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Understanding owner-induced canine obesity: An application of the theory of planned behaviour

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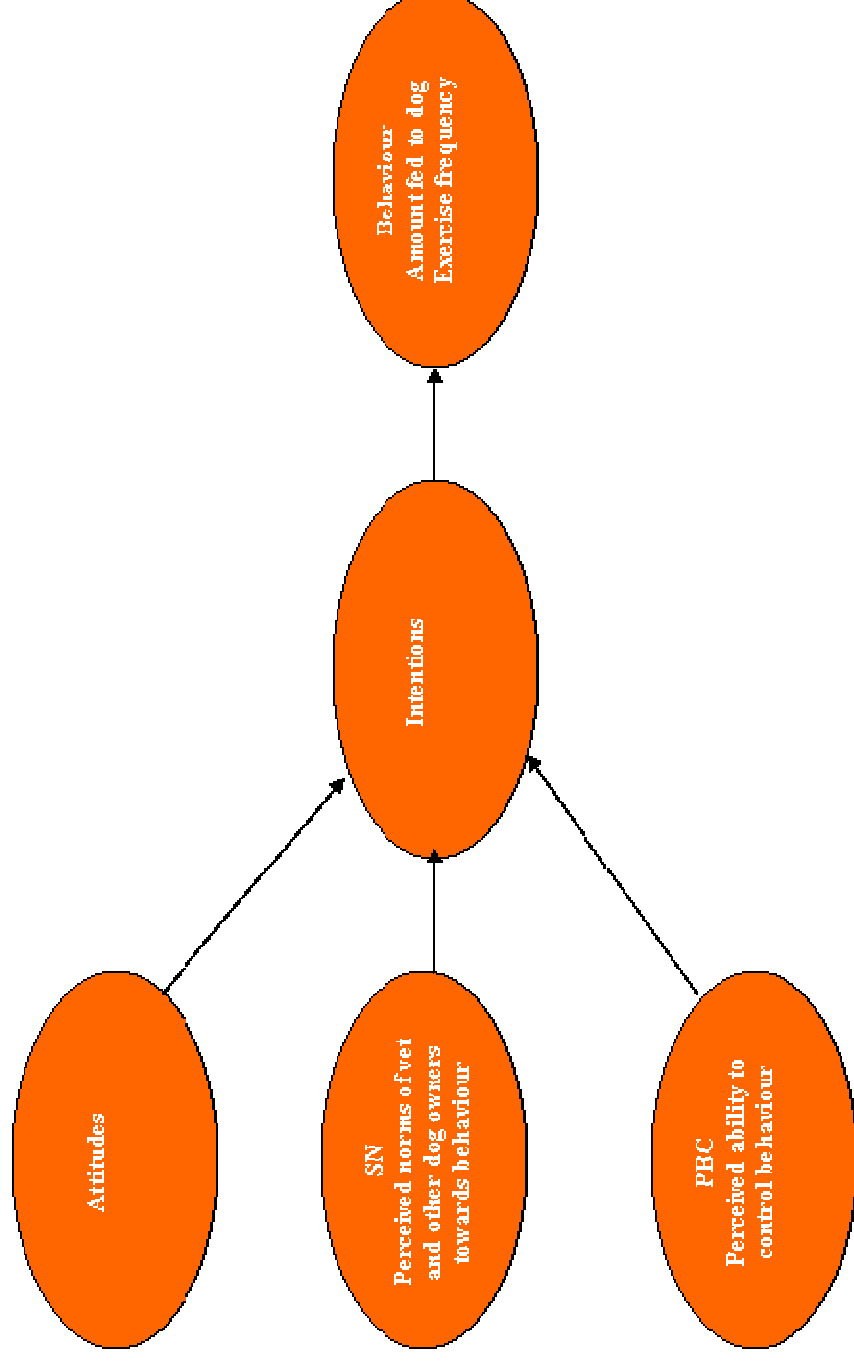


Background

- ◆ *Canine obesity is a common nutritional disorder affecting up to 40 per cent of the pet dog population.*
- ◆ *Obesity is commonly lifestyle induced. Owners feed their dogs too much and provide inadequate amounts of exercise.*
- ◆ *Treatment for obesity is a major challenge for both the owner and veterinary staff.*
- ◆ *It is therefore important to identify attitudes that underpin feeding and exercise behaviours so that these may be targeted in an intervention program*



The Theory of Planned Behaviour





Objectives

- ◆ *To use the TpB to identify the determinants of owners intentions to feed the appropriate amount to their dogs and to exercise their dog the appropriate number of times per week.*

Method

- ◆ *A questionnaire to assess the constructs of TpB was developed using information gained from a literature review, four focus groups and a pilot study.*
- ◆ *The final version was distributed among dog owners recruited from vet clinics, dog clubs and community events within Metropolitan Melbourne. A total of 183 participants completed and returned the questionnaire*



Findings

- ◆ *The Tpb model predicts owners' intentions to feed. Owners' perception of control made a unique contribution to the model.*

Table 1. Linear multiple regression of variables predicting intentions to feed appropriate amount

	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		5.32	.00
Overall, how much control do you feel you have over the amount you feed	.26	2.79	.01

F(12, 152)= 4.89, p= .00, Adjusted R²= .222

- ◆ *The Tpb model also predicts owner's intentions to exercise. Owners' perception of control made unique contributions to the model.*
- ◆ *Attitudes towards the importance of exercising the dog also made a unique contribution to the model.*

Table 2. Linear multiple regression of variables predicting intentions to exercise appropriate no. of times a week

	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		2.36	.02
Don't exercise dog freq b/c no time	-.34	-5.00	.00
Exercise freq is important	.28	3.86	.00
Overall, how much control do you feel you have over the no. of times a week you exercise your dog	.15	2.38	.02

F (11, 158) = 15.64, p=.00, Adjusted R²= .488



What's next?

- ◆ *Treatment of owner-induced canine obesity should involve modifying owners' attitudes towards feeding and exercise and owners' perceptions of their ability to control how much they feed and how often they exercise their dog.*
- ◆ *An intervention program based is scheduled to begin in February 08 within four veterinary clinics.*
- ◆ *It is anticipated that a relationship between TpB constructs, feeding and exercise behaviours and obesity may be found if the intervention program leads to significant weight loss in obese canines.*