EXCESSIVE BARKING: WHEN AND WHY IT OCCURS

INTRODUCTION:
In a study by Wells and Hepper, 70.7% of owners complain that their dogs bark excessively. However, only a few studies addressing solutions to excessive barking exist. This study aimed to understand the contexts in which excessive barking occurs and what dog owners do about it.

METHOD:
In fall of 2004, we administered a web-based questionnaire to dog owners who received an invitation to participate through email or online discussion groups. This generated a total of 131 responses, fulfilling our inclusion criteria. Background data on the dogs was collated. Of the 131 dogs, 79.9% of the dogs were spayed or neutered. 85.9% of the dogs were female (50.5%). 84.5% of the dogs were spayed or neutered. In response to owner leaving the property, 35.2% have to keep the dog away from the front door.

RESULTS:
The goal of this study was to determine the contexts in which excessive barking occurs, to learn more about the nature of excessive barking—an important step in helping to focus efforts for developing solutions.

PURPOSE:

WHEN AND WHY IT OCCURS

When Owners are Away

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Dog Indoors</th>
<th>Dog Outdoors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
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<td>Attention-seeking</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
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I. WHEN DO DOGS BARK EXCESSIVELY

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<tr>
<td>When owners are away</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When dogs are left inside</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>56.7%</td>
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II. WHAT TRIGGERS THE EXCESSIVE BARKING

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III. PATTERNS OF BARKING BEHAVIOR

Barking during the owner’s presence:

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| 10.8% of dogs bark excessively when the owner is in the house only
| 13.5% bark only when the owner is out of house only
| 74.9% bark only when the owner is at home and the dog is inside

Barking when the owner is home:

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| 62.9% of dogs bark both inside and outside
| 72.0% bark only inside when the owner is home
| 27.0% bark only outside when the owner is home

Barking when the owner is away:

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| 22.0% bark only when outdoors, but not when indoors
| 56.7% bark both when the owner is away and the dog is inside
| 21.4% bark both when the dog is inside and the owner is away

DISCUSSION

One of the most common themes that emerge throughout is that of the dog or band dog who is educated to the yard and barks while the owners are away. FINDING: barking does occur in this context; however, the responses still offer valuable insight as to how and when barking occurs and what dog owners do about it.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the evidence presented here supports the findings of previous studies that finding the causes of barking owners understand the causes of barking and providing them with positive reinforcement training programs that address the specific trigger can be effective.

REFERENCES


IMPLICATION:
Furthermore, in this group of dogs, use of some form of punishment as a method for controlling barking could potentially be addressed using positive reinforcement training techniques involving the owners rewarding the dog for quiet behavior.

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