

Therapy Dog Visits in a Burn Unit: The Positive Effects on Patients and Staff

CONCLUSION

A DOG THERAPY PROGRAM IS ONE EXAMPLE OF COMPLIMENTARY INTERVENTIONS TO HELP HOSPITALIZED BURN PATIENTS COPE, WHILE HELPING NURSES TO FOCUS ON THEIR PATIENTS IN A UNIQUE AND INTERACTIVE WAY.

RESULTS

- All staff reported positive interactions with the dog therapy and an improvement in their mood.
- All patients answered that they enjoyed the therapy dog visit with 13/15 indicating an improvement in their mood.
- All participants believed it is important to have activities such as dog therapy during hospitalizations with 32/39 rating the importance at 10/10.
- All participants recommended other patients and staff have the opportunity to have a therapy dog visit.

Therapy Dog
Post-Event Survey

Disagree Agree

On a scale from 1 to 10, how is your overall mood today?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree Agree

On a scale from 1 to 10, how did you enjoy the therapy dog visit?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree Agree

On a scale from 1 to 10, how important is it for you to have activities, such as a pet therapy visit, to look forward to while you are in the hospital?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree Agree

On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate your staff's (nurses, doctors, social workers) engagement with you as a patient?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree Agree

On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rate your hospital stay?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree Agree

Do you recommend other patients get the opportunity to have a therapy pet visit?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Hospitalized burn patients encounter multiple stressors including pain, lack of sleep, concerns about outcomes, and an unfamiliar environment that can impact their experience, well-being, and recovery.

DATA SOURCE/POPULATION

- A therapy dog visitation protocol was developed which included literature supporting therapy dog visits and patient exclusion criteria.
- Post-visit surveys were recorded for both patients and staff.
- 15 patients and 24 staff members completed the survey.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The dog therapy program allowed for positive interactions for both nurses and patients and improved patients' mood.
- Through this connection, nurses were able to help patients' recovery in a way that is different from the more traditional approach, which may also improve staff morale.