

Outcome of Pets Adopted During a Waived-Fee Adoption Event: Maddie's Matchmaker Adoptathon

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INTRODUCTION

Animal shelters can reduce shelter euthanasia by increasing the number and speed of pet adoptions. Improving adoption efficiency can control the number of pets in shelters at any given time, resulting in less crowding, stress, operating costs, staff fatigue, and risk of infectious disease transmission in the shelter.

Campaigns to increase shelter pet adoptions by reducing or eliminating adoption fees are controversial due to concern they may increase risk of poor care or abandonment. However, little data exist to correlate the payment of a fee with adoption success.

The purpose of this study was to assess the outcome of pets adopted during a waived-fee adoption event in the San Francisco Bay Area in June 2011.

METHODS

Survey Instrument

A survey regarding the adoption experience was sent to all 1,928 pet adopters. Pet and owner characteristics and pet lifestyle were compared between adopters who still had their pets 6-12 months post-adoption and those who did not.

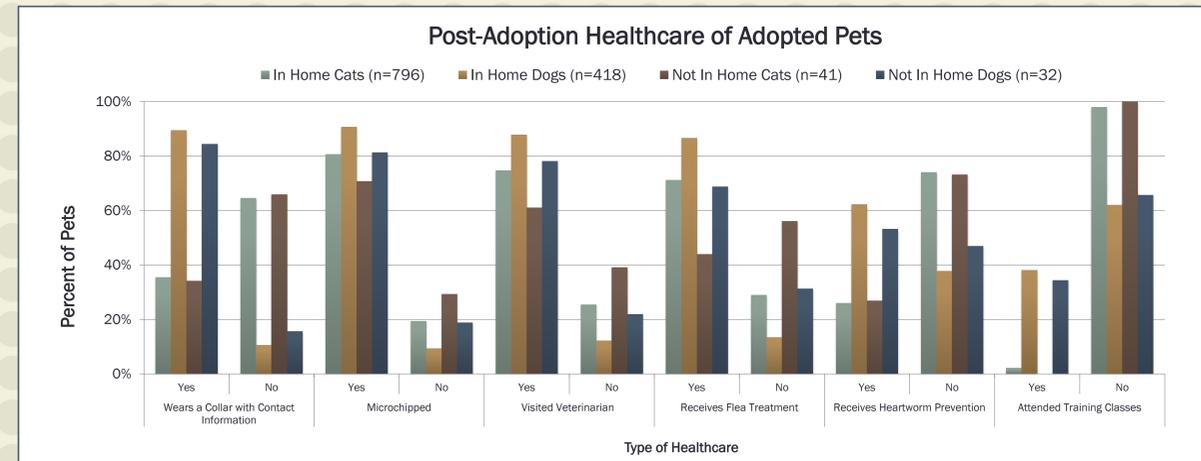
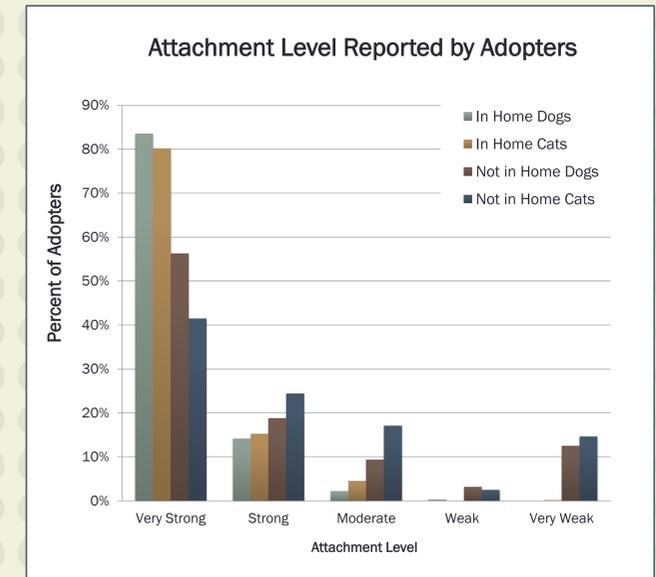
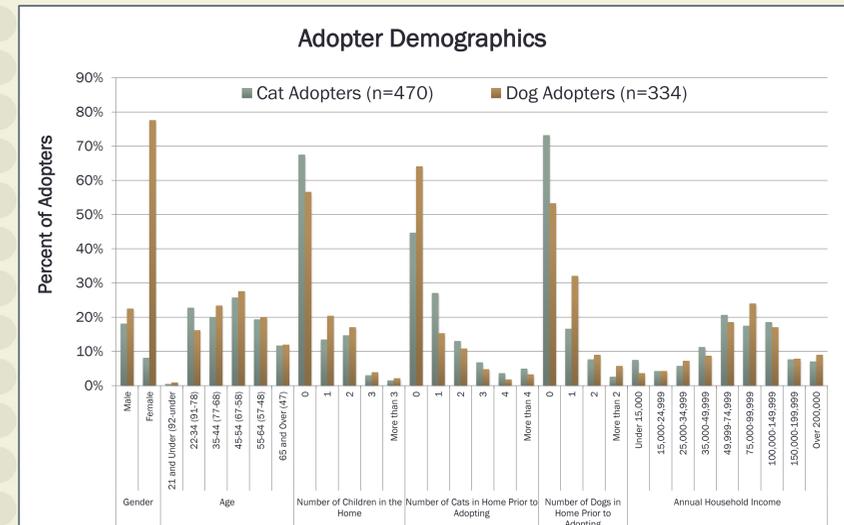
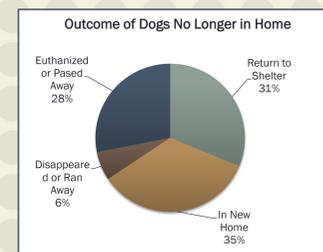
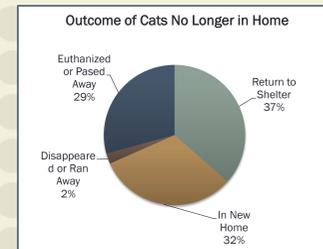
For each pet adoption, the following information was collected:

