Review Article

Are Pain and Mourning for a Pet and for a Family Member the Same?

Stefano Mariano[1]

1. Marconi University, Rome, Italy

Many people lives with pets and the most part of them are considered as a family members (Crossley et al. 2022). So, when a companion animal dies, people experiences pain and mourning. Despite the recent increase in research interest in human-pet relationships, to my knowledge there is no review that answers this question: Are pain and bereavement for a pet and for a family member the same? The present narrative review may be a first step in answering this question.

Methods: This review was conducted according to Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement. After removal of duplicates and examination of titles and abstracts, 49 records were included in the review (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for further details). The retrieved articles were selected and evaluated by reading each one in full text (see Appendix 3 for further details).

Discussion: This review, was beyond the scope of a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the intensity of mourning for the loss of an AC compared to mourning for the loss of a human. However, in examining the literature collected in the present study, we can highlight some significant recurring themes:

A. Intensity of grief over the loss of one's pet; B. The relationship between the owner/caregiver and their pet; C. The individual's vision and perspective of life after the loss of their pet; D. Society's disenfranchised grief.

Conclusions: The research indicates that AC owners experience a spectrum of pain and grief intensity when their pet dies, ranging from moderate to excruciating.

This grief is often compared to that experienced upon the loss of a close family member.

In addition, this review reveals a pervasive underestimation of the grief associated with the loss of a pet, both by society at large and by individuals who do not own a pet.

This disenfranchised grief can have a profound emotional impact on those who experience the loss of a pet.

It is also clear that veterinarians can play a role in helping AC owners to grieve and in improving the wellbeing, resilience and quality of life of people around the world experiencing pet loss. Further research is needed to develop a measure of DG that is specific to the loss of human companion animals (Brown et al., 2023).

Corresponding author: Stefano Mariano, drstefanomariano@gmail.com

Terminology

I adopted the following terms sharing the terminology:

- **Animal companions (ACs):** animals kept as companions to humans and generally of domesticated species. Commonly dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, smaller mammals, birds and reptiles, and excluding fish. I avoid the term 'pet' in this paper because it does not adequately reflect the current scientific understanding of animals' sentience, cognitive complexity and individuality, or the complexity and modern reality of the relationships between animals and their owners (Fraser, 2008).
- **Grief:** the behavioural, social, psychological and emotional reactions that a person has in response to the rupture or ending of a significant relationship with another (after Casarett, Kutner & Abrahm, 2001).
- **Animal companion bereavement**: the period following the death of an animal companion during which grief may be experienced and mourning may occur (after Casarett, Kutner & Abrahm, 2001).
- **Disenfranchised grief:** it is defined by the American Psychological Association (APA) as "grief that society (or some element of it) limits, does not expect, or may not allow a person to express".

 doi.org/10.32388/LASoGT

Introduction

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (2018), 57% of households in the United States own a pet, and according to the latest data from Euromonitor International (cited in Testoni et al., 2017), there are about 60.5 million pets in Italy. I have cited these data from just two countries to show how many pets live in the world.

Consequently, a considerable number of individuals dedicate a significant portion of their lives to the company of animals. These individuals frequently develop profound emotional bonds with their pets, to the extent that the vast majority of dog, cat, and other pet species owners in the Western world consider them to be members of their families (Pirrone et al., 2015a, 2015b).

The majority of common pet species have considerably shorter lifespans than humans, with the range extending from approximately 18 months (hamsters) to seven years (rabbits and select giant dog breeds), 13-17 years (many dogs and cats), and 20 years (some cats). For many pet owners, particularly those with multiple animals, this implies experiencing bereavement more frequently than their human loved ones (Hewson, 2014).

It is therefore highly probable that during their lifetime, owners/caretakers of these animals may experience grief as a result of the loss/death of their pet. The experience of loss is often related to grief and mourning, which are behaviours exhibited by AC owners and expected by social groups following the death of a pet. The grief and mourning resulting from the death of pets is frequently underestimated or even unrecognized (disallowed) by others, which results in a lack of understanding regarding the extent and consequences of disallowed grief (DG) (Brown et al., 2023).

Previous studies have investigated the attachment bonds between pet owners and the animals when they were alive, as well as the bonds between owners when their pets were dead. Additionally, they have observed the coping mechanisms put in place following the loss of a pet.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first narrative review to seek to understand whether and how the pain and mourning associated with the loss of a pet is comparable to the pain and mourning associated with the loss of a significant person.

Methods

This review was developed in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement. The PubMed, Scopus, PsycINFO, and Biosis databases were searched for primary research, including original research articles, systematic reviews, and articles written in any language. The search was conducted, including ahead-of-print publications, up to March 12, 2024, containing the terms "grief," "grieving," "bereavement," "loss," and "pet." A total of 46 documents were identified through the initial search. An additional 25 documents were added through other sources. After removing duplicates and examining titles and abstracts, 49 records were included in the review (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for further details). The retrieved articles were selected and evaluated by reading each one in full text (see Appendix 3 for further details). The selected papers were those that evaluated and/or compared the pain and mourning associated with the loss of a pet with the pain and mourning associated with the loss of an individual who plays an important role in one's emotional life.

Discussion

This review, was beyond the scope of a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the intensity of mourning for the loss of an AC compared to mourning for the loss of a human. However, in examining the literature collected in the present study, we can highlight some significant recurring themes.

A. Intensity of Grief Over the Loss of One's Pet

1. All participants reported significant grief after the loss of their AC, with the majority of participants rating their pain as 10/10. This high level of pain continued for weeks, if not months (Wilson et al., 2021).
2. The death of a pet can produce similar effects to those caused by a variety of other losses, including the death of a spouse, a child, or a job (Uccheddu et al., 2019).
3. For some individuals, the grief response experienced following the loss of an animal companion may be similar to that experienced following human bereavement (Reisbig et al., 2017).
4. It has been demonstrated that pets can be regarded as attachment figures, with the loss of which a significant pain response is elicited (Zilcha-Mano et al., 2011).

B. Relationship between Owner/Handler and Their Animal

1. All AC owners report that their relationship with the animal is emotionally significant (Wilson et al., 2021).
2. The analysis indicated that pets were frequently designated as family members, and that strong emotional bonds between animals and humans were reported in some studies (Kemp et al., 2016).
3. The findings of the Mourning Dog Questionnaire corroborate the tendency of individuals to anthropomorphize their pets (Uccheddu et al., 2019).
4. Pets are frequently regarded as an integral member of the family unit (Baydak, 2000).
5. Pets are frequently regarded as integral members of the family unit. Of the 16 respondents, 13 indicated that they would administer a scarce drug to their pet in lieu of a non-family member (Cohen, 2002).
6. ACs can be described as "fictitious relatives," and many owners would describe them as full members of their family (Hewson, 2014).
7. An increasing number of people view their pets as family members, and the death of a pet often induces a grief reaction of a severity comparable to the loss of a significant human relationship (Kogan 2022).

C. The individual's vision and perspective on life after the loss of their pet

1. The findings of the Mourning Dog Questionnaire corroborate the pessimistic outlook on life after the demise of a pet (Uccheddu et al., 2019).

