


THE IMPORTANCE AND CHALLENGES OF THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN COMBATING INTERSPECIES VIOLENCE IN LIGHT OF LINK THEORY

A IMPORTÂNCIA E OS DESAFIOS DA ABORDAGEM MULTIDISCIPLINAR NO COMBATE À VIOLÊNCIA INTERESPÉCIES À LUZ DA TEORIA DO LINK

LA IMPORTANCIA Y LOS DESAFÍOS DEL ENFOQUE MULTIDISCIPLINARIO EN LA LUCHA CONTRA LA VIOLENCIA INTERESPECIE A LA LUZ DE LA TEORÍA DEL LINK

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ABSTRACT

The Link Theory, the basis of One Health initiatives, discusses the connection between animal cruelty and domestic violence, which highlights the role of animals as sentinels of deep family disorders. This study contextualizes this theory historically, considering current legislation and its importance in combating interspecies violence. The objective of this work was to disseminate information about the importance of integrated health actions, with an emphasis on the intersection between Veterinary Medicine and Psychology, in addition to pointing out challenges to the multidisciplinary approach and encouraging the dissemination of knowledge. In this context, the need to form multidisciplinary teams, the inclusion of Legal Veterinary Medicine as a mandatory subject in undergraduate courses and the adoption of more effective legal-political and cultural practices were discussed. These practices include increasing sanctions for mistreatment, creating public policies that guarantee humane shelters capable of simultaneously housing women in situations of violence and their pets, improving the legal definition of animal custody in cases of disputes arising from abusive relationships, and strengthening the dissemination of channels for reporting and supporting victims. Such measures are essential for expanding public knowledge and encouraging purposeful discussions on the topic, which favors the dissemination of information to the public that needs it and strengthens actions to combat interspecies violence.

Keywords: Link Theory. Animal Abuse. Domestic Violence. Multidisciplinary Team. Cycle of Violence. One Health.

RESUMO

A Teoria do Link, base das iniciativas em Saúde Única, destaca a conexão entre crueldade animal e violência doméstica, o que evidencia o papel dos animais como sentinelas de desordens familiares profundas. Este estudo contextualiza historicamente essa teoria, considerando as legislações vigentes e sua importância para o combate à violência interespecies. O objetivo deste trabalho foi difundir informações sobre a importância de ações integradas em saúde, com ênfase na interseção entre Medicina Veterinária e Psicologia, além de apontar desafios à abordagem multidisciplinar e incentivar a

disseminação do conhecimento. Nesse contexto, foi abordada a necessidade de formação de equipes multiprofissionais, a inclusão da Medicina Veterinária Legal como disciplina obrigatória na graduação e a adoção de práticas jurídico-políticas e culturais mais efetivas. Essas práticas incluem o aumento das sanções para maus-tratos, a criação de políticas públicas que garantam abrigos humanizados capazes de acolher simultaneamente mulheres em situação de violência e seus animais de estimação, a melhor definição legal da guarda de animais em casos de litígios decorrentes de relações abusivas e o fortalecimento da divulgação dos canais de denúncia e acolhimento às vítimas. Tais medidas são fundamentais para a ampliação do conhecimento público e o estímulo de discussões propositivas sobre o tema, o que favorece a disseminação da informação aos públicos que dela necessitam e fortalece as ações de enfrentamento da violência interespecies.

Palavras-chave: Teoria do Link. Abuso Animal. Violência Doméstica. Equipe Multidisciplinar. Ciclo da Violência. Saúde Única.

RESUMEN

La Teoría del Link, base de las iniciativas One Health (Una Sola Salud), aborda la conexión entre la crueldad hacia los animales y la violencia doméstica, lo que pone de relieve el papel de los animales como centinelas de trastornos familiares profundos. Este estudio contextualiza esta teoría históricamente, teniendo en cuenta la legislación vigente y su importancia en la lucha contra la violencia interespecie. El objetivo de este trabajo fue difundir información sobre la importancia de las acciones sanitarias integradas, con énfasis en la intersección entre la medicina veterinaria y la psicología, además de señalar los retos del enfoque multidisciplinario y fomentar la difusión del conocimiento. En este contexto, se discutió la necesidad de formar equipos multidisciplinarios, la inclusión de la medicina veterinaria legal como asignatura obligatoria en los programas de grado y la adopción de prácticas jurídico-políticas y culturales más eficaces. Estas prácticas incluyen el aumento de las sanciones por maltrato, la creación de políticas públicas que garantizan refugios humanitarios capaces de albergar simultáneamente a mujeres en situaciones de violencia y a sus mascotas, la mejora de la definición legal de la custodia de los animales en casos de disputas derivadas de relaciones abusivas y el fortalecimiento de la difusión de canales para denunciar y apoyar a las víctimas. Estas medidas son esenciales para ampliar el conocimiento público y fomentar debates constructivos sobre el tema, lo que favorece la difusión de información al público que la necesita y refuerza las acciones para combatir la violencia interespecie.

Palabras clave: Teoría del Link. Maltrato animal. Violencia doméstica. Equipo multidisciplinario. Ciclo de violencia. Una Sola Salud.

