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Momentary energy levels in healthcare professionals working with facility dogs
Shania Sinha, Clare Jensen, & Marguerite O'Haire

Past research has shown that pediatric healthcare professionals working with full-time therapy dogs (*facility dogs*) reported less work-related burnout and better mental health overall. However, specific in-the-moment effects of facility dogs on healthcare professionals have yet to be examined. The purpose of this study was to use Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) to assess the effects of facility dog presence on momentary energy levels of pediatric healthcare professionals. EMA data for the present study were collected from 122 healthcare professionals working in pediatric hospitals. Within the sample, participants working with a facility dog (*handlers*; $n=61$) were compared to control participants working without one ($n=61$), matched on age, gender identity, job position category and pet ownership. Average daily energy levels were compared between handlers and control participants using independent t-test analysis. Among handlers, multilevel modeling analysis was used to test the association of facility dog presence with momentary energy levels. Results showed that facility dog handlers and control participants reported similar energy at work overall ($p=.115$). However, we found that handlers reported having significantly higher energy at specific timepoints in which their facility dogs were present at work ($p<.01$). Findings suggest that working with a facility dog does not affect overall energy at work but may help pediatric healthcare professionals to feel more energetic in the moments when the dog is present. Future research should aim to collect more data on mental states of healthcare professionals to examine short- and long-term effects of working with facility dogs.

Keywords: facility dog, healthcare professional, Ecological Momentary Assessment, EMA, mental health