D. The underestimation of the pain of losing a pet by society and the social context in which it occurs

1. The pain associated with the death of a pet is frequently underestimated or even not recognized by others. (Brown et al., 2023).
2. Despite the relatively high frequency and intensity of grief over pet death among pet owners, this process is largely unrecognized socially and underexplored in research (Packman et al., 2012).
3. The perception of animals by dog owners does not differ from that of humans with regard to the emotional, physiological, and legal aspects of their nature (Uccheddu et al., 2019).
4. It is probable that those who have lost a pet will experience feelings of disenfranchisement as a result of this loss. (Park et al., 2023).
5. A total of 13 participants (out of 18) indicated that relationships with family and friends who did not understand their pain were strained (Baydak, 2000).
6. It has been posited that society tends to undervalue the significance of animal companions, which may result in the grieving process surrounding the loss of an animal companion being overlooked or even pathologized, leading to what is known as disenfranchised grief (Leonhardt-Parr & Rumble, 2024).
7. The relationship between humans and animals is often regarded as inferior to that between humans. This becomes problematic during times of loss and grief when members of a grieving pet owner's support system fail to recognize the significance of the relationship with the pet. (Reisbig et al., 2017).
8. The death of a pet typically does not involve the same rituals that allow owners to express their grief (Kogan et al., 2022).

For further information, please refer to Appendix 3.

Conclusions

The results of this study, along with the conclusions that can be drawn from them, are presented below.

The research indicates that AC owners experience a spectrum of pain and grief intensity when their pet dies, ranging from moderate to excruciating.

This grief is often compared to that experienced in the loss of a close family member.

In order to know the precise intensity of this phenomenon, it would be necessary to use an appropriate instrument, such as the Mourning Dog Questionnaire, or Pet Bereavement Questionnaire, or the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale, or the Animal-Human Continuity Scale, which would take into account a number of variables, including the owner's age, gender, occupation, education level, and whether he or she lives alone or with family; age, cause of death, and type of pet.

Additionally, this review reveals a pervasive underestimation of the grief associated with the loss of a pet by both society at large and individuals who do not possess such a bond.

This underestimation can have a profound emotional impact on those who experience the loss of a pet.

It is also evident that veterinarians may play a role in supporting AC owners through the mourning process. Further study is required to develop a measure of DG specific to human–CA loss (Brown et al., 2023).

The present study is not without limitations. The lack of research on this specific topic and the lack of access to the full text resulted in the identification of multiple limitations. However, this field of research may prove to be important for developing effective strategies for primary prevention.

Appendix 3 - Table of characteristics of included studies

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
1) Beyond RecoveryLutto per la perdita di animali da compagnia in Cina Wong PWC, Lau KCT, Liu LL, Yuen GSN, Wing-Lok P, 2017	The aim of this study was to investigate whether postbereavement growth is possible from pet loss bereavement when appropriate coping strategies are adopted	Qualitative study interviews	n.31 animal lovers recruited through convenience and snowball sampling in Hong Kong	Hong Kong SAR, China	Identified seven common themes: self-reliance, social-supported, or professional-support coping behaviors	Animal loss bereavement appears to share similar features to other forms of bereavement but also has its unique features. The intensity of grief seemed to be affected by factors like the strength of the human-animal bond, lack of empathy from closed ones, being married without children, and euthanasia decision.
2) Grief following pet and human loss Eckerd LM, Barnett JE, Jett-Dias L, 2016	compare grief severity and its predictors	Quantitative study interviews?	Two equivalent college student samples who had experienced the death of a pet (n = 211) or a person (n = 146) within the past 2 years	Oregon, Usa	The human death sample reported higher grief severity, $p < .01$, but effect sizes were small (ds = .28–.30).	Ccoseness to the deceased was overwhelmingly the strongest predictor of grief severity
3) Pet Bereavement and Coping Mechanisms Park RM, Royal KD, Gruen ME, 2023	To examine the relationship between pet loss and owner grief response	Literature Review	48 studies included	North Carolina, Usa and Online	this review was able to identify a consensus among the literature that bereaved pet owners are likely to experience disenfranchisement surrounding their loss	Factors that influence the grief response, the disenfranchised nature surrounding pet loss, ambiguous pet loss and coping mechanisms used: isolation, social support, continuing bonds and memorialization, religion and spirituality and relationships with other animals

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
4) Grieving the loss of a pet Cleary M, West S, Thapa DK, Westman M, Vesk K, Kornhaber R, 2022	explored the psychosocial impact of bereavement and grieving the loss of a pet	Qualitative systematic review	19 qualitative papers from 17 studies that	Australia		Five themes: Their Relationship; Their Grief; Their Guilt; Their Supports; and Their Future.
5) Pet loss and continuing bonds in children and adolescents Schmidt M, Naylor PE, Cohen D, Gomez R, Moses JA Jr, Rappoport M, Packman W, 2020	explore the different ways that children use continuing bonds (CB) to cope following the death of a pet	mixed-methods study	32 children (5-18 years) and their parents	California, Usa	Children answered four questionnaires and the Continuing Bonds Interview. Parents answered a demographic questionnaire.	All children utilize CB while grieving the loss of a pet, although CB expression varies depending on the age of the child, the level of grief following the loss, and the strength of attachment to the pet.
6) Relationship Between Childhood Trauma Experience and Coping With Pet Loss Ahn J, Lee SW, Kim K, Jin B, Chung US, 2023	Explore relationship Between Childhood Trauma Experience and Coping With Pet Loss	online survey conducted with non-clinical adult participants who had experienced the loss of a companion animal	sample of 137 individuals who had experienced pet loss	Korea	standardized assessments, including the Inventory of Complicated Grief (ICG), the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7), and the Insomnia Severity Index (ISI). Childhood trauma was evaluated using the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ)	People who experienced pet loss had significant psychological symptoms, ranging from 32% to 55%. Childhood trauma experiences affect complicated grief, depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, insomnia and prolonged grief disorder after pet loss
7) How We Disenfranchise Grief for Self and Other, Cesur-Soysal G, Arı E, 2022	Examine perceived disenfranchisement, self-disenfranchisement and disenfranchisement of others about grief and pet loss	Empirical Study Online ahead of print	Null	Turkey	attachment and social support are significantly related to the evaluations of the disenfranchised grief process	attachment and social support are significantly related to the evaluations of the disenfranchised grief process
8) Pet Grief: Tools to Assess Owners' Bereavement and Veterinary Communication Skills	The aim of this study is the Italian adaptation of instruments for veterinary counseling services	Participants were selected through Facebook. An invitation with a link to the survey was posted on the	377 pet owners who responded to the questionnaire, 354 (318 females and 36 males)	Italy	The study analyzed Pet Bereavement Questionnaire (PBQ) to describe the individual experience of pet-grief; Regret of Bereaved Family Members (RBFM) to	All the instruments obtained good internal reliability, and the results of the confirmative factor analysis of all the Italian versions were in

