

Article

Not peer-reviewed version

Challenges in Sheltering Seized Animals to Hoarders from a One Welfare Perspective

[Paola Fossati](#) *

Posted Date: 25 July 2023

doi: 10.20944/preprints202307.1279.v1

Keywords: One welfare; animal welfare; animal shelter; animal hoarding; hoarders; companion animals; seized animals; challenges.



Preprints.org is a free multidiscipline platform providing preprint service that is dedicated to making early versions of research outputs permanently available and citable. Preprints posted at Preprints.org appear in Web of Science, Crossref, Google Scholar, Scilit, Europe PMC.

Copyright: This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Article

Challenges in Sheltering Seized Animals to Hoarders from a One Welfare Perspective

Paola Fossati

Department of Environmental Science and Policy, University of the Studies of Milan. paola.fossati@unimi.it

Simple Summary: Animal hoarding is a serious behavioral issue that overwhelms hoarders and impacts many animals, causing them to suffer in an inadequate, unsanitary, and hidden environment. It poses significant challenges to animal welfare, frequently leading to mistreatment, along with threats to human health. When such an obsessive accumulation of animals is discovered, exposing their harmful condition, there are not perfect solutions. Positive interventions can be planned using the emerging One Welfare approach, which recognizes the interdependence of animal welfare, human well-being, and the environment. Typically, the accumulated animals are seized and relocated to a shelter, where additional challenges arise for both the animals and the shelter staff. The One Welfare approach, which is increasingly being used alongside One Health to work at the interface of human and animal health and welfare, could be adopted to address the poor state of humans while also planning strategies that benefit animals, including their conditions in shelters. In this paper, I examine the main issues surrounding animal hoarding, as well as the challenges raised by the common transfer of animals to shelters in light of the One Welfare principles.

Abstract: Animal hoarding is a complex issue that, when discovered, frequently necessitates opening shelter doors to many animals. This is due to hoarders' inability to provide even the most basic welfare standards for their animals, resulting in poor welfare conditions that frequently border on mistreatment. These people are frequently unaware of their failure to care for their animals, as well as of the harm that they cause to people around them and the environment. They usually don't care for themselves either. The majority of hoarders have difficult histories, and they all need help getting back on track. Meanwhile, when the agencies discover the *status quo*, the animals are usually seized and taken to shelters, where they face a variety of welfare consequences, beginning with confinement in an unknown environment that is associated with additional risks (e.g., infectious diseases, behavioral deterioration, and distress). Furthermore, the targeted shelters are frequently overcrowded and cannot adequately accommodate the large number of animals found in hoarders' environments. The One Welfare approach, which is increasingly being used alongside One Health to work at the intersection of human and animal health and welfare, could be adopted to benefit animals while also addressing the poor states of humans. This concept's depiction of the interconnections between animal welfare, human wellbeing, and the environment can fit with all the components of the animal hoarding phenomenon, including the peculiarities of the hoarding environment as well as those of shelters where animals are often moved. The purpose of this paper is to offer insights into how the One Welfare concept may be critical in tackling all of the interests concerned in these cases and offering solutions.

Keywords: one welfare; animal welfare; animal shelter; animal hoarding; hoarders; companion animals; seized animals; challenges

1. Introduction

Animal welfare is a concept that is becoming increasingly rich in meaning as knowledge about animals' sentience progresses, but also as evidence of direct and indirect links between animal welfare and human welfare, as well as between the latter and the environment, grows [1,2].

This link is evident in various contexts of social life, particularly those in which welfare levels are directly proportional to one another: better human welfare corresponds to better animal welfare, and vice versa [3].

The plight of animal hoarders is one example of the deteriorating living conditions of both animals and the people who keep them in their homes [4].

Whatever the cause that pushed them into that state, hoarders end up living in filthy conditions of social isolation and extreme personal neglect, suffering profound discomfort because of their situation of environmental inadequacy. It is well known, in fact, that people suffering from hoarding disorder tend to isolate themselves from the outside world and surround themselves with "things" from which they cannot separate themselves, with a proclivity to accumulate until levels of clutter and a lack of living space are reached, making their own daily lives difficult [5,6]. When the accumulation involves animals, thus living, sentient beings, the problem becomes more complex and incisive from a welfare standpoint. The inability to care for a large number of animals, confining them in the house or, in some cases, in its outdoor spaces, not only worsens the hygienic and sanitary condition of the environment but also determines the impairment of the physical and sanitary state of the animals themselves, inadequate nutrition, behavioral consequences, and, in the most severe cases, even the death of the weakest individuals [7].

Since hoarders usually have no awareness of their problem [7] and do not recognize the distressing conditions of the animals they own [8], the decision to remove the animals from them is common when their situation is discovered. This type of intervention is usually implemented in the most serious cases, where the animals' keeping is deemed incompatible with their nature and well-being, if not mistreatment [9]. In situations where conditions attributable to a criminal offence are detectable, hoarding is prosecuted under animal cruelty laws that allow for seizure and possible forfeiture [8] [In Italy, articles 727 and 544 *ter* p.c. consider animals as sensitive beings and protect them, respectively, from detention in conditions incompatible with their nature and producing serious suffering and from mistreatment, while acknowledging they are worthy of good welfare. According to Art. 544 *sexies* p.c., for offences of animal mistreatment, the forfeiture of the animal is always foreseen, unless the animal belongs to a person who is not involved in the offence]; [animal cruelty statutes usually demand general intent, while hoarders commonly do not intend to harm their animals; nevertheless, it can often be demonstrated that they deliberately acquired a growing number of animals despite being unable to provide adequate care (see 9, at 21 Section II.A.2)]. A civil approach may be used when animal hoarders are willing to accept help and intervention and appear to be willing to return to normal behavior [see 9, at 21-22 (explaining that civil forfeiture laws have the potential to expedite the animal rescue process)].

