
Abstract
This study explored the influence of five types of auditory stimulation (human conversation, classical music, heavy metal music, pop music, and a control) on the behaviour of 50 dogs housed in a rescue shelter. The dogs were exposed to each type of auditory stimulation for 4 h, with an intervening period of one day between conditions. The dogs’ position in their kennels (front, back), their activity (moving, standing, sitting, resting, sleeping), and their vocalization (barking, quiet, other) were recorded over 4 h at 10 min intervals during each condition of auditory stimulation. The dogs’ activity and vocalization were significantly related to auditory stimulation. Dogs spent more time resting and less time standing when classical music was played than when any other stimuli were played. Exposure to heavy metal music encouraged dogs to spend significantly more of their time barking than did other types of auditory stimulation. Classical music resulted in dogs spending significantly more of their time quiet than did other types of auditory stimulation. It is suggested that the welfare of sheltered dogs may be enhanced through exposure to appropriate forms of auditory stimulation. Classical music appears particularly beneficial, resulting in activities suggestive of relaxation and behaviours that are considered desirable by potential buyers. This form of music may also appeal to visitors, resulting in enhanced perceptions of the rescue shelter’s environment and an increased desire to adopt a dog from such a source.

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