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
Testoni I, De Cataldo L, Ronconi L, Colombo ES, Stefanini C(6), Dal Zotto B(7), Zamperini A, 2019		social media platform			assess the family regret; Shared Decision-Making Questionnaire (SDM-Q-9) for decision making in end of life; Consultation and Relational Empathy Measure (CARE) to assess the veterinarian relational empathy during clinical encounters	accordance with the original ones The path analysis suggests that developing a veterinary relationship-centered care practice may be beneficial for pet owners facing end-of-life issues and the death of their companion animals since it showed that shared-decision making strategies and empathic communication may reduce negative dimensions of bereavement that may complicate grief.
9) Grieving the Loss of a Pet Needs the Health System Recognition Mohanti BK, 2017	The aim of this study is to anticipate, identify and address physical and psychosocial symptom burdens in a timely manner	null	null	India		Unlike the loss of a child, spouse or parent which become a shared tragedy; others may not understand the depth of sadness and a sense of void in a grieving pet owner. Emotional pain and physical distress due to the loss of a companion animal are likely to be pronounced
10) Expressions of Grief in Online Discussion Forums-Linguistic Similarities and Differences in Pet and Human Bereavement, Minna Lyons, Katie Floyd, Haley McCray, Claire Peddie 1, Katherine Spurdle, Amelia Tlusty, Charlotte	compare online discussion forum posts related to pet loss to those related to human bereavement.	Original study	401 posts were analyzed using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count software for frequencies of word use relevant to bereavement	Usa and online	poor	There were some similarities in partners and pets in the word use related to friends and social connectedness

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
Watkinson, Gayle Brewer, 2022						

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
11) Relationship between Attachment to Pet and Post-Traumatic Growth after Pet Loss Park HJ), Jeong GC, 2022	analyze the moderating effect of a cognitive emotion regulation strategy mediated through separation pain on the relationship between attachment and post-traumatic growth after pet loss among owners	Original study	303 owners who have experienced pet loss	Korea	It analyzed the mediated moderating effects by PROCESS macro	The results showed that the adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategy strengthened the effect of attachment to pets on post-traumatic growth and decreased the effect on separation pain
12) The Impact of Continuing Bonds Between Pet Owners and Their Pets Following the Death of Their Pet, Hughes B, Lewis Harkin B, 2022	Analyze the role of ongoing bonds with a living pet and the impact of these bonds after the animal's death	Systematic Narrative	null	UK	null	Continuing bonds can sometimes aggravate and intensify grief experiences, particularly when pet grief is perceived as disenfranchised grief. Identifying appropriate bonds can be useful to moderate the intensity of grief and be a valuable mechanism of support. CB can also help post-traumatic growth of owners.
13) Owners' Expectations for Pet End-of-Life Support and After-Death Body Care: Exploration and Practical Applications. Cooney, K. A., Kogan, L. R., Brooks, S. L., & Ellis, C. A., 2021	The study explores the perceptions and expectations of pet owners in the United States regarding end-of-life issues, with a particular focus on postmortem care	Systematic Narrative	anonymous online survey, 2043 partecipants	Usa	Participants living in the US who were the current owners of at least one cat or dog, had a regular veterinarian, and had made end-of-life decisions for at least one pet	The majority of these owners indicated they preferred to work with a specific crematory (43%) or cemetery (70%) and over 95% of these owners reported feeling it important to work with their preferred after-death body care service

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
14) Online survey as empathic bridging for the disenfranchised grief of pet loss, Packman W, Carmack BJ, Katz R, Carlos F, Field NP, Landers C, 2016	Investigated grief reactions of bereaved individuals following the death of a pet	Online survey. Qualitative methodology	Respons of U.S. and French Canadian participants to open question on our online pet loss survey.	Usa and Canada	Four major themes emerged: lack of validation and support; intensity of loss; nature of the human pet relationship; and continuing bonds	Findings confirm that, for both the U.S. and French Canadian participants, pet loss is often disenfranchised grief and there are ways to facilitate expressions of grief.
15) Posttraumatic Growth Following the Loss of a Pet. Bussolari C, Habarth J, Kimpara S, Katz R, Carlos F, Chow A, Osada H, Osada Y, Carmack BJ, Field NP, Packman W. 2017	The study examined Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) experienced by bereaved pet owners in the United States, French-Canada, Japan, and Hong Kong following the death of their pet	Online survey qualitative methodology	Respons of United States, French, Canada, Japan, and Hong Kong participants	Usa, French-Canada, Japan, and Hong Kong	Study explored to what extent the cross-cultural responses mapped onto the five factors of the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI).	For the U.S. sample, 58% of responses mapped onto the PTGI. For French-Canada, 72% of responses mapped onto the PTGI. For Japan, 50% of responses mapped onto the PTGI and for Hong Kong, 39% of responses mapped onto the PTGI
16) Older women's experiences of companion animal death: impacts on well-being and aging-in-place. Wilson DM, Underwood L, Carr E, Gross DP, Kane M, Miciak M, Wallace JE, Brown CA, 2021.	The aim of multiple methods study was to develop a greater understanding of the impact of companion animal death on older women living alone in the community, as older women are a distinct at-risk group, and the supports that should be available to help these individuals with their grief.	Research Article	Online questionnaire Participants (n=12) were recruited from across Alberta, a Canadian province, through seniors' organizations, pet rescue groups, and social media groups of interest to older women. All were older adult (age 55+) women, living alone in the community, who had experienced the death of a companion animal in 2019.	Alberta, Canadian province	On the standardized measures, participants scored highly on attachment and loss, but low on guilt and anger. The interview data revealed three themes: catastrophic grief and multiple major losses over the death of their companion animal, immediate steps taken for recovery, and longer-term grief and loss recovery.	The findings highlight the importance of acknowledging and addressing companion animal grief to ensure the ongoing well-being and thus the sustained successful aging-in-place of older adult women in the community.
17) Does the DSM-5 grief disorder apply to owners of deceased pets? A psychometric study of impairment during pet loss. Lee SA, 2020	This study aimed to validate the DSM-5 grief disorder construct to owners of deceased pets	Research Article	395 adults who were impaired during bereavement.	Usa	Confirmatory factor analyzes indicated that the grief symptoms cohered into the symptom clusters proposed by the DSM-5	Findings support the application of the DSM-5 model of grief to owners of deceased pets.
18) "My pet has passed": Relations of adult attachment	This study examined attachment relationships and	Research Article	73 university students 17-26 years of age who	Usa	They completed measures of attachment styles toward people	Findings positive relations between attachments with people

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
styles and current feelings of grief and trauma after the event, Olivia K Brown, Douglas K Symons, 2015	emotional distress after the passing of a pet		had lost a family pet within the past 5 years.		and their pet, as well as complicated grief, depression, and trauma	and pets, and anxiety in pet attachment was positively related to complicated grief, even when attachment with people was controlled
19) Validation of the HHHHHMM Scale in the Italian Context: Assessing Pets' Quality of Life and Qualitatively Exploring Owners' Grief. Testoni I, De Vincenzo C, Campigli M, Caregnato Manzatti A, Ronconi L, Uccheddu S, 2023	The study aimed to validate the HHHHMM Quality of Life Scale in the Italian context.	Mixed-methods design	314 people	Italy	The Mourning Dog Questionnaire (MDQ), Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale (LAPS), Pet Bereavement Questionnaire (PBQ), and open-ended questions were adopted to test the research hypotheses and qualitatively explore the grieving experience	The results showed that the model's fit was partially adequate, with all parameters being significant and over 0.40. Moreover, human guardians' anger levels were high when their companion animal's quality of life was poor, and greater levels of grief were associated with higher levels of attachment.
20) The End of the Partnership With a Guide Dog: Emotional Responses, Effects on Quality of Life and Relationships With Subsequent Dogs, Lloyd J, Budge C, La Grow S, Stafford K, 2021	The study examined the experiences and feelings of people who experienced the ending of at least one partnership with a guide dog to explore issues arising at the end of the partnership and how this may impact on relationships with subsequent dogs.	Research Article	36 people	New Zeland	Results indicate that the majority of handlers experienced a reduction in their quality of life due to a decrease in independent mobility followed by the loss of a friend and companion, curtailment of social interactions, and loss of self-esteem/confidence.	The majority of handlers expressed feelings of extreme grief when the partnership ended, whether it was successful or not. Feelings of extreme grief were more common for first than subsequent dogs. The depth of emotion was compared to losing a family member or other loved one, which has been reported in some person and pet relationships.