It is, however, necessary to have shelters that can accept and care for these animals. These are often difficult challenges because the animals may not adapt and because shelter facilities are often already full and do not have enough space to accommodate the large number of animals commonly found in hoarders' homes [10]. Within this framework, ensuring the welfare of these animals becomes challenging, and the question of the welfare of the people who have (mis)kept them up to that point remains open. They, in turn, must be helped to regain a sense of balance in their lives and a healthy relationship with their companion animals [11].

The One Welfare approach [12], which is increasingly being used in conjunction with One Health to work at the interface of human and animal health and welfare, could be adopted to have a positive impact on animals while also addressing poor human conditions. Since positive interactions between humans and animals are an important aspect of it, this approach is appealing when targeted interventions on the two parties are required, even if they are destined not to resume the relationship later. Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that animal hoarding is a complex problem that requires the involvement of multiple agencies, ranging from social services to mental health services, environmental health services to veterinary services [13]. The purpose of this article is to offer insights into how the concept of One Welfare can be applied to address the problem of animal hoarding as well as the "welfare interests" of the parties involved.

2. The One Welfare Approach

There is growing evidence that the condition of well-being extends beyond physical health, but mental health and, more broadly, well-being addressed in a multidimensional manner must also be considered. This is true for both humans and nonhuman animals and is well summarized in the

concept of "One Welfare," which recently flanked and supplemented the already well-known One Health principle [14]. Both are supported by the link that is established between the welfare of all living things and the ecosystem in which they exist, as is the need for an interdisciplinary approach to studying this interconnectedness [15].

Addressing welfare necessitates confronting important (and sometimes contentious) issues in science, health, productivity, economics, politics, and even ethics [16].

As a result, it is critical to have an approach that does not focus on isolated disciplines but connects them like pieces of a puzzle. This composite picture points back to the need for balancing and promoting various welfare interests, which is becoming increasingly apparent in a global context of interconnected ecosystems and societies [17]. Human welfare is important among the various aspects considered, as is the physical and social environment, in addition to the assorted body of animal welfare issues, precisely because of the interlink that exists between the conditions of all life forms that comprise a community.

The interdependence of human and animal conditions stems from a common evolutionary origin and creates a dynamic complexity that requires more than just the human dimension to be considered when addressing the effects of coexistence.

In terms of health, the unifying concept of One Health has long supported policies and programs aimed at improving the health of people, other animals, and the environment [18]. The existence of a relationship between the various human and nonhuman life forms that populate our planet is thus already recognized in terms of health, but it risks being ignored and undersupported in terms of welfare due to the complexity of the area and the fact that evidence is sometimes still developing when it comes to animal mental states [19].

Yet, it has already been established that "animal well-being" and "human well-being" both refer to a state in which "individuals have the psychological, social, and physical resources they require to meet a specific psychological, social, and/or physical challenge" [20]. In fact, in both cases, they evoke a positive mental and emotional state that complements health, allowing one to speak of "quality of life." The One Welfare concept embraces and draws attention to this connection to break down silos and benefit both humans, animals, and the planet. The One Welfare Framework is divided into five sections, which are listed in no particular order of priority in Table 1, according to Pinillos, 2018 [12]. Section 1 will be considered for the purposes of this article.

Table 1. The One Welfare Framework. From R.G. Pinillos One Welfare: a framework to improve animal welfare and human well-being. CAB International, 2018.

Table 1. The One Welfare Framework
Section 1: The connections between animal and human abuse and neglect.
Section 2: The Social Implications of Improved Animal Welfare.
Section 3: Animal Health and Welfare, Human Well-being, Food Security and Sustainability.
Section 4: Assisted Interventions Involving Animals, Humans, and the Environment.
Section 5: Sustainability: Connections Between Biodiversity, the Environment, Animal Welfare, and Human Well-being.

3. Relationships between Animal Abuse and Human Neglect

Section 1 of the One Welfare Framework addresses human-animal interactions that can result in abuse, neglect, and suffering. Building on the research that has already confirmed the link between animal abuse and human abuse, it aims to better understand this connection and highlight its complexity in order to raise awareness of it.

Abuse of vulnerable beings, whether human or animal, implies intentional physical or psychological violence, sometimes with a goal of control or coercion.

Neglect, on the other hand, is typically the result of carelessness, indifference, or ignorance; it can also be the result of neglectful behavior that personally affects the perpetrators, who are also careless towards themselves [21]. It implies a failure to provide supervision, basic needs fulfilment, medical care, and even providing the victims with necessities they cannot provide for themselves [22].

Understanding the link between animal abuse, human violence, and neglect is proposed as a means to identify and potentially prevent incidents of intentional mistreatment directed at humans and society shortly after those directed at animals [23].

