HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES

The Effects of Dogs on Mental Health

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the potential therapeutic benefits of human-animal interaction, particularly with dogs, in alleviating stress and anxiety. This study aims to investigate the impact of interacting with a dog on anxiety levels using the State portion of the State Trait Anxiety Test (STAI). Participants will be recruited from the local community through advertisements and social media posts. Eligible participants will be adults aged 18-65 without any known allergies to dogs or previous negative experiences with them. Prior to participation, informed consent will be obtained from all participants.

The study will employ a pre-post experimental design. Participants' anxiety levels will be assessed using a portion of the STAI, consisting of State Anxiety (reflecting current anxiety levels). Upon arrival, participants will complete the pre-interaction STAI questionnaire to establish baseline anxiety levels. Subsequently, participants will engage in interaction with a dog under supervision. During this interaction, participants will be encouraged to pet, play, and interact with the dog as they wish. Following the interaction session, participants will complete the post-interaction State Anxiety questionnaire to assess any changes in anxiety levels. By investigating the impact of dog interaction on anxiety levels, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on animal-assisted interventions for mental health. If successful,

the findings may have implications for the development of novel therapeutic interventions aimed at reducing stress and anxiety in clinical and non-clinical settings.