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
21) Psychiatric investigation of 18 bereaved pet owners, Kimura Y, Kawabata H, Maezawa M.	This study explores the grief associated with the loss of a pet	Survey using a self-administered questionnaire	50 bereaved pet owners attending a public animal cremation service, and we received 18 responses.	Japan	8 of the 16 valid responses indicated depression and/or neurosis	Statistical analyses showed that the following factors were significantly associated with grief reactions: age of owner, other stressful life events, family size, age of deceased animal, rearing place, and preliminary veterinary consultation
22) The mental health effects of pet death during childhood: Is it better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all? Katherine M Crawford, BS, research coordinator, Yiwen Zhu, MS, data analyst, Kathryn A Davis, MA, research coordinator, Samantha Ernst, BS, research assistant, and Kristina Jacobsson, 2021	The study investigates the occurrence of grief following death of a pet	Research Article	A sample of 88 people. 40-item questionnaire based on reactions following human bereavement	U.K.	The questionnaire showed high internal reliability, and total scores were significantly positively correlated with the degree of affective attachment to the pet, the suddenness of the death and whether the respondent lived alone; but not with the type of pet, the time since it had died, and how long the owner had been with it.	Overall these findings indicate a parallel reaction to that following a human bereavement, but with a lower frequency of affective distress.
23) Role of attachment in response to pet loss, Field NP, Orsini L, Gavish R, Packman W, 2009	This study examined the impact of attachment on grief severity following the death of a pet	They observe a set of measures t deceased pet, social support, and complicated grief symptoms	71 people who had lost a dog or cat within the past year	Usa	The observed measures included an attachment measure assessing individual differences in attachment anxiety and avoidance, the continuing bond with the deceased pet, social support, and complicated grief symptoms. No significant mediators of the effect of attachment anxiety on grief were found	The results highlight the importance of distinguishing strength of attachment from attachment security in examining the effect of attachment on response to pet loss.

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
24) Exploring how veterinary professionals perceive and use grief support resources to support companion animal caregivers in Ontario, Canada Matte AR, Khosa DK, Meehan MP, 2021	The aim of this study was to qualitatively explore veterinary professionals' use and perceptions of grief resources and services to support companion animal caregivers following companion animal euthanasia	A qualitative study consisting of group and individual interviews	38 veterinary professionals and staff from 10 veterinary hospitals	Ontario, Canada	Conclusion: Overall, findings suggest that there are substantial opportunities to improve and embed a provision of grief resources within the veterinary profession. There is a need to develop adequate resources to meet caregivers' supportive needs and implement these resources within the greater veterinary profession.	Results indicated that typically resources were only provided if a caregiver requested information, or when veterinary professionals recognised that the caregiver may benefit from these resources. To assess a caregiver's need, participants reported considering their age, the strength of the human-animal bond, their previous and ongoing life circumstances, and their emotional state.
25) Practitioner Experiences of the Death of an Equine in an Equine-Assisted Services Program, Nieforth LO, Kaufman S. 2024	EAS practitioners. The goal of the study was to explore the experiences of practitioners and identify the socioemotional processes that occur upon the death of an equine within an EAS program	Research Article	Online survey distributed to EAS practitioners. Open-ended response. 84 people	Indiana, Usa	Responses are situated into two themes (1) Processing the death of an equine and (2) Practical implications.	Experiences processing the death of an equine can be situated within Worden's Four Tasks of Mourning, extending a grief model previously only considered in the context of human death to animal death.
26) Associations between stress and quality of life: differences between owners keeping a living	The main objectives of this study were to compare the levels of stress	QOL was assessed with the WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire and divided into four major domains:Physical,Psychological,	The study sample contained 110 current, and 103 bereaved dog	Israel	RESULTS: Stress levels were significantly higher in bereaved owners. QOL in three of the four domains (Physical, Psychological, and	CONCLUSIONS: The results suggest that a loss of a dog is associated with

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
dog or losing a dog by euthanasia, Tzivian L, Friger M, Kushnir T, 2015	and to explore the correlates of QOL of healthy adults who currently own or who have just lost their dog	Relationship, and Environmental.	owners, all females, who lost their dogs due to euthanasia.		Relationship) of current owners were significantly better than among bereaved owners. Stress was significantly associated with these three domains of QOL. Quality of life was found to be positively associated with social support. Age was related directly only to current owners' QOL	stress for the bereaved owner and reduced physical, psychological, and relationship QOL. Lack of social support in the case of death of a companion animal has a strong effect on owners' grief reactions
27) Social work with a pet loss support group in a university veterinary hospital, Dunn KL, Mehler SJ, Greenberg HS. 2005	The article describes the development of a bereavement support group for pet owners in a university veterinary hospital.	Observation of a group of work	Null	Pennsylvania, Usa	The group is predicated on the understanding that a human-animal relationship can be strong and the loss of that bond, through the animal's death, can produce a grief reaction	The discussion and conclusion support the development of interdisciplinary collaborations among veterinarians, owners and social workers in other veterinary hospitals.
28) Overcoming the social stigma of losing a pet Crossley MK and Rolland C, 2022	A goal of the review is to provide counselors with perspectives to consider in their practice when working with clients who have attachments to their companion animals and to acknowledge the therapeutic benefits of working through the grief process to resolution as a way to continue	Narrative review	Null (The present review is built on research in the field of pet loss and human bereavement and factors in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on human-animal attachment)	Rhode Island, Usa	Pets play a significant role in the lives of their caregivers, taking on different attachment roles depending on the needs of the individual.	Grieving the death of a pet continues to be disenfranchised in society. Perceptions of judgment can lead individuals to grieve the loss without social support.

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
	the bond with a deceased pet.					
29) Fare thee well: how to help owners (and yourself) deal with the death of a beloved pet, Bentz AI, Bach C,	The authors present advice on how to communicate with grieving clients as well as how to cope with a personal sense of loss when a patient dies.	Article	Null	Pennsylvania, USA	Pet owners often seek reassurance from their veterinarian after making the decision to have their pet euthanized	
30) Mourned Pets. About Coping with Animal Death in Veterinary Practice and Caregiver's Experience Mourned Pets. About Coping with Animal Death in Veterinary Practice and Caregiver's Experience, Lange L, 2023	The author tries to provide explanation for her feelings and for veterinarian behavior,	Article	1 person	Poland	The article is written from the first-person per- spective as an autoethnographical attempt to describe the experience of loss of a pet compan- ion, a cat,	The author introduces new kind of veterinarian in-home services for palliative care and euthanasia.

