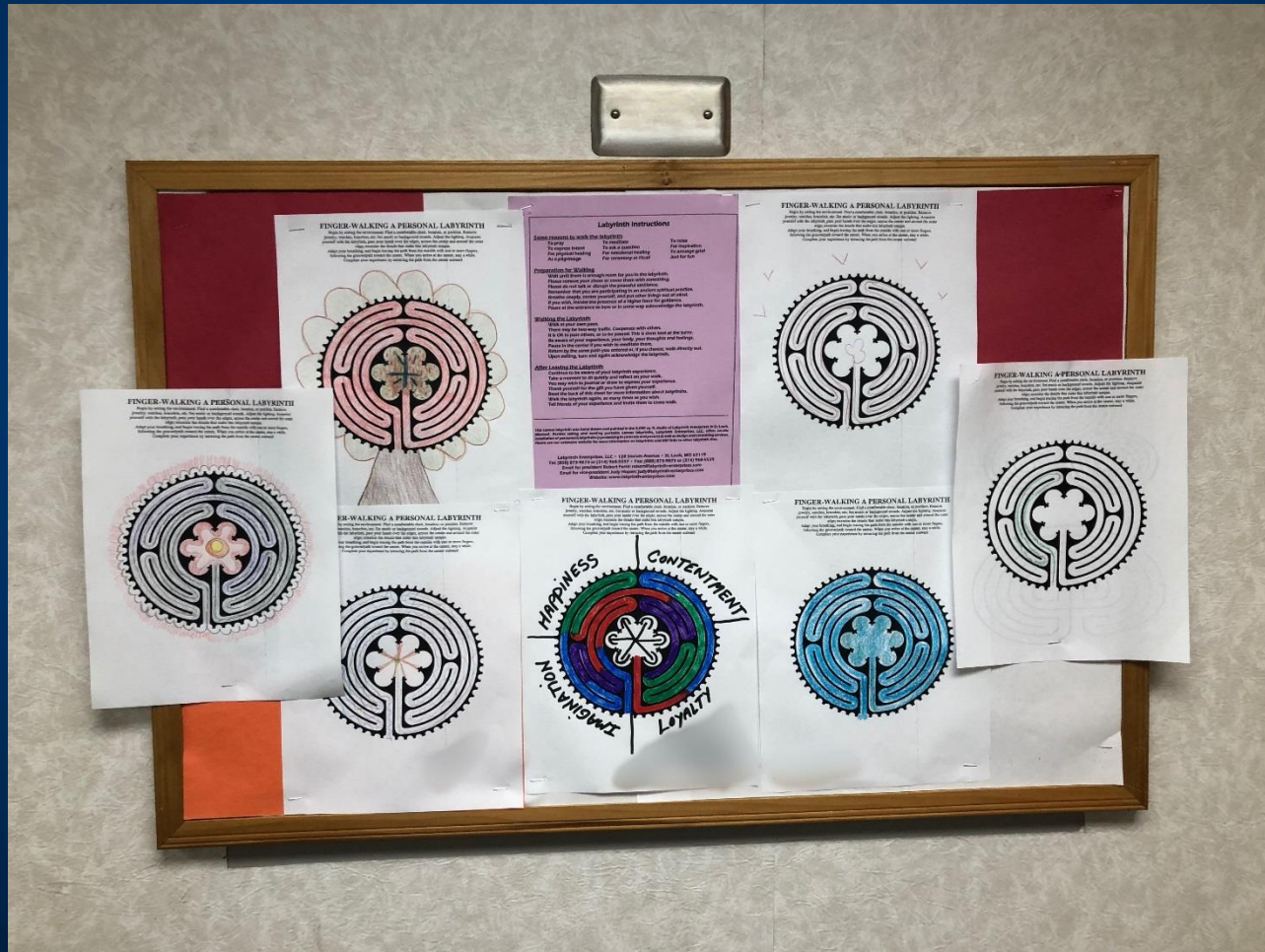
Hypothesis

- If every Behavioral Health unit had a trained animal for therapy, healing and comfort would be increased (Kårefjärd, A., & Nordgren, L. 2018)
 - Especially for those that have lived with pets previously or currently have them

Methodology

- In depth literature review using databases such as CINAHL (Nursing) and PubMed in order to find patient research focused on dementia and animal assisted therapy
- Observation of expressive therapies of the course of 6 weeks in the Euclid Hospital Behavioral Health Department

Expressive Therapy Example



Methodology (cont.)

- Contacted Cleveland Clinic Volunteer Services to see how animal volunteers were handled in order to attempt to obtain an animal volunteer on 4th Floor Euclid Geropsychiatry

Results

- No pet therapist could be found within time constraints
- More time needed to set up

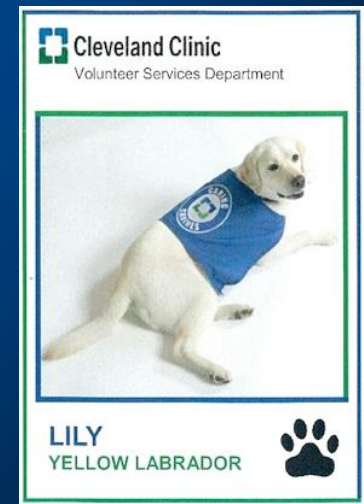


Conclusions

- The benefits of animal assisted therapy are supported by qualitative observation; it can be seen that older adults with memory loss or dementia greatly benefit from the presence of animals (Kårefjärd, A., & Nordgren, L. 2018)
- Multi-level benefits
 - Comfort to staff members as well

Recommendations

- Beneficial to have at least one therapy animal assigned to each behavioral health unit, depending on volunteer's time
- Consider paying for training/certification or even giving compensation to owners of trained therapy dogs.



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