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Assessment of Noise Induced Fear and Anxiety in Dogs: Modification by a Novel Fish Hydrolysate Supplemented Diet

G.M. Landsberg, I. Mougeot, S. Kelly, N.W. Milgram



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1 **Assessment of Noise Induced Fear and Anxiety in Dogs: Modification by a Novel Fish Hydrolysate**
2 **Supplemented Diet**

3 Landsberg, G.M^a., Mougeot, I^b., Kelly, S^c., Milgram, N.W^a.

4

5 a – CanCog Technologies, Toronto, Ontario, 120 Carlton St Suite 204, Toronto, ON M5A 4K2

6 b - Royal Canin, Guelph, Ontario, 100 Beiber Road, R.R. #3 N1H 6H9

7 c - VivoCore Inc. Toronto, Ontario, 120 Carlton St Suite 203, Toronto, ON M5A 4K2

8

9 Corresponding author: Gary Landsberg, 120 Carlton St Suite 204, Toronto, ON M5A 4K2 Tel: 416-986-
10 8234.

11 E-mail address: garyl@cancog.com

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13 **ABSTRACT**

14 This study examined the effectiveness of two different dosage levels of a fish hydrolysate, a natural
15 supplement derived from fish protein, in reducing fear and anxiety in beagle dogs. A thunderstorm
16 model was used, which entailed playing a recorded track of a thunderstorm to elicit measures in an
17 open field test. Fear and anxiety were assessed with behavioral measures, which included noise
18 induced activity and inactivity and an observational behavioral assessment, and blood cortisol levels. The
19 test compound showed some effectiveness in reducing a hyperactivity response to thunder, and in
20 reducing the cortisol response. The results of this study provide initial support for considering the use of
21 fish hydrolysate as a dietary supplement to reduce fear and anxiety.

22 **KEYWORDS:** Behavior, fish hydrolysate, fear, anxiety, cortisol, thunderstorm model

23 **INTRODUCTION**

24 Anxiety can be defined as a response to the anticipation of prospective or imagined danger or
25 uncertainty, while fear is a state of alarm and agitation caused by present or threatened danger
26 (Sherman and Mills, 2008). Individual differences in fear and anxiety are underlying factors in many
27 canine behavior problems. An estimated 29% of pet dogs show signs of anxiety-related behaviors,
28 (Denenberg et al., 2013), and 17% to 49% of all dogs have been estimated to demonstrate an aversion
29 to noise (Blackwell et al., 2013). Resultant behavior issues may adversely affect the human pet-
30 relationship leading to a decreased commitment to pet care, relinquishment or euthanasia. (Bamberger
31 and Houpt, 2006; Casey, 2002.) In addition, the stress associated with fear and anxiety can adversely
32 affect health and lifespan (Dreschel, 2010).

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