

# Daily Mobility among Community-Dwelling Older Adults with Pet Dogs in Urban Areas: A Scoping Review



Liliana Sousa<sup>1</sup>, Suellen Costa<sup>2</sup>, Helena Reis<sup>3</sup>, Miguel Padeiro<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CINTESIS@RISE, Department of Education and Psychology, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal (lilianax@ua.pt)

<sup>2</sup> University of Aveiro, Portugal

<sup>3</sup> University of Coimbra, Centre of Interdisciplinary Studies (CEIS20), Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

<sup>4</sup> Centre of Studies in Geography and Spatial Planning (CEGOT), University of Coimbra, Portugal

## Background/Objectives

Companion dogs are part of families and households and are relevant to individuals of all ages. Research has focused on the role of therapy and service dogs in people's lives. Dogs have been involved for therapeutic purposes in interventions targeting older adults with depression and dementia, mostly in institutional settings, and have shown effectiveness<sup>1</sup>.

Literature on the impact of pet dogs on community-dwelling older adults is scarce. This study mapped the literature on the impact of having a companion dog on the mobility of community-dwelling older adults living in urban areas.

## Methods

Scoping Review<sup>2</sup>.

Electronic databases were searched, and studies written in English, Portuguese, and Spanish that were published in a peer-reviewed journal were identified. After a careful review, 23 eligible studies were identified, and relevant findings were extracted

## Main Findings

Companion dogs contribute in terms of companionship and affection to the well-being of older adults; In terms of daily mobility, results suggest ambiguous impacts that depend on the dog, the owner, and environmental features. For instance, older adult dog owners may spend more time at home to ensure that their dogs are not alone, thus limiting mobility. Dog characteristics (in particular size, age, and behavior) have been scarcely explored and may mediate dog-owner mobility. Outdoor spaces, including dog-friendly spaces, increase the frequency and quality of activities outside the home, including with the companion dog.

## Conclusion

More research is needed to clarify what makes having a companion dog key to promoting physical activity and active and healthy aging.

## References

1 Jain, B., Syed, S., Hafford-Letchfield, T. & O'Farrell-Pearce, S. (2020). Dog-assisted interventions and outcomes for older adults in residential long-term care facilities: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Older People Nursing*, 15(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/opn.12320>.

2 Levac D, Colquhoun H, O. K. (2010). Introduction: Rationality. *Representing and Intervening*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511814563.003>.

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