As previously stated, the hoarder's behavior may have illegal traits and, although not necessarily involving malicious intent, may be considered a crime against animals. Indeed, animal neglect results in sacrificing their welfare to the point of causing them severe suffering [8 (see 1)]. The perception of the welfare of their animals in the minds of the animal hoarders gradually deteriorates, to the point of not realizing the decreasing quality of their condition and being convinced that they are well cared for [8 (see 1)]. However, this does not change the fact that they subject animals to living conditions that are contrary to their nature and, in many cases, intolerable to them.

The environment in which animals are forced to live has a significant impact on their lives and well-being [24]. Therefore, it is critical that animal welfare be included among the non-marginal aspects of social and environmental relevance in the One Welfare approach.

4. The Life of an Animal Hoarder

An animal hoarder is generally described in the literature as a person who owns many animals and lives with them in unsanitary conditions [7,8]. Hoarder behavior is defined as following a degenerative course [4], hiding behind a mendacious attitude of "love for animals," selfish self-servingness [25], a lack of empathy [26], and even elements of criminal relevance, which he or she fails to recognize. The Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium (HARC) has laid out and displayed this characterization in reports professionally documenting the phenomenon of animal hoarding [27].

For framing hoarder behavior, the following criteria have been identified [4, 27]:

- Having a larger than usual number of companion animals
- Inability to provide minimum acceptable standards of care and hygiene, resulting in illness, injuries (untreated), and even death.
- Denial or minimization of the inability to address animal problems and avoid the consequences of failure on people's and animals' living conditions.
- Obsessive persistence in accumulating a collection of animals despite progressively deteriorating conditions that are not recognized.

Dogs and cats are the most commonly accumulated animals, with an average of 39 animals, but this can reach a hundred or more in many cases [28]. As a result, living conditions for both the animals and the humans who share the dwelling become routinely untenable. Inadequate cleaning results in the accumulation of dirt and even animal droppings; the unhealthy environment quickly becomes colonized by parasites, bacteria, mould, pests, and, in some cases, plagued by the presence of dead and unremoved animal carcasses. Toilet facilities are frequently inoperable [28,29]. In the context of a broad medical definition, hoarders are framed under the umbrella of neuroses and personality disorders [30,31,32]. Along with these pathological states, senile diseases such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease can be included. Memory and attention problems have been documented in hoarders [33]. Hoarders' behavior can be compared to addictions in which impulse control is impaired [30,34]. Self-abandonment is very common, especially in the elderly, who are at risk of malnutrition, poor treatment management, and eviction from the home [4,34].

The problems and inconveniences that threaten the health and safety of hoarders and impair their daily lives also have an impact on those who live with them, members of the surrounding communities, and, more broadly, on society as a whole, with reference to the expenses that become necessary for cleaning and pest control or relocation to new housing, which are generally borne by public authorities [7]. This is true despite the fact that the costs of animal accumulation are frequently overlooked and underestimated [35].

The degree to which hoarders perceive and understand their own level of social symptoms and needs varies [6,11,36]. This is most likely why the recidivism rate tends to be high, implying that commonly used intervention strategies are significantly ineffective [6,11].

5. The Lives of Hoarded Animals

Animals who are hoarded always have welfare issues. They are, in fact, victims of the hoarder's (often unconscious) need to support his or her own emotional needs, his or her significant lack of empathy, and his or her misguided sense of treating them well. As a result, their true needs go unmet [6].

Hoarded animals are typically kept in deplorable conditions, such as filth, neglect, malnutrition, parasitism, infectious diseases, or other untreated chronic conditions. They are sometimes discovered dead [37]. Furthermore, these animals are deprived of a suitable environment for their ethology and are forced to live in conditions that are contrary to their nature. As a result, deprivation, pathological states, pain, and suffering characterize their lives. As a consequence of poor socialization, they frequently develop abnormal behaviors such as fear, reactions to touch, separation anxiety, stereotypies, and chronic stress [39]. They almost never receive spay/neuter assistance or veterinary care. Another issue is that in hoarding situations, the animals' suffering is prolonged over time. The deficiencies to which they are subjected, as well as a lack of veterinary care and proper social interaction, characterize their entire existence at the hoarder and can lead to slow agony [37]. Furthermore, it has been documented that hoarding can have long-term effects on animals, even after they are removed from the hoarder and placed for adoption with "normal" families [40]. The problem of animal hoarding is so complex that addressing it requires the collaboration of many disciplines and professional figures, including psychologists and social workers [41], sanitation workers [42], veterinarians [26], lawyers [43], and others. This diverse input of expertise and interventions is beneficial not only in addressing all aspects involved but also in preventing recidivism. A holistic approach is thus preferable, and the One Welfare principle can assist in achieving an efficient solution for all stakeholders.

6. The Lives of Animals in a Shelter

Animal shelters are designed to accept and protect animals who do not have a family to care for them or who have been abandoned for a variety of reasons. Unlike in the past, modern shelters do not euthanize animals as soon as they enter or after a few days if they are not claimed by an owner. Sensibilities in Western society have evolved, and more serious infectious diseases, such as rabies, have been eradicated or are extremely rare in Western countries.