INTRODUCTION

Contact between humans and animals dates back thousands of years, initially guided by utilitarian domestication. Over time, animals came to be seen as companions, strengthening emotional bonds and giving rise to the multispecies family (Ximenes & Teixeira, 2017). As evolution occurs, this historical-social advancement is expected to reduce archaic practices of domination that challenge moral progress, promoting positive interactions. However, interspecies violence is still a worrying reality and has intensified over time (Fitzgerald et al., 2025; Pulz, 2022). This shows that moral progress is built, but not defined, by the historical-social context (Vázquez, 2018). In this scenario, the Link Theory fits in, with an approach on the relevance of studying the connection between animals and humans, focusing on what the new multispecies family configuration reveals about the bonds established within the domestic environment in which the animal is inserted. In this dynamic, the animal assumes the role of sentinel and signals hidden problems rooted in the family nucleus (Ascione & Arkow, 1999, p. 143). These issues are often expressed by violent acts perpetrated by an aggressive link against animals and other vulnerable beings that live in the same domestic space, such as women, children and the elderly, which is why the theory is called Link Theory (Nassaro, 2013; Padilha, 2011).

In international research (Carlisle-Frank et al., 2004; Flynn, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Gallagher et al., 2008; McEwen, Moffitt, & Arseneault, 2014; Nassaro, 2013; Padilha, 2011), a strong correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence has been indicated, which highlights an intergenerational cycle of aggression driven by the desensitization of the aggressor since childhood. The increasing domestic violence thus reinforces the urgent need for effective strategies to prevent and combat interspecies violence (Fitzgerald et al., 2025; Pulz, 2022; Sant'ana & Reis, 2020).

In that regard, the integrated concept of One Health emphasizes the interdependence between Human, Animal and Environmental Health, since changes in one of the areas can directly affect the others, being essential for effective results within the subject of the present study and in combating other challenges at a global level (Ruegg et al., 2018).

Thus, understanding the historical context of the Link Theory is essential for building effective policies and strategies to promote a more balanced and safer environment for humans and animals (Fitzgerald et al., 2025; Pulz, 2022; Sant'ana & Reis, 2020). Based on this argument, the importance and challenges of a multidisciplinary approach to combating

interspecies violence in light of the Link Theory were elucidated, focusing on the confluence between Veterinary Medicine and Psychology within the thematic area of One Health. Thus, the action fronts of these professions, their limitations and implementation difficulties were investigated, based on current legislation, in order to disseminate and increase the scope and effectiveness of this theory's approach to combating the cycle of interspecies violence.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REVIEW

LINK THEORY: CORRELATION BETWEEN ANIMAL CRUELTY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The connection between animals and humans dates back thousands of years. Since prehistoric times, domestication has been used as a form of control over animals, meeting the daily needs of those who owned them, related to hunting, agriculture, security, transportation, among others. Notably, during the medieval and modern eras, some species began to be considered pets, with dogs commonly found in aristocratic and royal environments. Over time, this practice of keeping companion animals intensified, which resulted in the strengthening of affective and emotional bonds between species and sparked reflections and discussions among philosophers about the appropriate way to treat animals (Fitzgerald et al., 2025; Pulz, 2022).

These animals, previously described as "soulless machines", driven only by instincts and devoid of any form of rudimentary consciousness, were later considered to deserve respectful treatment, based on their capacity for suffering, regardless of whether they possessed rationality or linguistic ability. With the recognition of sentience (Cambridge University, 2012) and animal rights at the legal and international level (UNESCO, 1978), the well-being of an organism began to be considered for the first time (Rosa, 2018).

Sentience is attributed to the state of rudimentary consciousness, characterized by the ability to subjectively experience fundamental sensations and emotions, such as pain, fear, cold and discomfort, and to consciously discern these internal states as pleasant or unpleasant (Pulz, 2022).

Furthermore, it has been argued that the mental activity of animals should be considered in a similar way to that of humans, thus suggesting that animals have at least some level of consciousness (Cambridge University, 2012; Rosa, 2018).

In this context, interactions with animals acquire a meaning beyond the merely utilitarian, even in a more biological scenario (Pulz, 2022), and a new dynamic of

relationships is established, the multispecies family (Ximenes & Teixeira, 2017), with animals often considered as children (Fitzgerald et al., 2025).

Considering this new reality, there is not only an ethical and moral responsibility regarding animals removed from their natural habitats and under guardianship, but also the need for a more in-depth study of the relationships established within this new family context and its impacts (Pulz, 2022).

As evolution advances, it is expected that human beings will abandon archaic practices of domination, even applied to their own species, always seeking positive interactions. However, it is still possible to witness situations that challenge moral progress, disqualifying it. This shows that it is built, but not defined by the historical-social context, since it can progress in both positive and negative ways, as evidenced by moral degradation, violence, and crimes (Collins et al., 2017; Vázquez, 2018).

Violence can be understood from different points of view among scholars. Some consider it natural, others consider it artificial (Modena, 2016). In the first case, it implies that the propensity for violence is innate and therefore inherent in all human beings. In the second case, violence is solely a social cause, as an instrument that legitimizes power, whether through the dissolution of order, revenge of the oppressed or the weakness of the State (WHO, 2012). Regardless of the ideology adopted, it is undeniable that violence represents a global challenge in terms of Public Health and needs to be controlled (Sant'ana & Reis, 2020). Furthermore, some say that it can be learned and replicated (Nassaro, 2013; Padilha, 2011).

