

# Behaviour of dogs after adoption from a shelter

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## Summary

Dogs play a variety of roles in people's lives, and it is not uncommon for dog owners to lack sufficient knowledge to meet the needs of their pet and cope with daily difficulties. Failure to recognize the need for development in this regard can result in exacerbation of behavioural problems. The purpose of this study was to assess the changes in dogs' behaviour after adoption from a shelter and to verify the persistence of types of behaviour considered undesirable by either the shelter staff or the new owners. Owners of dogs adopted from shelters are commonly faced with relatively or absolutely undesirable behaviours. Often the dog's history prior to its placement in a shelter is unknown, which can result in difficulties in caring for it and increase the risk of exacerbation of behavioural problems. The role of shelter staff responsible for recognizing the dog's personality and their management of information during the adoption process have proven to be crucial. Approximately half of the dogs housed in the shelter faced factors causing aggression towards other animals. This was the most common type of undesirable behaviour (alongside phobias) after adoption. Most dogs were fearful and withdrawn (52.1%) during the first month in their new home. Changes in their behaviour were most often observed 2–3 months after adoption, and nearly all respondents (92.2%) considered the changes to be positive. The undesirable behaviours most easily eliminated were destructiveness and failure to maintain hygiene. The majority of respondents (57.3%) had used or were currently using the services of a specialist to help with their dog's behaviour. These were most often behaviourists (84.5%), while the fewest respondents had chosen to continue working with a specialist from the shelter (8.5%). The owners most often discontinued the consultations because satisfactory results had been achieved. The following can be concluded from the survey: 1. The behaviour of dogs adopted from the shelter showed improvement, and some of their undesirable behaviours were eliminated. 2. Shelters need to implement a policy of informing people of the possibility of behavioural problems. 3. It may be helpful to organize training sessions for people adopting dogs from a shelter in order to increase their knowledge of how to care for the animal and how to deal with potential difficulties.

**KEY WORDS:** undesirable behaviour, adoption, dogs, shelter