Thus, animal shelters no longer purely sanitary, but they are now dedicated to saving the lives of the animals they house. Several countries, including Italy, Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, India, Taiwan, and Costa Rica, have implemented a no-kill policy that prohibits the euthanasia of animals in shelters [44]. However, to provide an adequate standard of animal welfare, many resources, both financial and in terms of the number of shelter workers, must be available. Above all, the availability of space to house them, taking into account their individual characteristics as well as the possibilities (or impossibilities) of socialization, is critical.

The picture of existing shelters is not uniform because care, management, and regulation differ between facilities. Furthermore, it should be noted that the requirement to keep animals in shelters until they are returned to their original owner, adopted by a new family, die of natural causes, or are euthanized for serious health or behavioral reasons can lead to overcrowding and, as a result, worsening welfare conditions. Shelters, on the other hand, while having the common goal of providing adequate space and care for the animals they house's accommodation requirements as well as their nutritional and health needs, are generally designed to house animals temporarily (though some often stay for long periods) and do not have the characteristics of a real home [45,46].

Animals are often confined to a small space and must share it with other individuals, as well as access to food and care resources. Care for each animal is reduced when the facility is understaffed [47].

The quality of life and care in the shelter has an impact on the animals, and for some, it can be especially problematic. This is particularly true for cats, which are greatly affected by stress from various factors in their shelter environment [48,49,50,51,52,53,] and when animals are forced into long-term confinement [54]. Furthermore, individual differences in reaction to environmental stress have been observed in some subjects [55,56,57].

In any case, arrival in a new context, placement in inadequate space and often in poor environments, loss of affective bonds or otherwise habitual relationships with the person or people they know, and the presence of other unfamiliar animals are critical aspects for all animals [58,59,45,60,61,62,63]. This is exacerbated if the facility is not functional, if supervision is inadequate, and if sufficient funding is not available [64]. Even in well-managed refuges, the presence of transient, displaced, and mixed animal populations promotes biological instability, which increases the risk of pathogen exposure [65]. In addition, the effects of sheltering on animal behavior have been documented in the literature, with animals unable to cope successfully with the new environment often developing reduced behavioral variability, abnormal or stereotyped behaviors, as well as stress-related attitudes such as lack of responsiveness, altered activity levels, or other specific signs such as vocalizing, self-grooming, and coprophagy [24,66].

7. The Challenges

One Welfare approach has not yet been extensively researched in terms of practical applications and spin-offs, and it is interesting to point out what challenges are most likely to be faced by those who carry out their animal welfare work in the field for the purposes of future research. Situations involving vulnerable people who own animals necessitate special measures, such as considering not bringing all their animals to shelters. When animal removal is the only option and the shelter doors are opened to them, challenges arise for both the animals, as to their adaptability, and the shelter staff, who must receive and settle them while ensuring their well-being. The work will be more or less complicated and challenging depending on the number of animals and their relative psycho-physical condition, because the recovery of their welfare and the resources that must be deployed are dependent on them. A critical point arises when considering addressing the condition of their owners in order to determine whether it can be resolved and whether the animals can be provided with new welfare. This point fully reflects the mandate of the One Welfare approach. Finding strategies and making decisions that protect both people and animals is a difficult challenge, especially when the goal is to avoid separation. When the decision to remove the animals is not supported by law, for example, because the situation is not severe enough to warrant actual mistreatment or the people holding the animals have mental or cognitive issues, the ethical question of whether it is acceptable to separate them from their animals or whether alternative solutions should be explored arises.

Alternative solutions are consistent with the concept of One Welfare because any useful solution to avoid separating animals from their owners improves situations when they are retrievable, reduces stress for both parties, and improves their living conditions. It also relieves strain on shelters and avoids the expenditure of economic and professional resources required to support all the steps involved in removing animals and placing them in a shelter, as well as veterinary care (which may include sterilization costs).

Keeping the One Welfare principle in mind in human-animal interactions would imply considering the welfare of the individual animals directly involved as well as the welfare of the humans involved, which is a significant challenge in the case of animal hoarders, who have a large number of animals. Moreover, from the One Welfare perspective, the goal of ensuring the welfare of all stakeholders extends beyond those directly concerned, taking into account indirect impacts such as those on society and the environment. This allows the shelter to fit well into the One Welfare framework because it means that the facility should provide welfare opportunities not only for the animals housed there and the staff members and volunteers who care for them but also for the outside community and the environment surrounding it.

When animals from hoarding environments are to be housed, the criterion of considering their needs creates a challenge because their health and behavior are almost always compromised and

require a concentration of effort and attention that may not be reconciled with staff routine activities (that cannot be neglected for the benefit of other housed animals). Furthermore, when (usually in large numbers) animals from hoarders arrive at shelters from cruelty cases of hoarding, and after being seized, they are legally framed as "seized" but not yet forfeited. Thus, they are taken away from the owner, who, however, doesn't lose ownership rights until convicted since animals are classified as property by the legal system. Moreover, seized animals, sometimes must be retained as evidence in the prosecution (in criminal cases) [19].