It is within the family that the individual begins to build and shape his or her personality, internalizing values and repeating patterns of behavior in the future (Nassaro, 2013; Padilha, 2011). In this context, family dynamics, often hidden, become a risk factor for the occurrence of mistreatment against vulnerable individuals, both human and non-human, who share the same environment as the aggressor, perpetuating a cycle of violence (Baquero, Akamine, Amaku, & Ferreira, 2018; Fitzgerald, et al., 2025; Nassaro, 2013).

Scientific research conducted in various parts of the world (Carlisle-Frank et al., 2004; Flynn, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Gallagher et al., 2008; McEwen et al., 2014; Nassaro, 2013; Padilha, 2011), has consistently pointed to a strong link between animal abuse and domestic violence. In one study analyzed, it was found that 27.1% of adults who were victims of domestic violence during childhood were also involved in cases of abuse of non-human animals (McEwen et al., 2014). In another study, it was observed that 50% of

women who reported domestic violence reported that their aggressors had also perpetrated violent acts against animals (Padilha, 2011). Furthermore, it was found that 93% of animal abusers have a history of involvement in other criminal offenses (Gallagher et al., 2008).

In this sense, animal abuse is no longer just a factor that occurs in isolation in society and is revealed as an indicator or symptom of deep problems present in the family units in which the animals are inserted, and can manifest itself through physical, psychological, symbolic and/or sexual aggression perpetrated by aggressive adults (Collins et al., 2017; Nassaro, 2013, 2016). This correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence, originating from an adult aggressor (Link), is called the Link Theory (Nassaro, 2013; Padilha, 2011). According to this theory, violence is seen as a cycle that repeats itself across generations and arises due to a process of desensitization experienced by the aggressor, triggered by experiences that occurred during the early stages of human development, within the family context, and that are expressed negatively throughout the individual's life (Nassaro, 2013).

Domestic violence has grown at an alarming rate, affecting women, children, adolescents and animals (Waiselfisz, 2015). Crimes against vulnerable groups continue to increase in all their forms. The significant increase of 91.5% in rape cases between 2011 and 2023 is outrageous (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2024).

Furthermore, Brazil has 160 million companion animals (Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Produtos para Animais de Estimação [Abinpet], 2024) and their vulnerability has also increased. In 2022, almost 185 thousand animals were rescued by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) after suffering abuse or abandonment, 96% of which were dogs (Instituto Pet Brasil [IPB], 2022). A survey by the IPB, in partnership with 400 NGOs, revealed that 60% of these animals suffered abuse and 40% were found abandoned. Between 2018 and 2020, the number of vulnerable animals more than doubled (IPB, 2022).

Studies indicate that the presence of animals in violent homes, in addition to negatively affecting the health and well-being of pets, has been associated with interpersonal violence, which represents a risk factor for violent acts, since these animals function as "objects" of coercion by the abusive individual (Fitzgerald et al., 2025; Roguski, 2012). Other factors include social vulnerability and the number of reports of animal abuse (Baquero et al., 2018).

It is important to emphasize that many women remain in or return to abusive relationships because they fear the fate of their pets, who are often used as instruments of coercion and control by their intimate partners (Fitzgerald et al., 2025). This variable can prolong, on average, the time these women remain in situations of violence by two years (Roguski, 2012).

In view of the information mentioned above, it is worth briefly contextualizing, from a historical perspective, the main studies conducted on the correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence. This recap allows us to understand how previous research interacts with current data, offering theoretical and practical support for the formulation of more effective control strategies, given the impossibility of eradicating violence.

Table 1 - Brief historical contextualization of Link Theory (1963-2013)

Year	Author	Study Title	Sample	Objective	Main Results
1963	MacDonald	<i>The Threat to Kill</i>	N=100 psychiatric patients (between 11 and 83 years old), Colorado Hospital. Groups: 48 psychotic and 52 non-psychotic.	To determine whether the threats posed a real risk of homicide.	Verbal death threats alone do not predict crime. Clinical hypothesis of the "Sociopath Triad": animal cruelty, enuresis and arson behavior in childhood as potential predictors of future violent behavior
1966	Hellman & Blackman	<i>Enuresis Firesetting and Cruelty to Animals: A Triad Predictive of Adult Crime</i>	N=84 prisoners, St. Louis Mental Health Center. Groups: violent (n=31) and nonviolent (n=53) offenses.	Empirical validation of the "Sociopath Triad" as a predictor of adult crimes	75% of the group that had committed physical violence presented ≥2 signs of the triad during childhood vs. low presence in the non-violent group. Dysfunctional family environments increase the chances of developing aggressive behaviors in adulthood
1971	Tapia	<i>Children who are Cruel to Animals</i>	N=18 male children and adolescents (between 5-15 years), Child Psychiatry, University of Missouri, United States	To empirically analyze the factors involved in acts of child animal cruelty and their repercussions in adulthood.	Animal abuse, exposure to violence and chaotic family dynamics identified as predisposing factors for violent behavior
1985	Felthous & Kellert	<i>"Childhood Cruelty toward Animals among Criminals and Non-Criminals"</i>	N=152 men. Groups: control – non-criminals (51 people), aggressive and moderately	To assess the connection between animal abuse committed during childhood and violent	60% of respondents admitted to having committed ≥1 act of animal abuse during childhood, while 8% committed ≥5 acts of