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results	
31) Bereavement for Companion Animals: Intensity, Moderating Variables, and Effects on Wellbeing López-Cepero, J., Garcia-Martínez, J., Martos-Montes, R., & Rivera, F. (2024).	The study examines the intensity of grieving experienced by volunteers from animal protection organizations in southern Spain	Article. Study of regression analysis ANOVA	130 volunteers (86% female; M = 42.0 years	Spain	Volunteers reported on their reactions to loss following the death of animals under their care, levels of empathy, anthropomorphism, and attachment experienced toward these animals, received social support, and overall health status	The results showed that 65.5% of participants displayed signs of general complicated grieving (83% on the grief scale; 40% on the anger scale; 47% on the guilt scale	
32) Attachment styles, continuing bonds, and grief following companion animal death Lykins, AD, McGreevy, PD,, Bennett B, Paul NK, & Gotsis N, 2023	The study explored how attachment styles, continuing bonds, and time since loss interacted to predict grief severity in a large sample of individuals grieving the loss of a variety of companion animals	Research Article	Online survey using two questionnaires: The Pet Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ; Zilcha-Mano et al., 2011) and The Pet Bereavement Questionnaire (PBQ; Hunt & Padilla,Citation2006) 496 participants aged between18 and 79 years	Online	The authors recommend reconsideration of the non-human animal exclusion in prolonged grief disorder, and suggest that bereavement supports embrace targeted approaches that consider attachment styles.	The results showed that higher attachment anxiety predicted more severe grief, a relationship partially moderated by continuing bonds, whereas attachment avoidance predicted less severe grief irrespective of continuing bonds	
33) Support for bereaved owners of pets, Clements PT, Benasutti KM, & Carmone A, 2003	The study explores The bond that exists between people andtheir pets and its impact on physical and mentalhealt	A comprehensive review of the bereavement of animals	Null	Usa	It is important to provide an environmentof acceptanceand understanding for bereaved pet owners to enhanceefforts toward adaptive grief and bereavement and pro-mote adaptive coping and reinvestment in life	A comprehensive review of the bereavement of animals	
34) Pet Humanisation and Related Grief: Development and Validation of a Structured Questionnaire Instrument to Evaluate Grief in People Who Have	The aim of this study was the scientific validation of a novel instrument (the Mourning Dog Questionnaire) designed to allow a comprehensive quantitative analysis of grief responses in dog	The research model was based on a grid of five different questionnaires: the PBQ, the LAPS, the AHCS, thePScale, and the Testoni Death Representation Scale	A sample of 369 Italian dog owners	Italy	The Mourning Dog Questionnaire was based on a grid of quantitative measurable outcomes that combines five different questionnaires concerning levels of attachment to pets, responses to the loss of a pet, outlook on life events and grief, perceptions of animals in terms of emotions, needs and legal right.	Authors found that pet owners have the tendency to humanise their pet and perceive animals no differently from humans in terms of emotions, needs and legal rights. In addition, after the death of the pet, a negative view of life was described according to the findings	

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results	
Lost a Companion Dog, Uccheddu S, De Cataldo L, Albertini M, Coren S, Da Graça Pereira G, Haverbeke A, Mills DS, Pierantoni L, Riemer S,Ronconi L, Testoni I, 2019	owners after the death of a pet dog, which is a still underestimated issue						
35) Lavorgna BF, & Hutton VE, Grief severity: A comparison between human and companion animal death, 2019	Research investigated and compared experiences of human death or the death of a companion animal	Research Article	Online self-report questionnaire. 50 participants aged 18 to 65 years who had experienced the death of a human (n = 35) or the death of a companion animal (n = 15	Australia	There were no significant differences between the levels of grief severity, however, the qualitative analyses highlighted the complexities associated with attempting to compare these grief experiences	These results highlight the importance of therapists acknowledging and validating companion animal grief	
36) Exploring pet owners' experiences and self-reported satisfaction and grief following companion animal euthanasia Matte AR, Khosa DK, Coe JB, Meehan M, & Niel L, 2020	The aim of this study was explore the relationship between pet owners' experiences and their resulting satisfaction and grief following companion animal euthanasia	An online questionnaire conducted with pet owners who had experienced euthanasia within the last 10 years	N=2354 partecipants. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and multivariable linear regression	Null	Overall, participants reported high levels of satisfaction with their euthanasia experience. Their experience with the administration practices (i.e., payment and paperwork), emotional support, follow-up care and care for their pet's remains was found to be associated with overall satisfaction. Participants' grief was associated with the number of euthanasia previously experienced, the type of human–animal bond, if the euthanasia was emergent and the emotional support they received	Findings contribute to existing research and shed light on some of the most important practices associated with companion animal euthanasia. Several practical recommendations are made, including developing standard operating procedures for companion animal euthanasia; exploring owners' previous experiences, expectations and emotions; the importance of reassurance; and access to grief resources and services.	

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results	
37) Expressions of Grief in Online Discussion Forums- Linguistic Similarities and Differences in Pet and Human Bereavement, Lyons M, Floyd K, McCray H, Peddie C, Spurdle K, Tlusty A, Watkinson C, Brewer G, 2022	The study compared online discussion forum posts related to pet loss to those related to human bereavement	Research Article	401 posts	Null	Posts were analyzed using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count software for frequencies of word use relevant to bereavement	There were some similarities in partners and pets in the word use related to friends and social connectedness. Our results highlight the similarities in the vocabulary in pet and human bereavement	
38) Comparing grief over people and pets Kitowska AH, Sørensen M, Skødstrup ME, Danielson N, Brandenborg P, Langergaard S, & Hansen TGB, 2022	The aim of the current study was to extend previous findings by (1) asking identical questions to participants bereaved of a person or a pet,respectively, and (2) correlating grief level with an improved measure of closeness to the deceased.	Research Article	An open invitation from the study elicited 366 participants, of whom 58% had lost a person and 42% a pet.	Denmark	Method: Two standardized grief scales were reworded to be applicable across species, and closeness was measured by 8 items representing two dimensions of attachment.	Results: Measures proved reliable (chr α = .89-.94). For neither grief measure did level of grief significantly differ between those having lost a person and those having lost at pet (t-tests, ps > .4). Attachment consistently correlated with level of grief across species and across grief measures (rs =39-53, ps < .001).	
39) The Lived Experience of Companion-animal Loss: A Systematic Review of Qualitative Studies. Kemp, H. R., Jacobs, N., & Stewart, S. (2016)	The aim of this systematic review was to evaluate qualitative studies of the lived experience of companion-animal loss and grief	Systematic Review conducted on 11 eligible studies	peer-reviewed articles from 1970 to July 2015. Only primary empirical studies were included.	Null	Prolonged grief was associated with self-disenfranchisement, whereas subjective healing was associated with remembrance, in which the animal remained as a memory in a “new” normal.	Analysis revealed that pets were often labeled as family, and strong emotional connections between animals and humans were reported in some studies. Grief was described in five studies, with participants’ experience ranging from low to overwhelming.	