- Pet demographics
- Adopter demographics
- Adoption experience
- Pet medical/behavior conditions
- Pet lifestyle

Data Collection and Analysis

Survey responses were audited for completeness and internal consistency as they were submitted. Respondents were contacted for clarification if necessary. The results for dogs and cats were evaluated separately.

Pet lifestyle and healthcare were compared between adopters who retained and did not retain their pets using the Chi square test, and odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals were calculated. $P < 0.05$ was considered significant.



CONCLUSIONS

- The vast majority of pets adopted without a fee remained in the home.
- Owners of both retained and non-retained pets reported high attachment and integrated pets into their homes, suggesting that successful adoptions do not require payment of a fee.
- Free adoption promotions may increase adoptions without compromising quality of life.

RESULTS

- A total of 57% of adopters completed the survey, reporting that 95% of cats and 93% of dogs were still in the home.
- Pets were no longer in the home due to return to the shelter (1.8% cats; 2.2% dogs), rehoming (1.6%; 2.4%), death (1.4%; 2.0%), or going missing (0.1%; 0.4%).
- Strong or very strong attachment to the pet was reported by 94% of adopters.
- Most pets lived predominantly indoors (95%; 93%), slept on the family bed (62%; 44%), and had been to a veterinarian (74%; 87%).
- There were no significant differences between the two groups based on pet attachment level, post-adoption lifestyle or healthcare, or perception of the adoption event.

REFERENCES

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- Wilson, J., Levy, J., Scott, H.M., Zeidman, S. (2011). Adoption Fee Amount and Other Factors Associated with Pet Adoption Success.

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