These legal circumstances impose restrictions on shelter workers, who must obtain permission for interventions that are limited by "property rights," such as spaying/neutering. These animals are not available for adoption as long as the hoarder owns them. This lengthens their stay in shelters, even if they have no specific problems to recover from. Shelter staff is required to be ready to make decisions in these cases, either by activating the authorities to obtain the necessary permits, for example, or by employing a strategy of alternative measures, which can "circumvent" the legal constraints [For example, establishing temporary fostering for families who are aware of the animals' legal status and are willing to possibly return them if the seizure is not confirmed but who can offer them a better condition (and welfare) than in the shelter in the meantime] and also relieve the number of animals in the facility.

In fact, managing large numbers of animals, many of which are in poor condition and whose mental and physical health must be assessed, is a significant challenge in and of itself.

8. Discussion

When an animal hoarding situation is discovered, it is critical to "rescue" both the people and the animals involved by providing the necessary counselling or treatment [67,68]. To that end, collaboration among various agencies is beneficial, ranging from social and health services to veterinary services, as well as emergency services, law enforcement, and animal welfare associations. Early and integrated intervention with diverse expertise allows all humans and animals involved to be helped more effectively and prevents the situation from deteriorating [26,9].

This benefits overall well-being and increases the likelihood of successful rescue intervention. In comparison to the study of object hoarding disorder [5], there is little information on the effectiveness of strategies used to address animal hoarding [11,69]. Yet, it is a dysfunction that has devastating consequences for all those involved, causing social problems as well as animal welfare issues. A primary goal of municipal public administrations, as well as social and veterinary services, should be to identify a scientific and methodical approach to studying these cases and developing intervention procedures with a focus on prevention.

Prevention should be addressed broadly as avoiding the establishment and consolidation of hoarding mechanisms and effects, as well as minimizing recurrences in cases identified and treated. Many human and animal lives could be saved in this manner. It would imply protecting their well-being and avoiding emotional upheaval. Proper care can significantly improve the physical and behavioral conditions of the people and animals involved. Furthermore, the living environment can be kept in a healthy and comfortable condition.

Preventing large numbers of animals from being seized and taken to shelters, where they will struggle to adapt and may be unsuitable for their delicate mental and physical recovery needs, is especially important after they have suffered for a long time from the deprivation and discomfort of the hoarding environment. Furthermore, veterinary care is not always guaranteed in shelters, and much of animal welfare is dependent on the available economic and professional resources.

In addition to these general considerations, one must consider the wide range of hoarding situations into which these animals are forced, as well as the length of time the conditions of distress have persisted and the level of mental and physical impairment they have reached. The latter varies on an individual basis and, ideally, should be considered when making the best decisions for each animal, taking into account the prediction of how they would fare in the shelter and whether there are any viable alternatives or forms of support to improve their health and well-being.

In addition, the hoarders' position must be evaluated in terms of legal responsibilities, as the possibility of seizing their animals and transporting them to a shelter is dependent on this.

The One Welfare approach, as a complement to the One Health approach, may be appropriate as a foundation for addressing the challenges posed by animal hoarding and moving animals to shelters. Although it must be acknowledged that, in many cases, this risky behavior cannot be stopped, integrating existing strategies with the interdisciplinary collaboration fostered by this concept could improve the resolution of hoarding cases.

This method has already been tested in a number of communities in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe [26,70], and it has proven to be an effective tool for approaching hoarders in a way that addresses the various multidimensional aspects of their condition while also earning their trust. Focusing on the plight of hoarders as well as that of the animals while involving the capacities of social services and "animal services," such as veterinary professionals and animal behavior experts, recognizes that both human and animal welfare are at stake and important and that the well-being of both these categories should be improved. This makes it advisable to consider alternative measures before seizing animals and moving them to shelters.

From this perspective, the ethical value of the One Welfare approach emerges, which seeks to balance all interests in the best way possible [71]. In the case of animal hoarding, intangible factors such as ethical and cultural factors, as well as pragmatic aspects such as health and economic impacts, are relevant. There is no doubt that ensuring the welfare of humans and animals, both of which are living and sentient beings with their own interests, the most important of which is not to suffer, is an ethical goal and moral responsibility of a social and civil community.

The attention paid to taking initiatives aimed not only at humans but also at animals, while taking into account the vulnerability of both categories, thus gives the One Welfare approach an ethical value, but it also brings it in line with current culture, given the role animals play in modern societies, including donating unconditional and selfless support [72,73].

9. Conclusions

The discovery of animal hoarding situations highlights the need to care for both the vulnerable people at the center of them and the animals, who are equally vulnerable. The One Welfare approach, which complements the One Health approach, can be very helpful in determining the best strategy in each of these situations, considering all of the interests involved. To date, research has revealed that the condition of animals found in precarious housing environments is not uniform. However, animals are frequently removed and taken to shelters. This action allows them to be immediately removed from an unhealthy environment. Nevertheless, transfer to a shelter has consequences for the animals' health and welfare, depending on both their adaptability and the functionality of the facility that will house them.

A One Welfare strategy suggests taking advantage of the interdisciplinary collaboration of different agencies and professionals, but most importantly, it emphasises the opportunity to explore alternatives to the standard solutions wherever possible. These latter must be improved further and enhanced. More research on this topic is recommended, including evaluation of the outcomes of the various forms of intervention investigated and, possibly, taking into account the unique needs encountered in each case. In particular, when hoarders' animals are taken to shelters, it is critical to compare the work processes implemented and their outcomes and then evaluate them from the One Welfare perspectives.

