Case initiation: First responders in cases of animal cruelty and neglect
Typical...Ideal? Sequence of Events

Incident

Reporting

Police officers

RSPCA inspectors

Expert Witnesses:
Clinicians; Pathologists; Inspection Officers; Behaviorists; Biologists; etc.

Crown Prosecution Service

RSPCA Prosecution Service (Private prosecution)

Magistrates Court
Police officers   RSPCA inspectors

Expert Witnesses/Animal Professionals:
Clinicians; Pathologists; Inspection officers; Behaviorists; Biologists; etc.

Crown Prosecution Service        RSPCA Prosecution Service

Magistrates Court
The incident – an event that has negatively impacted animal welfare

What quality of life determinants does “Animal Welfare” specifically address? hunger, thirst, pain, injury, disease, fear, distress, and discomfort, and the inability to express normal behavior.

UK Law: The Animal Welfare Act of 2006 – no animal fetal or embryonic, wild or not commonly domesticated is “protected” under this act.
The act protects against the unnecessary suffering, mutilation, poisoning, fighting, neglect, or sale to persons under the age of 16 of “protected animals”.
UK Law: Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996 – protects wild mammals against specific acts of cruelty intended to cause unnecessary suffering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What incidents are most common?</th>
<th>What animal is most commonly abused?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual animal neglect</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large scale neglect/Hoarding</td>
<td>Cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional (non-accidental) injury</td>
<td>Horses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>Farm Animals</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
UK statistics: RSPCA cruelty complaints investigated in 2009 – 140,000-145,000** (489 of these were for fighting). In 2009 there were 2,500 convictions through the RSPCA under the AWA.

311 cruelty cases (neglect/abandonment/non-accidental injury) (60 of which are hoarding cases), listed for the UK on pet-abuse.com

Canadian statistics: 43.1% neglect, 29.2% non-accidental injury, 4.80% poisonings, 10.7% natural disease, and 11.43% inconclusive (Review of 271 criminal cases)*

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US Statistics collated in 2012 reviewing 16,934 incidents

- **Neglect** (32.2%)
- **Hoarding** (12.4%)
- **Shooting** (11.3%)
- **Fighting** (8.8%)
- Beating, mutilation, throwing, stabbing, burning (7.0%)

Incident statistics

• Incidents of abuse number in the thousands each year
• Adults most often commit these crimes
• Neglect makes up 30-40% of cases and non-accidental injury makes up roughly 30% of cases.

Chances of seeing cases in practice are high
Neglect/Abandonment

Incidents tend to be related to socio-economic conditions and educational shortcomings – cases increase in difficult economic times and/or among marginal social groups.

2005 UK RSPCA reports: 68,732 animals whose basic food, water and shelter needs were not met (this included 19,352 animals who were not given access to water).

**RSPCA White Paper Five Years Measuring Animal WWElfare in the UK 2005-2009
Neglect

Suggestive Client behaviors:

Presents animal(s) with unkempt appearance; Poor body condition, untreated wounds, flea and tick infestations, etc. without request for a medical work up

Serious illness or injury without request for euthanasia or apparent concern for welfare

Dangerous or unsanitary environment

Inadequate shelter

Patronek, 1998; Anti-Cruelty society
**Hoard**

Phenomenon was first reported in 1982. Cases tend to be complex and resource demanding: often involve great expense addressing large numbers of animals that require re-homing and treatment, as well as integrated social and mental welfare systems for the owner or family involved.

Associated mental illness including OCD, attachment and personality disorder, depression and addiction. Women are reported 2X as often as men.
• Stressful events tend to trigger
• Usually identified in middle aged or older adults
• 40% of those who hoard objects also hoard animals
• There is a reported nearly 100% recidivism rate
• Analysis of records on pet-abuse.com indicates a five-fold increase in reports of animal hoarding incidents from 2000 to 2006

1 AVMA practice guidelines, Arkow, Boyden and Patterson-Kane
Hoarding

Suggestive Client behaviors:

• Large numbers of animals
• Inconsistent care
• Use of multiple practices
• Office visits for infectious disease and trauma; unkempt appearance
• Treatment request inconsistent with nature of disease/prognosis – unrealistic expectations

Patronek, 1998; Anti-Cruelty society
Fighting

Predominantly done with dogs; also some cockfighting and badger digging and baiting reported in the UK.

Refereed fights occur in a pit between two dogs and are bet on by a group gathered at the pit – length and outcome variable.
Fighting Suggestive Client behaviors:

Characteristics pattern of bite wounds on head, neck and legs.

