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NEWS BITES

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PETS IMPROVE WELLBEING OF OLDER PEOPLE

NEW GUIDELINES FOR PETS IN RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

People living in retirement communities can benefit significantly from spending time with pets, according to recent studies.

“Our research has identified a number of social and mental health benefits associated with interacting with pets and there are many studies that show specific benefits to older people from having contact with pets,” says Dr Lisa Wood from the University of Western Australia.

One study looked at residents in 37 nursing homes and found that those who had access to pets were happier than those who didn't.

“The groups that were visited by pets had statistically significant increases in feeling enthusiastic, attentive, interested and inspired,” says Dr Wood. “For older people, sharing life with a pet helps with what can sometimes be a lonely time in their life.”

Guidelines on how to plan for pets in retirement homes have been developed in a collaboration between veterinarian and animal behaviourist Dr Gaille Perry and the Halycon Retirement Community in Queensland.

For more information on responsible and enjoyable pet ownership visit www.petnet.com.au

