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Fatal dog attacks in Spain under a breed specific legislation: a ten year retrospective study

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18 **In loving memory of Mario Cantin, D.D.S., M.Sc., Ph.D. (May 1983, September 2016), who passed away very young but left in us the best life lessons. He will be deeply missed as a wonderful person and valued colleague.**

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31 **Abstract:**

32 Forensic evaluation of fatal dog attacks requires interdisciplinary teams where veterinarians testify with forensic pathologists and odontologists to provide information about the circumstances of the attack, examine the scene and study the autopsy of the victim or animal. In Spain, there is a shortage of scientific studies focused on dog bites, and fewer studies on fatal attacks. The aim of this study is use a multidisciplinary approach to review fatal dog maulings that occurred in Spain over a 10-year period. A retrospective descriptive epidemiological study of all deaths that resulted from attacks by domestic dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*) that occurred in Spain during a ten year period (2004–2013) was performed. Different sources of information were reviewed: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) [National Institute of Statistics], electronic search of media reports, forensic autopsy and police reports. Demographics and epidemiological information related to the victims, dogs and scenario of the events were collected. In the study period, 16 cases of fatal dog attacks (mean 1.6 cases/year) resulting in 17 deaths (71% male) were identified. The mean age of the victims was 45.9±31.5 years (range 1–90). Victims were over 65 years in 35% and younger than 5 years in 29% of cases. Fatal attacks were reported from 13 provinces. Barcelona was the province with the major incidence: (3 cases with 4 victims) followed by Tenerife, Canary Islands (2 cases). Some risk factors were identified: males and adults over 65 years, 1 dog involved, certain dog breeds, pet dog owned by the victim, attack at the victim's property and injuries localized in the head, face and neck area. Most breeds involved in fatal attacks are considered by the current Spanish legislation as potential dangerous dogs (PDD). The implementation of breed specific legislation (BSL) in Spain (1999 and 2002) does not seem to have produced a reduction in dog bite related fatalities over the last decade. A national reporting system on dog bites and dog attacks with a multidisciplinary approach including veterinary specialists is necessary (e.g. behavioural medicine), with the aim to reach a better understanding of the related risk factors as a first step in their prevention.

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54 **Key words:** fatal dog attack; dog bite; potential dangerous dogs; breed specific legislation; forensic veterinary medicine

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56 **Introduction**

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