			aggressive criminals (101), United States.	behaviors developed in adulthood, in order to compare levels of aggression	animal cruelty during the same period. Higher frequency in aggressive children. Motivations: retaliation, demonstration of power and/or pleasure.
1987	<i>Associação Psiquiátrica Americana, como citado em 2014</i>	<i>DSM-5: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of mental disorders</i>	International literary consensus based on several scientific studies	Establish diagnostic criteria for mental disorders	Animal cruelty as a diagnostic indicator of 'Conduct Disorder' in children and adolescents, especially when this behavior appears at an early age and is associated with other behaviors, such as lack of empathy and remorse, destruction of property, etc.
1997	Luke & Arluke	<i>"Physical cruelty toward animals in Massachusetts"</i>	N=80.000 records of physical cruelty to animals (1975-1996), Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA), United States, with only 268 cases prosecuted. The ages of the accused ranged from 9 to 83 years.	To conduct an in-depth examination of the origin, distribution patterns, and frequency of cases of physical animal cruelty.	Young males predominated (mean age 30; 27% under 18). Dogs (57.8%) and cats (26.9%) were the main species affected. Severe physical violence (beating, shooting, stabbing, throwing) accounted for 75% of prosecuted cases. Conviction rate was 44.4%, with penalties primarily fines (33%), probation (20%), imprisonment (10%), and restitution (<25%). Few offenders received counseling or community service. Harsher penalties were recommended.
1997	Ascione	<i>"Battered Women's Reports of Their Partners' and Their Children's Cruelty to Animals"</i>	N=38 women who were assaulted by their intimate partners and were housed in a domestic violence shelter in the United States.	Obtain reports from women who were victims of violence and the relationship between this type of violence and the cruelty of their partners and children towards animals.	High prevalence of animal abuse by intimate partners in order to coerce and control victims. Children exposed to contexts of violence tend to develop aggressive behaviors
1999	Ascione & Arkow	<i>"Child Abuse, Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for</i>	Gathering of data from various sources of assistance and police records.	Assess and highlight the connection between child abuse, domestic violence and animal cruelty to	Evidence of the connection between animal cruelty, domestic violence and child abuse ("Link Theory"). These elements are closely linked, forming a cycle

		<i>Prevention and Intervention</i>		prevent and intervene in the cycle of interspecies violence.	of violence that will persist until interrupted. Animal cruelty may indicate problematic environments and potential violent behavior in the future
2011	Padilha	"Crueldade com animais X violência doméstica contra mulheres: uma conexão real"	N=60 women, from different social classes, who sought out Specialized Police Stations for Women's Assistance and Support Centers in the State of São Paulo to report episodes of domestic violence, Brazil	Analyze the relationship between crimes against animals and humans	50% of women stated that their intimate partners perpetrated violent acts against their animals. Establishment of the "Link Theory" in the Brazilian context. Pointing out the negligence of authorities in addressing violence against animals.
2013	Nassaro	"Maus tratos aos animais e violência contra as pessoas – A aplicação da Teoria do Link nas ocorrências da Polícia Militar paulista"	N=1014 criminal records of those charged by the Military Police of São Paulo (2010-2012) + 30 interviews with those accused of domestic violence and animal abuse, Brazil.	Analyze the relationship between crimes against animals and humans based on the application of the "Link Theory" in occurrences of the São Paulo Military Police.	The relationship between animal abuse and violence against humans was highlighted. One third of the aggressors who abused animals had committed other offenses; Animals are seen by the aggressors as instruments of coercion. Adult aggressors may be the result of direct or indirect experiences of abuse in childhood. Suggestion for the implementation of preventive public policies

Source: Prepared by the author based on research data (2025)

CURRENT LEGISLATION IN BRAZIL FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS AND RELATED TOPICS

Regarding animals, according to resolution no. 1236/2018 of the Federal Council of Veterinary Medicine (CFMV), mistreatment is understood as any conduct that results in unnecessary pain or suffering, regardless of whether it is carried out directly or indirectly, actively or passively, intentionally or through negligence, lack of preparation or irresponsibility. Practical examples of mistreatment include physical aggression, malnutrition, restriction of well-being, unhealthiness, behavioral disorders, such as hostility and depression, obesity and abandonment (CFMV, 2018).

In Brazil, the protection of fauna is legitimized by the Federal Constitution of October 5, 1988 (Article 23, item VII and Article 225 § 1 and item VII), and by Environmental Law No. 9605/1998 (Article 32), which establishes criminal and administrative sanctions for individuals who commit mistreatment, abuse, injury or mutilation of domestic, wild or domesticated, exotic or native animals, with penalties ranging from three months to one year in prison, in addition to a fine. Furthermore, those who subject live animals to painful or cruel experiments, even for educational or scientific purposes, and there are alternatives available, are subject to the same penalties. In the event of the death of the mistreated animal, the penalty is increased by one third (Brasil, 1998).

Specifically for dogs and cats, Law No. 14.064/2020, known as the 'Sansão Law', provides for a harsher penalty for those who mistreat these animals, including imprisonment of two to five years, application of a fine and prohibition of keeping mistreated animals (Brasil, 2020). However, there is a shortage of resources for identifying crimes of interspecies violence, legal referral and support for victims of violence, whether human or animal. Furthermore, the delay in discovering these crimes can result in the death of the animals in question, due to previously established acts of domestic violence (Leal & Reis, 2017).