Owner may treat wounds at home.

Typically a bull breed is used, most often American pit bull terriers.

Dogs are selected to inter-dog aggression

Patronek, 1998; Anti-Cruelty society
Intentional injury

May include: beating, kicking, stomping, stabbing, throwing, burning, choking, suffocating, drowning, hanging, torture, mutilation, poisoning, shooting, vehicular trauma.

• Dogs and cats under 2 years of age are at greater risk.
• Associations - The Humane Society of the United States estimates that nearly 1 million animals a year are abused or killed in connection with domestic violence.
Utah battered Women’s shelter: Threats of pet abuse and/or actual pet abuse reported by 71% of the women with pets.

Of the 22 women with children, 32% reported that one of their children had hurt or killed one of their pets.

Australian study: a woman whose partner had threatened a pet was 5 times more likely to have experienced domestic violence (study compared 102 women in domestic violence services to women not in services)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act of Abuse</th>
<th>No. of Households Where Act Occurred at Least Once</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kicked</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punched or hit</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threw pet</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit with object</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swung/thrown by tail</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beheaded/broke neck</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choked/strangled/suffocated</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hung/held in air with lead</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabbed/stabbed</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Warning signs of potential for escalated or repeated violence:

• Positioning/posing/displaying victims or parts of victims
• Use of messages or threats associated with the abuse
• Return to the scene

• Documentation – photos, video etc.
• Association of a person with the incident – generic or specific

Munro & Thrusfield, 2001
• Ritualism; Re-enactment of media
• Description of altered state of consciousness
• Absence of insight or explanation for the act; Lack of an economic motive
• Bizarre justifications or lack of remorse
• Use of multiple forms of injury
• Use of fire
• Prolonged duration; Pre-planning
• Other illegal acts committed at same time
• Use for other means – intimidate or coerce a human victim
• Acts against an animal that had prior positive interaction
Intentional injury (non-accidental injury)

Suggestive Client behaviors:
• History provided not consistent with injuries found
• Delay in seeking treatment
• Old injury evident on exam or imaging – rib fractures in particular
• Repetitive injury
• Altered – fearful or aggressive – behavior associated with a particular family member

Patronek, 1998; Anti-Cruelty society
Sociologic Overlaps in Animal Cruelty Incidents

Study looking at 153 matched intentional harm to animals vs. no record of animal abuse

PARENTAL REPORTS OF CHILDREN’S CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ON THE CHILD BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST (2-12 year olds) –Percent reporting “Sometimes/Often True”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Abused boys</th>
<th>Abused girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonabused boys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=453</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonabused girls</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34.80%</td>
<td>27.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Friedrich, personal communication, April 1992]

PERCENT WITH OTHER OFFENSES NOTED IN STATE CRIMINAL RECORDS*

*All chi square comparisons between abusers & controls significant at p<.0001

Arluke, Levin, Lule, & Ascione (1999)
Does it matter if an incident is reported to an RSPCA inspector or Police officer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSPCA: primary role in protecting the welfare of animals.</th>
<th>Police: primary role in protecting the public and public property.</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The RSPCA provides a 24 hour service to the public through the National Control Centre telephone system and has approximately 530 field officers in England and Wales.</td>
<td>• Capacity, interest, procedure, and expertise in cases of animal cruelty will vary across forces, but any overlap with human abuse or cruelty will obviously fall under police jurisdiction. • In Scotland, inspectors are required by law to be accompanied by another inspector or police officer when investigating a cruelty or neglect complaint.</td>
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</table>
Once an incident has been reported, what will an RSPCA inspector or Police officer do next?

Investigation may include: Visits to a private home, farm, pet shop or kennel; meeting with owners; talking to witnesses and collecting statements; taking photos or video.

If an investigation shows neglect: inspectors advise owners on animal care.
If an investigation shows evidence of cruelty or neglect that cannot be resolved through advice, the inspector will consult a vet/expert and ask their opinion of the animal’s condition.

If it is concluded that the animal is suffering, further action is taken. Where owners do not co-operate or refuse entry to their property, the RSPCA has to call on the assistance of the police. The RSPCA have no special powers for entry or search and seizure.

A suspect must be told, in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), that they are able to seek legal advice and are also given the option to have their animal examined by a vet/expert of their choice in order to seek an alternative opinion on the animal’s condition.
Investigations by RSPCA or police officers are followed with a complete report.

In the case of RSPCA cruelty inspection, the report is sent to the RSPCA or SSPCA headquarters, and a decision is made whether to issue a warning or take the matter to court.
Questions or Comments?