



## Compulsive Dogs Show Human Disorder

by G. Bossik on October 26th, 2012 at 12:45 pm



Does your dog chase its tail excessively? Does he also snap at invisible flies, pace around, or seemingly go into a trance? Then, according to new research, your pet may have the canine equivalent of obsessive compulsive disorder.

This research was published in a study entitled, *Environmental Effects on Compulsive Tail Chasing in Dogs*.

The authors, Katriina Tiira and seven other scientists, analyzed four different dog breeds and learned that various environmental factors could determine whether a dog would engage in compulsive tail chasing.

"[The] early-onset and the variable nature of the repetitive [behavior] ... share several similar components between canine and human compulsions and supports canine TC [tail chasing] as a model for human OCD," Tiira and colleagues concluded.

The components detailed in the study include behavioral and dietary information that was collected through two Internet-based questionnaires: Stereotypic Behaviour Q and Dog's Personality Q.

The questionnaires were sent to the owners of 368 dogs, among which were breeds such as the Standard Bull Terrier, Miniature Bull Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, and German Shepherd.

The Stereotypic Behaviour Q results show that dogs that chase their tails compulsively may have higher nutritional requirements.

"Our study revealed that dogs receiving dietary supplements chased their tails less compared to dogs not receiving any nutrients," the scientists wrote in the study.

The scientists placed particular emphasis on the need for vitamin B6 and vitamin C in tail chasing dogs and added that there was evidence that vitamins and minerals had also been shown to be helpful in human OCD cases.

The published results of the second questionnaire — Dog's Personality Q — show that tail chasing dogs had been separated from mothers earlier than other dogs and showed fearful behavior.

The scientists likened this canine [separation anxiety](#) and the resulting fear to human OCD. "Childhood trauma and stressful events have been associated with OCD..., suggesting that [the] same environmental factors may influence the development of both dog and human compulsive [behaviors]," they reported.

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