There is legislation that strengthens the protection of life, as established in Law No. 17,640, enacted on February 17, 2023. This law establishes that those responsible for veterinary care establishments must immediately report suspected crimes of animal abuse to the State Civil Police, through the Electronic Animal Protection Police Station (DEPA). Those who do not comply with the established will be subject to the legal measures provided for. It is important to emphasize that anyone can report animal abuse to the competent authorities (São Paulo, 2023a).

Furthermore, regarding the legal classification of pets, Brazilian civil legislation classifies them as movable property, according to article 82 of the Civil Code (Brasil, 2002), which defines them as objects of possession and property. However, this definition has proven insufficient for adequate legal articulation in cases of disputes involving the custody of pets, especially in the dissolution of stable unions (Fitzgerald et al., 2025).

In view of this scenario, Bill 27/2018 (Brasil, 2018), approved by the Federal Senate, proposes the recognition of animals as unique beings in the law, that is, belonging to a "third gender": neither people nor objects, but a special category endowed with its own rights, which must be respected and, in the event of violation, subject to judicial protection.

In this sense, Bill 179/2023 (São Paulo, 2023b), currently being processed by the Chamber of Deputies, seeks to recognize the multispecies family as a family entity, composed of human beings and their pets, giving these bonds legal and affective relevance.

DEPARTMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR REPORTING ANIMAL CRUELTY IN BRAZIL

There are different options available for seeking help or reporting cases of animal abuse to the police.

- Police Station: open police reports through the official website or in-person visits to the units. Telephone Channels - Emergency Hotline: 190 (Military Police) and Complaint Hotline: 181 (Civil Police). In addition, some Municipalities and States have police stations specialized in the environment and animal protection, such as Sergipe;
- Public Prosecutor's Office: access the website <http://www.mpf.mp.br/servicos/sac> or the ombudsman offices of the State Public Prosecutor's Offices. The greater the details of the complaint, the better, based on some evidence of the crime, such as photos, videos, among others;
- Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA): access to the agency's website, in-person service, telephone channel: 0800 61 8080 or sending an email to linhaverde.sede@ibama.gov.br;
- Environmental Departments: should only be contacted in cases of mistreatment of wild animals, exotic and domestic species, health surveillance work, zoonoses or the environment.

CURRENT LEGISLATION IN BRAZIL FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND AVAILABLE SERVICES

In Brazil, we have some laws that protect vulnerable groups of people from domestic violence. Law No. 11,340/2006, known as the “Maria da Penha Law”, represents an important milestone in addressing the prevention and punishment of domestic violence against women, guaranteeing protective measures and support for victims (Brasil, 2006). In the same sense, Law No. 13,010/2014, called the “Boy Bernardo Law”, ensures the right of children and adolescents to be educated without physical aggression (Brasil, 2014). Finally,

Law No. 14,344/2022, called the “Henry Borel Law”, establishes mechanisms that fully protect children against violent acts, especially within the family environment (Brasil, 2022).

In addition to this legal framework, Bill 918/2023 (São Paulo, 2023c) is currently being processed in the Chamber of Deputies. It proposes the establishment of rules that aim to ensure the protection and safety of victims of domestic violence and their pets, incorporating this measure into the Maria da Penha Law. It also provides that in cases of proven economic vulnerability on the part of these women, the State will bear the costs of veterinary services and other care essential to the well-being of the animal.

In this context, the ‘Casa da Mulher Brasileira’, located in Curitiba, stands out as a pioneering initiative by providing simultaneous shelter for women in situations of violence and their pets since 2016 (Curitiba, 2023). By allowing pets to be present at the shelter, the institution fills a gap present in most shelter structures, which often do not provide this type of support, which makes it difficult for these women to leave abusive environments for fear of abandoning their animals (Fitzgerald et al., 2025).

Moreover, other support initiatives have been developed at the state and municipal levels. The Women's Assistance Reference Centers, for example, have teams of psychologists and social workers and provide shelter for women on a long-term basis (secret shelters) or temporary basis (halfway houses). Women are allowed to stay in these places accompanied by their children under the age of 18. Operation is continuous, 24 hours a day, and referral to these locations is carried out according to the severity of the situation.

In the technological sphere, the ‘SP Mulher’ app helps women who have protective measures, with real-time monitoring and sending of alerts in cases of emergency. The platform is integrated with the aggressors' monitoring system through an electronic ankle bracelet, if applicable, which facilitates the issuance of new police reports.

Other support measures include the Rental Assistance, offered to victims in vulnerable situations in the State of São Paulo, in the amount of R\$400, and the ‘Tem Saída Program’, which promotes the reintegration of these women into the job market through the services of the Center for Support to Work and Entrepreneurship (CATE). To do so, it is not necessary to have a police report or prior protective measures. Referral to the program is made through police stations, including specialized ones.

DEPARTMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR REPORTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN BRAZIL

- Women's Helpline (Federal Government): Dial 180. This public service offers guidance, forwarding of complaints to state public security agencies and the Public Prosecutor's Office, and support for victims of violence, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week: <https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/navegue-por-temas/politicas-para-mulheres/ligue-180>
- Children's Helpline for Children under 18: Dial 100 or 125;
- Emergency: Dial 190 (Military Police); Immediate and free service, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A Military Police vehicle is immediately dispatched to the location for assistance: <http://www.ssp.df.gov.br/servicos-de-urgencia-e-emergencia-190-193-19>;
- Casa da Mulher Brasileira: specialized service operating 24 hours a day. It brings together a multidisciplinary team to more effectively welcome and listen to women who are victims of domestic violence, including the Women's Defense Department (DDM) with actions to prevent, protect, and investigate domestic violence crimes; the Public Prosecutor's Office, which acts in the criminal prosecution of crimes of violence; the Public Defender's Office, which provides guidance to women on their rights and provides legal assistance; the Court of Justice, which is responsible for the proceedings, trials, and execution of cases related to violence; Temporary shelter for cases of imminent death, for up to 48 hours, as well as integrated services and psychological and social service resources, including LIBRAS. Telephone: (11) 3275-8000, (11) 96600-8506 WhatsApp from 9 am to 5 pm. Email: pjcasadamulherbrasileira@mpsp.mp.br; Opening hours for the Public Defender's Office on weekdays, from 10 am to 5 pm.

FRONTS OF ACTION AND THE CHALLENGES OF MULTIDISCIPLINARITY

Veterinary medicine

Veterinarians are considered important social mobilizers, contributing to the reduction of violence not only against animals, but also against vulnerable groups of people. These professionals act as sentinels in cases of suspected violence, since they are often the first to interact with mistreated animals, being able to recognize them and

distinguish the injuries presented by them as intentional or unintentional - as long as they have received appropriate training, reporting any signs of animal abuse to the competent authorities (Wolfe et al., 2003; Lockwood, 2000; Sant'Ana, 2020).

Furthermore, these professionals can participate in interdisciplinary actions to disseminate knowledge about the Link Theory and essential care for animals in contexts of domestic violence. These professionals can become educators, offering joint training to social service and animal care professionals, engaging in preventive activities and supporting victims (Lockwood, 2000).

The legal obligations of Veterinary Medicine in Brazil and in several countries are explicit in order to safeguard the well-being of animals, reduce their suffering and interrupt the cycle of violence (Arkow, 2015). Still regarding resolution nº1236/2018 of the CFMV, it is established that a copy of the report of findings or medical records must be sent to the police or environmental authorities for legal action in conjunction with the Public Prosecutor's Office. The evidence collected supports investigations and legal proceedings and may result in the loss of custody of the animal, the imposition of fines or the arrest of the aggressor (CFMV, 2018).

In this sense, in Legal Veterinary Medicine, injuries and their recognition interfaces are described, in order to help Veterinarians to be able to recognize cases of mistreatment or at least establish suspicions. In this case, injuries described in one or more animals, evidenced mainly in the rib region, multiple fractures, low body score, occurrences of poisoning, burns, scars, bruises and puncture and/or blunt wounds (Arkow, 2015).

Neglect is also considered mistreatment and can be defined by dental diseases, infestation by ectoparasites, unhealthiness towards the animal and the environment in which it lives, dehydration, signs of illness, distress, pain, injuries that require treatment, sexual abuse, vocalization, and situations in which the animal shows fear of its owner or people in general (Arkow, 2015; Leal & Reis, 2017).

However, even starting from this premise, there will still be cases of mistreatment due to involuntary negligence, given the impoliteness and ignorance of some guardians. However, it is still necessary to classify the extent of this negligence, its frequency and duration (Leal & Reis, 2017).

In view of the above, when there is suspicion of mistreatment arising from a routine examination, it is recommended that the veterinarian in charge of the case speak with the guardians or person responsible for the animal during consultation, in order to resolve the

issue. When the guardian acts in a hostile or dubious manner, the case should be forwarded to the competent authorities, as a form of primary prevention. In serious circumstances, the violation of the guardian's confidentiality is valid (Arkow, 2015).

Breaking the cycle of violence through emergency intervention, education, counseling, and monitoring is the responsibility of veterinarians (CFMV, 2018). However, many professionals are unaware of the importance of their roles in cases of mistreatment, fear of being targeted by animal owners, are hesitant to get involved in legal disputes, and have difficulty identifying patterns of non-accidental injuries, in addition to fearing the possibility of losing their patients (Leal & Reis, 2017; Lockwood, 2000).

In the United States (US), the method of warning and support for veterinarians, mandatory reporting, the need for court orders to formalize reports, and the possibility of protecting professionals to encourage an increase in reporting are operated in accordance with the laws in force in each state (Estados Unidos, 2017). Based on this premise, it is possible to observe an incentive for these professionals to make more reports, since they feel protected when doing so (Leal & Reis, 2017; Lockwood, 2000).

The precariousness regarding the inclusion of the teaching of Legal Veterinary Medicine in the curricular chronogram as a mandatory subject in Veterinary Medicine courses justifies the limitation of the treatment of cases of mistreatment of non-human animals by professionals in the field, from the theoretical dimension to the practical application (Leal & Reis, 2017; Lockwood, 2000).

Finally, and no less important, it is necessary to remind Veterinarians of their voluntary adherence, conviction and civic commitment to the professional code of ethics and its treatments, provided for in resolution no. 1138, of December 16, 2016 of the CFMV, through items 'f' and 'j', art.16, of Law no. 5517, of October 23, 1968, for the benefit of One Health, valuing the well-being of society, animals and the environment, protecting them. To this end, it is essential that these professionals maintain an upright conduct, based on ethical and professional discussions. Furthermore, the obligation to report any form of mistreatment of animals and the environment to the competent authorities is foreseen and regulated, thus contributing to the improvement of collective well-being conditions (CFMV, 2016).