This will make it possible to determine whether the challenges posed by the need to manage these situations are on the way to being met positively.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: The Author thanks the Special Issue sponsors, the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals International, FOUR PAWS, and the Australian Institute of Animal Management, for funding the publication fees.

Conflicts of Interest: The Author declares no conflict of interest.

References

1. Hewson, C.J. What is animal welfare? Common definitions and their practical consequences. *Can Vet J.* **2003**, *Jun*, 44(6):496-9.
2. Broom, D.M. Animal welfare: concepts and measurements. *J Anim Sci* **1991**, *69*, 4167–4175
3. Hansen, B.G.; Østerås, O. Farmer welfare and animal welfare- Exploring the relationship between farmer's occupational well-being and stress, farm expansion and animal welfare. *Prev Vet Med.* **2019**, *Oct*, 1;170:104741.
4. Patronek, G. Hoarding of animals: an under-recognized public health problem in a difficult to study population. *Public Health Rep.* **1999**, *114*, 82–87.
5. Davidson, E.J.; Dozier, M.E.; Pittman, J.O.E.; Mayes, T.L.; Blanco, B.H.; Gault, J.D.; Schwarz, L.J.; Ayers, C.R. Recent Advances in Research on Hoarding. *Curr Psychiatry Rep.* **2019**, *Aug 13*, 21(9):91.
6. Berry, C.; Patronek, G.J.; Lockwood, R. Animal hoarding: A study of 56 case outcomes. *Anim. Law* **2005**, *11*, 167-194
7. Frost, R.O.; Steketee, G.; Williams L. Hoarding: A Community Health Problem, *Health Soc. Care Community* **8**, 229-234
8. Patronek, G.J.; Loar, L.; Nathanson, J.N.; Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium *Animal hoarding: structuring interdisciplinary responses to help people, animals and communities at risk*; Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium Ed.; Boston, Massachusetts, 2006
9. Beeler, E. Earlier intervention needed in animal-hoarding cases. *J Am Vet Med Assoc.* **2003**, 222:1674.
10. Bernstein, M.; Wolf, B.M. Time to Feed the Evidence: What to Do with Seized Animals, 35 *Envtl. L. Rep.* **2005**, 10679, 10681–83
11. Patronek, G.J.; Nathanson, J.N. A theoretical perspective to inform assessment and treatment strategies for animal hoarders. *Clin. Psychol. Rev.* **2009**, 29:274–281.
12. Pinillos, R.G. *One Welfare: A Framework to Improve Animal Welfare and Human Well-Being* CABI: Wallingford, UK, **2018**, ISBN9781786393845.
13. Williams, B. Animal hoarding: devastating, complex, and everyone's concern. *Ment. Health Pract.* **2014**, 17(6):35-39
14. Pinillos, R.G.; Appleby, M.C.; Manteca, X.; Scott-Park, F.; Smith, C.; Velarde, A. One Welfare - a platform for improving human and animal welfare. *Vet Rec.* **2016**, *Oct 22*, 179(16):412-413.
15. Westley, F.; Vredenburg H. Interorganizational collaboration and the preservation of global biodiversity. *J Org Sci* **1997**; 8:381–403
16. Fraser, D. Animal welfare, values, and mandated science. In: *Fraser D, ed. Understanding animal welfare: the science in its cultural context.* West Sussex, England: Wiley-Blackwell, **2008**, 260–274.
17. Mellor, D.J.; Bayvel, A.C.D. New Zealand's inclusive science-based system for setting animal welfare standards. *J Appl Anim Behav Sci* **2008**, 113:313–329.
18. Atlas, R.M. One Health: its origins and future. *Curr Top Microbiol Immunol.* **2013**, 365:1-13.
19. Krupenye, C.; Call, J. Theory of mind in animals: Current and future directions. *Wiley Interdiscip Rev Cogn Sci.* **2019**, *Nov*;10(6):e1503.
20. Dodge, R.; Daly, AP.; Huyton, J.; Sanders, L.D. The challenge of defining wellbeing. *Int. J. Wellbeing* **2012**, 2(3), 222–235.
21. Owen, J.; Woolham, J.; Manthorpe, J.; Steils, N.; Martineau, S.; Stevens, M.; Tinelli, M. Adult safeguarding managers' understandings of self-neglect and hoarding. *Health Soc Care Community* **2022**, *Nov 30*(6):e4405-e4415.
22. Adigun, O.O.; Mikhail, A.G.; Krawiec, C.; Hatcher, J.D. Abuse and Neglect. [Updated 2023 Jan 2]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; **2023** Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK436015/>
23. Arluke, A.; Levin, J.; Luke, C.; Ascione, F. The Relationship of Animal Abuse to Violence and Other Forms of Antisocial Behavior. *J. Interpers. Violence* **1999**, 14(9), 963–975.
24. Beerda, B.; Schilder, M.B.; van Hooff, J.A.; de Vries, H.W.; Mol, J.A. Chronic stress in dogs subjected to social and spatial restriction. *I. Behavioral responses. Physiol Behav.* **1999** *Apr* 66(2):233-42.