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
40) Older adults and companion animal death:A survey of bereavement anddisenfranchised grief, Brown, C.A., Wilson, D.M., Carr, E., Gross, D.P., Miciak, M. and Wallace, J.E., (2023)	This study deepens our understanding of older adults' experiences of disenfranchised grief DG in relation to companion animal death	Participants were recruited to participate in an online questionnaire	98 participants (Older adults)	Alberta, Canada	One-third of partecipants identified that they needed to be careful about who they disclosed their grief, as they were not certain that they would be supported.	The study found that DG is experienced by a sizable group of older adults following their companion animal's death and that many participants perceived that socially legitimized recognition of loss and accompanying bereavement resources were lacking
41) Human grief on the death of a pet. Baydak, M. A. (2000).	The aim of this study was explore the disenfranchised nature of the human grief response to the death of a pet	A series of five structured, time-limited and closed pet loss support groups were facilitated	18 participants	Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	Several participants expressed resentment that their own veterinarians had not offered a support group, but that they had to learn of the existence of the support group from a different source	Thirteen participants indicated that relationships with family and friends who did not understand their grief had been strained. Sixteen of the 18 participants indicated that attending the group had helped them come to terms with their grief All 18 of the respondents indicated that they felt that information about a pet loss support group

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
						should be provided to all bereaved pet owners, and that they
42) Coping with Animal Companion Loss: A Thematic Analysis of Pet Bereavement Counselling, Leonhardt-Parr, E., & Rumble, B. (2024)	This study aimed to contribute to the existing knowledge base on animal companion loss and provide a preliminary research base on the potential salience of PBC, 'Pet Bereavement Counselling'	Research Article: inductive thematic analysis	Six qualified and accredited PBC therapists were recruited and took part in semi-structured interviews	U.K.	The analysis revealed participants' perspectives on the acknowledgement of animal companion loss societally and within counselling professions, the diverse ways animal companion loss can impact on bereaved owners, as well as the distinctive attributes and delivery of PBC.	The findings have implications for how animal companion loss is conceptualised within counselling professions, teaching and research
43) Companion Animal Death: A Qualitative Analysis of Relationship Quality, Loss, and Coping, Reisbig A. M. J., Hafen M., Siqueira Drake A. A., Girard D., Breunig Z. B. (2017)	The present study qualitatively describes human–animal relationships and the subsequent loss and coping experienced by owners of beloved companion animals	Research Article	Qualitative analysis	U.K.	Comparison with human and other types of loss and factors unique to companion animal loss are discussed. Veterinary and other helping professionals need basic information about the experience of companion animal loss in order to help support and normalize the experiences of grieving companion animal owners.	Relationships with animals are often viewed as inferior to human relationships. This becomes problematic during times of loss and grief when members of a grieving companion animal owner's support system do not understand the salience of the relationship with the animal.
44) Pet loss and disenfranchised grief: Implications for mental health	The purpose of this article is to elucidate (a) the process of	Research Article		Texas USA	This article is essentially a call to practitioners to consider pet loss as a normative bereavement process that carries an additional layer of complexity because societal attitudes toward	Given the close attachments some forge with their pets,

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
counseling practice, Cordaro M. (2012)	coping with grief as experienced by bereaved pet owners; (b) the negative impact of disenfranchised grief on pet bereavement; and (c) the use of grief counseling and other resources for pet loss.				the death of a pet discourage bereaved pet owners from openly grieving the loss of a beloved companion.	significant grief reactions when a pet dies are common. Considering the grief reactions resulting from such a loss, a better understanding of the process of how bereaved pet owners cope with grief is needed. Considering pet loss as a normative grief process is not only an indication to bereaved pet owners that their loss is valued, it is also an initial step toward reinstating within our society a stigmatized grief
45) Can pets function as family members? Cohen S. P. (2002)	This exploratory study investigated how clients of a large urban veterinary center viewed the role of their pet in the famil and how they compared this role to that of humans.	Research Article	Comparative Study. Randomly selected clients (N = 201) completed a questionnaire containing scales delineating family relationships	New York, Usa	In Phase 2, 16 participants from Phase I completed a social network instrument and answered questions about family roles and boundaries.	Thirteen of the 16 respondents said that there were circumstances in which they would give a scarce drug to their pet in preference to a person outside the family.

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
			and pet attachment			
46) Grief for animal companions and an approach to supporting their bereaved owners, Hewson, C. (2014)	This article presents an overview of grief for animalNull companions and current approaches to bereavement support for bereaved owners	Narrative review	Null	U.K.	Bereaved AC owners commonly have four particular difficulties: A) Lack of societal understanding; B) Guilt following euthanasia; C) Animal as link to other significant relationships or experiences; D) Frequency of bereavement	These four particular pressures may compound a bereaved AC owner's grief, especially because their distress may seem like an over-reaction to those around them. At work or in the family, others may remark accordingly eg. 'It was only a hamster'; 'Get over it!'. Such remarks can cause the bereaved owner further distress, and engender a sense of shame for the grief
47) Pet Death and Owners' Memorialization Choices, Kogan, L.R., Packman, W., Bussolari, C., Currin-McCulloch, J., Erdman, P. (2022)	This study was designed to better understand how people memorialize their pets through the use of continuing bonds (CB) expressions, as well as their choices pertaining to after-death body care, decisions	Research Article	Online, anonymous, cross-sectional survey distributed to pet owners who had experienced the loss of a companion animal. 517 partecipants	Usa	The study found that choices regarding the expression of CB in response to pet death are similar to those witnessed after human loss.	Results suggest that it is essential that those grieving the death of their pet be supported and reassured that there is no right or wrong way to grieve, with all options recognized as legitimate in the experience

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
	related to taking time off work following the death, the impact of their religious beliefs on memorialization choices, and how their veterinarian responded to the death.					and expression of one's grief
48) When the bond breaks: Variables associated with grief following companion animal los, Cowling, D.M., Isenstein, S.G.E., & Schneider, M.S. (2020)	This research investigated variables related to grief following pet loss.	Research Article	Online quantitative survey. 85 partecipants	Null	Variables included type of relationship, animal species, amount of time since death, cause of death, attachment, and social support. We also examined emotions hypothesized to be associated with pet loss: grief, guilt, and loneliness. The cohort was divided into three groups rep- resenting high, middle, and low levels of grief. Individuals in the high grief group experienced the highest level of guilt and loneliness when compared with those with low and medium levels of grief	Grief was also related to the way in which participants described their pets. Those who classified their pet as their "child" or "best friend" reported significantly higher levels of grief in comparison with those who considered their pets to be "good companions." Other variables related to level of grief included age, which was inversely related to grief, guilt, and loneliness, and the presence of supportive others

Study details	Aims and purposes	Study design	Characteristics of the participants	Country	Impostazione/considerazioni aggiuntive	Setting Theme(s) of included articles/Results
						ameliorated guilt and loneliness. Species of animal was related to guilt and grief, with rabbit owners exhibiting significantly less guilt and grief than dog and cat owners.
49) Pet Loss: Understanding Disenfranchised Grief, Memorial Use, and Posttraumatic Growth, July 2019 Anthrozoös 32(4):555-568	This study investigated the relationship between disenfranchised grief, memorialization, and posttraumatic growth in bereaved pet owners.	Research Article	an online survey, respondents (n = 133) completed standardized measures, including the Pet Bereavement Questionnaire, the Loss of Social Support subscale from the Grief Experience Questionnaire, and the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory-Short Form (PTGI-SF).		There was a significant interaction between disenfranchised grief, grief severity, and posttraumatic growth, suggesting that disenfranchised grief inhibits posttraumatic growth when grief severity is high.	This study shows that dis-enfranchised grief can inhibit posttraumatic growth following the loss of a pet, highlighting the complicated relationship between posttraumatic growth, grief intensity, and disenfranchised grief.

