



Introducing...

Dr Sarah Zito - Sarah graduated from the Royal Veterinary College and has worked in small animal and equine practice in the UK and Australia. She has a membership in feline medicine and has just finished a PhD researching factors involved in the unwanted cat problem. Her interest in animal welfare also led her to work with the University of Queensland, the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League of Queensland to establish and implement a shelter medicine rotation for the University of Queensland.



Determinants of Cat Choice and Outcomes for Adult Cats and Kittens Adopted from an Australian Animal Shelter

Commonly, more adult cats than kittens are euthanized in animal shelters. We surveyed 382 cat adopters to assess adoption outcomes and potential determinants of adopters' choice of cat age group and price. Most adopters had benevolent motivations for adopting from the shelter and had put considerable thought into the adoption and responsible ownership requirements. However, adult cat adopters were more likely to have been influenced by price than kitten adopters. Adoption outcomes were generally positive for both adult cats and kittens and for adult cats adopted at low prices. The latter finding alleviates concerns about the outcomes of "low-cost" adoptions and lends support for the use of "low-cost" adoptions as an option for attempting to increase adoption rates. In addition, the results provide information that can be used to inform future campaigns aimed at increasing the number of adult cat adoptions, particularly in devising marketing strategies for adult cats.

Rethinking unwanted cat management from a human-cat relationship perspective

Our research aimed to improve understanding of human-cat relationships and ownership perception in order to inform management strategies for the unwanted cat problem.

Cat owners and non-owners surrendering cats shared a common concern for cats and their welfare. The majority of non-owners interacted with, formed attachments to, and felt responsible for the cats they surrendered. The extent of cat semi-ownership in the study population was considerable. Surrender reasons were usually complex and multifactorial. The collection of more detailed information by shelters at the time of surrender is warranted to guide strategies to prevent future surrenders.

Determinants of ownership perception in surrenderers and not surrenderers studied included cat acquisition method, association time, caretaking behaviours, cat friendliness/health, and feelings about unowned cats and the acceptability of feeding unowned cats. Our findings improve our understanding of cat semi-ownership and can inform approaches to mitigate the contribution of semi-owners to the unwanted cat problem.