25. Brown, S.E. Self Psychology and the Human-Animal Bond: An Overview. Chapter 8 In: Blazina C., Boyraz G and Shen-Miller D. (eds.), *The Psychology of the Human-Animal Bond. A Resource for Clinicians and Researchers*, Springer Science*Business Media, LLC **2011**, 137-149
26. Patronek, G.J.; Loar, L.; Nathanson, J.N. and Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium *Animal Hoarding: Strategies for Interdisciplinary Interventions to Help People, Animals, and Communities at Risk*. Boston, **2006** MA: Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium.
27. Arluke, A.A.; Frost, R.; Luke, C.; Messner, E.; Nathanson, J.; Patronek, G., Papazian, M., Steketee, G. Health Implications of Animal Hoarding: Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium (HARC). *Health & Social Work*. **2002**, 27: 125..
28. Nathanson, J.N. Animal hoarding: Slipping into the darkness of comorbid animal and self-neglect. *J. Elder Abuse Negl.* **2009**, 21:307–324.
29. Andrews-McClymont, J.G.; Lilienfeld, S.O.; Duke, M.P. Evaluating an animal model of compulsive hoarding in humans. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* **2013**, 17:399–419.
30. Frost, R. People who hoard animals. *Psychiatr. Times*. **2000**, 17(4)
31. Livesley, W.J. An integrated approach to the treatment of personality disorder. *J Ment Health*. **2007**, 16(1), 131–148.
32. Frías-Ibáñez, A.; Palma-Sevillano, C.; Barón-Fernández, F.; Bernáldez-Fernández, I.; Aluco-Sánchez, E. Nosological status of compulsive hoarding: obsessive-compulsive disorder subtype or independent clinical entity. *Actas Esp Psiquiatr.* **2014**, May-Jun;42(3):116-24.
33. Tolin, D.F.; Hallion, L.S.; Wootton, B.M.; Levy, H.C.; Billingsley, A.L.; Das, A.; Katz, B.W.; Stevens, M.C. Subjective cognitive function in hoarding disorder. *Psychiatry Res.* **2018**, 265:215–20.
34. Arluke, A.; Frost, R.; Luke, C.; Messner, E. Health Implications of Animal Hoarding. *Health Soc. Work* **2002**, 27:125-136.
35. Patronek, G.J.; Nathanson, J.N. A theoretical perspective to inform assessment and treatment strategies for animal hoarders. *Clin. Psychol. Rev.* **2009**, 29:274–281.
36. Ayers, C.R.; Saxena, S.; Golshan, S.; Wetherell, J.L. Age at onset and clinical features of late life compulsive hoarding. *Int J Geriatr Psychiatry*. **2010**, 25:142–149.
37. Ung, J.E.; Dozier, M.E.; Bratton, C.; Ayers, C.R. An exploratory investigation of animal hoarding symptoms in a sample of adults diagnosed with hoarding disorder. *J Clin Psychol.* **2017**, 73:1114-1125.
38. Ferreira, E.A.; Paloski, L.H.; Costa, D.B.; Moret-Tatay, C.; Irigaray, T. Q. Psychopathological Comorbid Symptoms in Animal Hoarding Disorder. *Psychiatric Quarterly*. **2020**, 1-10.
39. Puurunen, J.; Hakanen, E.; Salonen, M.K.; Mikkola, S.; Sulkama, S.; Araujo, C.; Lohi, H. Inadequate socialisation, inactivity, and urban living environment are associated with social fearfulness in pet dogs. *Sci Rep.* **2020**, 10:1–10
40. McMillan, FD (2013). Long term effects of hoarding and puppy mills on dogs. Paper presented at *International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association*. **2013**, Orlando, Florida, 13 May.
41. Bodryzlova, Y.; Aude, J.S.; Bergeron, K.; O'Connor, K. Group cognitive-behavioural therapy for hoarding disorder: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Health Soc Care Community*. **2019**, 27: 517– 530.
42. Health implications of animal hoarding. *Health Soc Work*. **2002** May;27(2):125-36.
43. Patronek, G. The problem of animal hoarding. *Municipal Lawyer*. **2001**, 42, 6–19.
44. Arhant, C.; Troxler, J. Is there a relationship between attitudes of shelter staff to cats and the cats' approach behaviour? *Appl. Anim. Behav. Sci.* **2017**, 187:60–68.
45. Taylor, K.D., Mills D.S. The effects of the kennel environment on canine welfare: a critical review of experimental studies. *Anim Welf*. **2007**, 16,435–447
46. Horecka, K.; Neal S. Critical problems for research in animal sheltering, a conceptual analysis. *Front Vet Sci* **2022**, 9:804154.
47. Ammons, D.N. *Assessing Local Performance and Establishing Community Standards*. 3rd ed. Routledge; Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: **2014**. p. 21
48. Carlstead, K.; Brown, J.L.; Strawn, W. Behavioral and physiological correlates of stress in laboratory cats. *Appl. Anim. Behav. Sci.* 1993, 38:143–158.
49. Rochlitz, I. Recommendations for the housing of cats in the home, in catteries and animal shelters, in laboratories and in veterinary surgeries. *J. Feline Med. Surg.* **1999**, 1:181–191.
50. Gourkow, N.; Hamon S.C.; Phillips C.J.C. Effect of gentle stroking and vocalization on behaviour, mucosal immunity and upper respiratory disease in anxious shelter cats. *Prev. Vet. Med.* **2014**, 117:266–275.
51. Stella, J.; Cronney, C.; Buffington, T. Environmental factors that affect the behavior and welfare of domestic cats (*Felis silvestris catus*) housed in cages. *Appl. Anim. Behav. Sci.* **2014**, 160(1):94_105
52. Amat, M.; Camps, T.; Manteca X. Stress in owned cats: Behavioural changes and welfare implications. *J. Feline Med. Surg.* **2016**, 18:577–586.