References

- Ahn, J., Lee, S. W., Kim, K., Jin, B., & Chung, U. S. (2023). The Relationship Between Childhood Trauma Experience and Complicated Grief: The Importance of Psychological Support for Individuals Coping With Pet Loss in Korea. *Journal of Korean medical science*, *38*(37), e305. https://doi.org/10.3346/jkms.2023.38.e305
- American Veterinary Medical Association. (2018) *AVMA Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook* (2017–2018th ed.). Schaumburg, IL: American Veterinary Medical Association.

- Baydak, M. A. (2000). Human grief on the death of a pet. https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/items/c8270d3f-8312-46cc-bd1c-240dac82328f
- Bentz, A. I., & Bach, C. (2009). Fare thee well: how to help owners (and yourself) deal with the death of a beloved pet. *Compendium (Yardley, PA)*, *31*(11), 514–519.
- Brown, C.A., Wilson, D.M., Carr, E., Gross, D.P., Miciak, M. and Wallace, J.E., (2023) Older adults and companion animal death:A survey of bereavement anddisenfranchised grief, *Human-Animal Interactions,* 5 May 2023 https://doi.org/10.1079/hai.2023.0017
- Brown, O. K., & Symons, D. K. (2016). "My pet has passed": Relations of adult attachment styles and current feelings of grief and trauma after the event. *Death studies*, *40*(4), 247–255. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2015.1128499
- Bussolari, C., Habarth, J., Kimpara, S., Katz, R., Carlos, F., Chow, A., Osada, H., Osada, Y., Carmack, B. J., Field, N. P., & Packman, W. (2017). Posttraumatic Growth Following the Loss of a Pet. *Omega*, 30222817690403. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222817690403
- Cesur-Soysal, G., & Arı, E. (2024). How We Disenfranchise Grief for Self and Other: An Empirical Study. *Omega*, *89*(2), 530–549. https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228221075203
- Cleary, M., West, S., Thapa, D. K., Westman, M., Vesk, K., & Kornhaber, R. (2022). Grieving the loss of a pet: A qualitative systematic review. *Death studies*, *46*(9), 2167–2178. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2021.1901799
- Clements, P. T., Benasutti, K. M., & Carmone, A. (2003). Support for bereaved owners of pets. *Perspectives in psychiatric care*, *39*(2), 49–54. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6163.2003.tb00676.x
- Cohen S. P. (2002). Can pets function as family members? *Western Journal of Nursing Research. Special Issue: Human-Animal Interaction*, 24(6), 621–638. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F019394502320555386
- Cooney, K. A., Kogan, L. R., Brooks, S. L., & Ellis, C. A. (2021). Pet Owners' Expectations for Pet End-of-Life Support and After-Death Body Care: Exploration and Practical Applications. *Topics in companion animal medicine*, *43*, 100503. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tcam.2020.100503
- Cowling, D.M., Isenstein, S.G.E., & Schneider, M.S. (2020). When the bond breaks: Variables associated with grief following companion animal loss. *Anthrozoös, 33*(6), 693–708. https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2020.1824651
- Crawford, K. M., Zhu, Y., Davis, K. A., Ernst, S., Jacobsson, K., Nishimi, K., Smith, A. D. A. C., & Dunn, E. C. (2021). The mental health effects of pet death during childhood: is it better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all?. *European child & adolescent psychiatry*, *30*(10), 1547–1558. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-020-01594-5
- Crossley, M. K. and Rolland, C. (2022). Overcoming the social stigma of losing a pet: considerations for counseling professionals. Human-Animal Interactions. https://doi.org/10.1079/hai.2022.0022
- d'Ovidio, D., & Pirrone, F. (2018). A cross-sectional survey to evaluate the pet squirrel population and ownership profiles. *Preventive veterinary medicine*, *159*, 65–71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.prevetmed.2018.08.018
- Dunn, K. L., Mehler, S. J., & Greenberg, H. S. (2005). Social work with a pet loss support group in a university veterinary hospital. *Social work in health care*, *41*(2), 59–70. https://doi.org/10.1300/J010v41n02_04
- Eckerd, L. M., Barnett, J. E., & Jett-Dias, L. (2016). Grief following pet and human loss: Closeness is key. *Death studies*, *40*(5), 275–282. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2016.1139014
- Field, N. P., Orsini, L., Gavish, R., & Packman, W. (2009). Role of attachment in response to pet loss. *Death studies*, *33*(4), 334–355. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481180802705783
- Hess-Holden, C. L., Monaghan, C. L., & Justice, C. A. (2017). Pet Bereavement Support Groups: A Guide for Mental Health Professionals. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, *12*(4), 440–450. https://doi.org/10.1080/15401383.2017.1328291
- Hewson, C. (2014). Grief for animal companions and an approach to supporting their bereaved owners. *Bereavement Care*, 33(3), 103–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/02682621.2014.980985
- Hughes, B., & Lewis Harkin, B. (2022). The Impact of Continuing Bonds Between Pet Owners and Their Pets Following the Death of Their Pet: A Systematic Narrative Synthesis. *Omega*, 302228221125955. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228221125955
- Kemp, H. R., Jacobs, N., & Stewart, S. (2016). The lived experience of companion-animal loss: A systematic review of qualitative studies. *Anthrozoös, 29*(4), 533–557. https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2016.1228772
- Kimura, Y., Kawabata, H., & Maezawa, M. (2011). Psychiatric investigation of 18 bereaved pet owners. *The Journal of veterinary medical science*, *73*(8), 1083–1087. https://doi.org/10.1292/jvms.10-0317