Therefore, the ethical obligation incorporated into the veterinarian's oath must be respected, and their actions are essential to interrupt the cycle of violence (Arkow, 1992). It is important to remember that veterinarians' engagement in the fight against animal cruelty

can result in more severe punishments for those who cause harm to animals (Benetato, Reisman, & McCobb, 2011). Authorities should also be reminded of the importance of protecting these professionals to encourage reporting, as mentioned above (Lockwood, 2000).

As a primary prevention measure to avoid future crimes, it is suggested that public security institutions implement a specific Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to deal with crimes of cruelty to non-human animals. It is essential to reassess current sanctions for these environmental crimes considered to be less serious. An example of this is the pecuniary penalty as an alternative to imprisonment, provided for in the Brazilian Penal Code (Nassaro, 2016).

This approach is ineffective from the point of view of the Link Theory, since such crimes indicate deep-seated family problems and point to interspecies and intergenerational violence. Therefore, it is recommended that public policies be directed not only to the immediate resolution of these crimes, but also to prevent the perpetration of future crimes (Leal & Reis, 2017; Nassaro, 2016).

It is also recommended that interviews be conducted with all family members, conducted by social workers, to investigate the home environment for signs of deep-rooted violence, psychological evaluation of the aggressor and application of community services to them, supervised in interaction with other people and animals (Nassaro, 2016).

Psychology

The theme of Mental Health, constructed and agreed upon by different social actors in the last two decades, advocates and aims for profound transformations in care (Duarte & Paiva, 2017), that is, in the production of care for psychological suffering and other subjective impasses (Lyerla & Stroup, 2018).

These transformations point to changes in different dimensions: in the conception of the health-illness production process; in the theoretical and technical-assistance model that organizes and supports the practices of professionals; in the field of legal-political and cultural practices; and in ethical propositions regarding the effects and consequences of actions in the field of Mental Health (Costa-Rosa, 2013).

Some of these transformations are included in the Constitution and regulated by law, such as the participation of the population in the planning, management and control of care practices and the management of institutional devices (Duarte & Paiva, 2017).

This set of practical transformations and theoretical, ethical and political propositions, which are embodied and brought to life in the current Mental Health Policy, is sufficient to speak of a Psychosocial Care Strategy (EAPS), in the same sense as that proposed by the Family Health Strategy (ESF), and in turn in the Violence Prevention Centers (NPVs), a natural interface with Veterinary Medicine, based on the principles of the Unified Health System (SUS) (Duarte & Paiva, 2017; Gomes, 2017).

The analysis of the advances, resistances and impasses in the field of Mental Health today, in terms of EAPS, will help to unravel some of the current relationships between EAPS and Primary Care, especially in what unfolds from it, based on the proposal of matrix actions being implemented in the guidelines of the Ministry of Health (Portela, 2017).

The context of professional activity, of the training of quality human resources still has universities as its main productive focus, the challenge of multiprofessionality (Machado & Ximenes Neto, 2018; Kronemberger, 2019). It is imperative in the context of One Health, since it advocates the implication of knowledge and practices common to professional contexts where dialogue and human communication, coexistence in groups and teams make day-to-day life something challenging (Kronemberger, 2019).

The proposal for collective actions, groups and work teams that promote aspects of a One Health vision also opens up spaces for new arrangements in the organization of health work (Binot et al., 2015). Finding a bridge of support and contribution, in a collaboration that goes beyond each profession involved in the challenge of multidisciplinary action, involves joint actions, as well as actions in One Health (FAO, UNEP, WHO, & WOAHA, 2022).

In interactions between humans and animals, the scope of the theme expands, highlighting the importance of this issue as a focus of public interventions. This shows the need for a comprehensive approach to topics such as medication consumption and its implications, not only from an economic point of view (Narrod et al., 2012), but also socially and in relation to behavioral changes.

These changes may include the adoption of new professional practices and techniques, since inaccurate diagnoses and inappropriate medication prescriptions may obscure situations of underlying violence (Bermudez, 2018). In this context, a multidisciplinary approach involving protection agencies such as Child and Youth Coordinators and Guardianship Councils becomes essential for detailed analysis. Collaboration aims to determine the dynamics of the case, diagnosis and prognosis, in line with the Mental Health team (Darlington, Feeney, & Rixon, 2005).

Other legal devices include the “Psychological Monitoring Program for Women Victims of Domestic Violence” in the Municipality of São Paulo, according to Law No. 17,884/2023, prioritizing specialized psychological care by the Unified Health System (SUS) in Basic Health Units (UBS) for this purpose, based on the increase in the occurrence of women victims of violence, with an emphasis on its impact, not only on themselves, but also on the entire family nucleus. Additionally, the program provides psychological support to victims, speeding up the process of recovery from trauma and adverse effects (São Paulo, 2023d).

NPVs are responsible for coordinating care in UBSs, providing support to victims or potential victims, regardless of the form of domestic violence, whether psychological, physical, neglect, abandonment, sexual assault or self-harm. With a focus on humanization, this approach is conducted by a specialized team that includes psychologists, social workers, nurses and doctors (São Paulo, 2023e).