53. Vitale, K.R.; Behnke, A.C.; Udell, M.A.R. Attachment bonds between domestic cats and humans. *Curr. Biol.* **2019**, *29*:R864–R865.
54. Dalla Villa, P.; Barnard, S.; Di Fede, E.; Podaliri-Vulpiani, M.; Siracusa, C.; Serpell, J. A. Behavioural and physiological responses of shelter dogs to long term confinement. *Vet. Ital.* **2013**, *49*, 231–241
55. Hiby, E.F.; Rooney, N.J.; Bradshaw, J.W. Behavioural and physiological responses of dogs entering rehoming kennels. *Physiol Behav.* **2006 Oct 30**;89(3):385–91.
56. Protopopova, A. Effects of sheltering on physiology, immune function, behavior, and the welfare of dogs. *Physiol Behav.* **2016 May 15**;159:95–103.
57. Martínez-Byer, S.; Urrutia, A.; Szenczi, P.; Hudson, R.; Bánszegi, O. Evidence for Individual Differences in Behaviour and for Behavioural Syndromes in Adult Shelter Cats. *Anim.* **2020**, *10*, 962.
58. Beerda, B.; Schilder, M.B.H.; Van Hooff, J.A.R.A.M.; De Vries, H.W.; Mol, J.A. Behavioural and hormonal indicators of enduring environmental stress in dogs. *Anim Welf.* **2000**, *9*, 49–62.
59. Hewson, C.J.; Hiby, E.F.; Bradshaw, J.W.S. Assessing quality of life in companion and kennelled dogs: a critical review. *Anim Welf.* **2007**, *16*, 89–95
60. Barrera, G.; Jakovcevic, A.; Elgier, A. M.; Mustaca, A.; Bentosela, M. Responses of shelter and pet dogs to an unknown human. *J Vet Behav* **2010** *5*, 339–344
61. Part, C.E.; Kiddie, J.L.; Hayes, W.A.; Mills, D.S.; Neville, R.F.; Morton, D.B.; Collins, L.M. Physiological, physical and behavioural changes in dogs (*Canis familiaris*) when kennelled: Testing the validity of stress parameters. *Physiol Behav.* **2014**, *133*:260–271
62. Barnard, S.; Pedernera, C.; Candeloro, L.; Ferri, N.; Velarde, A.; Dalla Villa, P. Development of a new welfare assessment protocol for practical application in long-term dog shelters. *Vet Rec.* **2016 Jan 2**;178(1):18.
63. van der Laan, J.E.; Vinke, C.M.; Arndt, S.S. Sensor-supported measurement of adaptability of dogs (*Canis familiaris*) to a shelter environment: Nocturnal activity and behavior. *PLoS One.* **2023 Jun 15**;18(6)
64. Turner, P.; Berry, J.; MacDonald, S. Animal shelters and animal welfare: Raising the bar. *Can. Vet. J.* **2012**, *53*:893.
65. Pesavento, P.A.; Murphy, B.G. Common and emerging infectious diseases in the animal shelter. *Vet Pathol.* **2014**, *Mar*;51(2):478–91.
66. Clay, L.; Paterson, M.; Bennett, P.; Perry, G.; Phillips, C. Early Recognition of Behaviour Problems in Shelter Dogs by Monitoring them in their Kennels after Admission to a Shelter. *Anim.* **2019**, *Oct 28*;9(11):875.
67. Lockwood, R. Animal hoarding: The challenge for mental health, law enforcement, and animal welfare professionals. *Behav Sci Law.* **2018**, *Nov*;36(6):698–716.
68. Strong, S.; Federico, J.; Banks, R.; Williams, C. A Collaborative Model for Managing Animal Hoarding Cases. *J Appl Anim Welf Sci.* **2019**, *Jul-Sep*;22(3):267–278.
69. Frost, R.O.; Patronek, G.; Arluke, A.; Steketee, G. The Hoarding of Animals: An Update. *Psichiatr. Times.* **2015**, *32*(4):1–5
70. Bratotiis, C.; Woody, S. Community Interventions for Hoarding. Chap. 24. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Hoarding and Acquiring*. Frost, R.O.; Steketee G. eds. Oxford University Press. **2014**.
71. Fraser, D. What do we mean by "One Welfare"? *4th OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare*. Guadalajara, Mexico. **2016**.
72. Beck, A.M.; Katcher, A.H. *Between Pets and People: The Importance of Animal Companionship*. Purdue University Press, West Lafayette, **1996**.
73. Friedmann, E. The animal–human bond: Health and wellness. In: *Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy: Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice*, ed. A. H. Fine. San Diego: Academic Press. **2000**, 41–57.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.