- Kitowska, A., H., Sørensen, M., Skødstrup, M.E., Danielson, N., Brandenborg, P., Langergaard, S., & Hansen, T.G.B. (2022). *Comparing grief over people and pets*. Poster presented at 30th anniversary conference of the International Association of Human Animal Interaction Organizations.
- Kogan, L.R., Packman, W., Bussolari, C., Currin-McCulloch, J., Erdman, P. (2022) Pet Death and Owners' Memorialization Choices, *Illness Crisis and Loss,* Volume 32, Issue 2, https://doi.org/10.1177/10541373221143046
- Lange L, (2023) Mourned Pets. About Coping with Animal Death in Veterinary Practice and Caregiver's Experience Mourned Pets. About Coping with Animal Death in Veterinary Practice and Caregiver's Experience, *Zoophilologica* Special Edition: Veterinary Social Work:1–17
- Lavorgna, B. F., & Hutton, V. E. (2019). Grief severity: A comparison between human and companion animal death. *Death studies*, *43*(8), 521–526. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2018.1491485
- Lee S. A. (2020). Does the DSM-5 grief disorder apply to owners of deceased pets? A psychometric study of impairment during pet loss. *Psychiatry research*, *285*, 112800. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.112800
- Leonhardt-Parr, E., & Rumble, B. (2024). Coping with Animal Companion Loss: A Thematic Analysis of Pet Bereavement Counselling. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*, *89*(1), 362–378. https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228211073217
- Lloyd, J., Budge, C., La Grow, S., & Stafford, K. (2021). The End of the Partnership With a Guide Dog: Emotional Responses, Effects on Quality of Life and Relationships With Subsequent Dogs. *Frontiers in veterinary science*, *8*, 543463. https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2021.543463
- López-Cepero, J., Garcia-Martínez, J., Martos-Montes, R., & Rivera, F. (2024). Bereavement for Companion Animals: Intensity, Moderating Variables, and Effects on Wellbeing. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2024.2324284
- Lykins, A. D., McGreevy, P. D., Bennett, B., Paul, N. K., & Gotsis, N. (2023). Attachment styles, continuing bonds, and grief following companion animal death. *Death Studies*, *48*(7), 698–705. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2023.2265868
- Lyons, M., Floyd, K., McCray, H., Peddie, C., Spurdle, K., Tlusty, A., Watkinson, C., & Brewer, G. (2022). Expressions of Grief in Online Discussion Forums-Linguistic Similarities and Differences in Pet and Human Bereavement. *Omega*, *85*(4), 1007–1025. https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222820914678
- Matte, A. R., Khosa, D. K., Meehan, M. P., Coe, J. B., & Niel, L. (2021). An Exploratory Study of Veterinary Professionals' Self-Reported Support of Bereaved Clients Before, During, and After Companion Animal Euthanasia in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. *Omega*, *83*(3), 352–370. https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222819853924
- Matte, A. R., Khosa, D. K., Coe, J. B., Meehan, M., & Niel, L. (2020). Exploring pet owners' experiences and self-reported satisfaction and grief following companion animal euthanasia. *The Veterinary record*, *187*(12), e122. https://doi.org/10.1136/vr.105734
- Mohanti B. K. (2017). Grieving the Loss of a Pet Needs the Health System Recognition. *Journal of social work in end-of-life & palliative care*, *13*(4), 215–218. https://doi.org/10.1080/15524256.2017.1385568
- Nieforth, L. O., & Kaufman, S. (2024). Practitioner Experiences of the Death of an Equine in an Equine-Assisted Services Program. *Omega*, 302228241249200. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228241249200
- Packman, W., Carmack, B. J., Katz, R., Carlos, F., Field, N. P., & Landers, C. (2014). Online survey as empathic bridging for the disenfranchised grief of pet loss. *Omega*, *69*(4), 333–356. https://doi.org/10.2190/OM.69.4.a
- Park, R. M., Royal, K. D., & Gruen, M. E. (2023). A Literature Review: Pet Bereavement and Coping Mechanisms. *Journal of applied animal welfare science: JAAWS*, *26*(3), 285–299. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888705.2021.1934839
- Park, H. J., & Jeong, G. C. (2022). Relationship between Attachment to Pet and Post-Traumatic Growth after Pet Loss: Mediated Moderating Effect of Cognitive Emotion Regulation Strategy through Separation Pain. *Behavioral sciences (Basel, Switzerland)*, *12*(8), 291. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs12080291
- Pirrone F., Albertini M., Mazzola S.M., Pierantoni L., Bavagnoli F., Vigo D. (2015a) Correlation between the size of companion dogs and the profile of the owner: A cross-sectional study in ItalyMarian. *DOG Behav.* 2015;1:32–43. doi: 10.4454/DB.V1I2.14.
- Pirrone F., Pierantoni L., Mazzola S., Vigo D. (2015b) Owner and animal factors predict the incidence of, and owner reaction toward, problematic behaviors in companion dogs. *J. Vet. Behav.* 2015;10:295–301.
- Podrazik, D., Shackford, S., Becker, L., & Heckert, T. (2000). The Death of a Pet: Implications for Loss and Bereavement Across the Lifespan. *Journal of Personal and Interpersonal Loss*, *5*(4), 361–395. https://doi.org/10.1080/10811440008407852
- Reisbig A. M. J., Hafen M., Siqueira Drake A. A., Girard D., Breunig Z. B. (2017). Companion animal death: A qualitative analysis of relationship quality, loss, and coping. *OMEGA Journal of Death and Dying*, 75(2), 124–150. https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222815612607

- Schmidt, M., Naylor, P. E., Cohen, D., Gomez, R., Moses, J. A., Jr, Rappoport, M., & Packman, W. (2020). Pet loss and continuing bonds in children and adolescents. *Death studies*, *44*(5), 278–284. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2018.1541942
- Spain B, O'Dwyer L, Moston S. Pet loss: understanding disenfranchised grief, memorial use, and posttraumatic growth. *Anthrozoös*. 2019;32(4):555–568. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2019.1621545
- Stokes, S., Planchon, L., Templer, D., & Keller, J. (2002). Death of a Companion Cat or Dog and Human Bereavement: Psychosocial Variables. *Society & Animals*, *10*(1), 93-105. https://doi.org/10.1163/156853002760030897
- Testoni, I., De Vincenzo, C., Campigli, M., Caregnato Manzatti, A., Ronconi, L., & Uccheddu, S. (2023). Validation of the HHHHHMM Scale in the Italian Context: Assessing Pets' Quality of Life and Qualitatively Exploring Owners' Grief. *Animals: an open access journal from MDPI*, *13*(6), 1049. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani13061049
- Testoni, I., De Cataldo, L., Ronconi, L., Colombo, E. S., Stefanini, C., Dal Zotto, B., & Zamperini, A. (2019). Pet Grief: Tools to Assess Owners' Bereavement and Veterinary Communication Skills. *Animals: an open access journal from MDPI*, *9*(2), *67*. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani9020067
- Tzivian, L., Friger, M., & Kushnir, T. (2015). Associations between stress and quality of life: differences between owners keeping a living dog or losing a dog by euthanasia. *PloS one*, *10*(3), e0121081. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0121081
- Uccheddu, S., De Cataldo, L., Albertini, M., Coren, S., Da Graça Pereira, G., Haverbeke, A., Mills, D. S., Pierantoni, L., Riemer, S., Ronconi, L., Testoni, I., & Pirrone, F. (2019). Pet Humanisation and Related Grief: Development and Validation of a Structured Questionnaire Instrument to Evaluate Grief in People Who Have Lost a Companion Dog. *Animals: an open access journal from MDPI*, *9*(11), 933. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani9110933
- Wilson, D. M., Underwood, L., Carr, E., Gross, D. P., Kane, M., Miciak, M., Wallace, J.E., & Brown, C. A. (2021). Older women's experiences of companion animal death: impacts on well-being and aging-in-place. *BMC geriatrics*, *21*(1), 470. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-021-02410-8
- Wong, P.W.C., Lau, K. C. T., Liu, L. L., Yuen, G. S. N., & Wing-Lok, P. (2017). Beyond Recovery. *Omega*, *75*(2), 103–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222815612603
- Zilcha-Mano, S., Mikulincer, M., Shaver, P.R., (2011) An attachment perspective on human–pet relationships: Conceptualization and assessment of pet attachment orientations, *Journal of Research in Personality,* Volume 45, Issue 4, 2011, 345-357.

Declarations

Funding: No specific funding was received for this work.

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.