Furthermore, compulsory reporting of cases of violence against women is mandatory for psychologists and has epidemiological purposes. External communication to authorities such as the Justice, Police and Public Prosecutor's Office should be considered in cases of serious risk, which involve breach of professional confidentiality (Brasil, 2020). Alternative strategies for supporting the victim are also considered, to minimize therapeutic impacts. Legislation such as the Maria da Penha Law (Law No. 11,340/2006) (Brasil, 2006) contributed to this, but challenges persist in prevention, creation and correct functioning of existing support networks.

Legal devices designed to assist in the recovery and care of victims of violence often face obstacles and do not reach their target audience. Therefore, it is crucial to disseminate and expand knowledge about these devices, as well as strategies to enable their effective implementation (Brasil, 2006).

An additional challenge to multidisciplinary, possibly rooted in the origin of the conception of knowledge, lies in the scope of professional practice and the training of quality human resources, whose main productive focus is still university institutions (Machado & Ximenes Neto, 2018), with a curriculum that often suffers from mandatory disciplines that advocate with the theme. This factor is imperative in the context of One Health, since it advocates the implication of knowledge and practices common to professional contexts where dialogue and human communication, coexistence in groups and teams make day-to-day life somewhat challenging (Kronemberger, 2019).

The suggestion of collective strategies, as well as the formation of groups and work teams that promote aspects inherent to the One Health perspective, favors the promotion of opportunities for the emergence of new organizational models in the context of Health Management (Binot et al., 2015).

Facilitators of management in one health

The integration of multidisciplinary devices in participatory management, based on the concepts of "Expanded Clinic", "Matrix Support", "Reference Teams" and "Institutional Support" (Pereira, 2011), facilitates the synthesis of the Principles of One Health (Ruegg et al., 2018) as an articulating element in participatory management. This contributes to the development of multidisciplinary teams (Garcia et al., 2021; FAO, UNEP, WHO, & WOA, 2022).

The proposal of public action psychology offers a technical apparatus to articulate and integrate Development Policies for the SUS, such as the National Policy for Continuing Education and Work Management in the SUS (PNEP), National Humanization Policy (PNH) and National Policy for Information and Informatics in Health (PNIIS). These policies are based on the assumptions of Public Health, including Ethics of the Common Good and the Right to Health, organizing work in Public Health in a coherent manner (Duarte & Paiva, 2017).

The analysis of the dimension of the meaning of work, through Learning at Work and the "Ethics of the Common Good" is motivating (Chanlat, 2002), with One Health being a unifying axis for the work of the Veterinarian in multidisciplinary health. This contributes to Public Health and Collective Health, addressing issues such as Mental Health, assistance to patients with psychological suffering, as provided for in health policies (Duarte & Paiva, 2017; Gorzoni & Davis, 2017; Pupo, Rosa, & Moraes, 2023).

Innovations, especially in 'Big Data' and e-Health systems, play a crucial role in the integration of scientific information (Liu & Park, 2014; Asokan & Asokan, 2015). This requires deeper technological development to consolidate a unified database, such as the proposal of a 'OneHealth Database Matrix' (Wang, Kung, & Byrd, 2018).

Psychosocial Care, as part of the multidisciplinary strategy, provides integrated care (Moucheraud et al., 2017), especially for patients with mental health problems, in line with health policies and international cooperation (Reis, Pereira, Machado, & Bezerra, 2021).

Health surveillance, access to information, and data production are essential for training human resources and managing health care networks (Moucheraud et al., 2017).

The structure of the Psychosocial Care Network (RAPS) integrates mental health care points, prioritizing regionalized organization and intersectoral actions for comprehensive care (Lyerla & Stroup, 2018), in line with the principles of One Health (Benitez et al., 2016).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding the legal duties and responsibilities of each profession is essential from both an ethical and professional standpoint. The interaction between different areas of knowledge favors the fight against the cycle of interspecies violence, as analyzed by the Link Theory, the birthplace of One Health initiatives. This approach expands the possibilities for multidisciplinary collaboration, which encourages the dissemination of content and access to information, the production of data and active health surveillance.

However, the implementation of multidisciplinary still faces challenges, such as the fear of reprisals by professionals, the absence of essential disciplines in the curricula, the unbridled and inappropriate use of psychotropic medications and the lack of dissemination of knowledge and essential information for the support of victims of interspecies violence. In view of this, it is essential to identify, strengthen and create new facilitators for effective management in One Health.

To make its implementation viable, strategies such as the creation of a large health management system, the 'One Health Big Data', are necessary, in addition to profound transformations in the theoretical and technical-care model. This includes, for example, the inclusion of Forensic Veterinary Medicine as a mandatory subject in undergraduate courses in Veterinary Medicine, as well as the incorporation of legal, political and cultural practices. Among these, the most important are the increase in sanctions for cases of mistreatment, the creation of public policies that guarantee the existence of humane shelters capable of simultaneously accommodating women and their pets, and the legal definition of animal custody in contexts of litigation arising from stable unions or marriage with an abusive intimate partner. In addition to this, there is the expansion of the dissemination of knowledge on the subject, thus ensuring greater effectiveness of the proposed actions.

Through these initiatives, important advances can be demonstrated in tackling domestic violence, especially by extending protection beyond the direct victim, also

extending to their emotional and family ties, such as pets, and by recognizing their role in the process of overcoming trauma, as well as in rebuilding the dignity and autonomy of these women.

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