

Use of a Canine Gastrointestinal Olfactory Stimulant in a Shelter Setting

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A recent investigation linking olfactory triggers to a distinct reflex has highlighted the relationship between “sniffing” the ground and canine defecation. The work presaged the question as to whether dogs awaiting adoption would exhibit the same apparent scent mediation of final peristalsis in a kennel environment. In fact, this study has shown that olfactory gastrointestinal neurobiological pathways remained intact with rescue dogs. Further, use of an olfactory stimulant resulted in more rapid and predictable excretion behavior consistent with prototypical household routines upon adoption. In turn, the canine olfactory stimulant improved operational efficiencies in a shelter management protocol with faster, more reliable “dog walking.” That is, with less time spent literally waiting for dogs to relieve themselves in often stressful, unfamiliar and densely populated shelter settings, more time would be available for interaction and exercise so as to leverage limited resources. Ultimately, this strategy may prove helpful to millions of shelter dogs, improve adoption rates and retention, and reduce relinquishments associated with home soiling.