

ANIMAL HEALTH AND HOUSING: AN INTEGRATED INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH APPROACH

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Dogs are associated with more than 60 zoonotic diseases among which, parasitosis and, in particular, helminthosis, can pose serious public-health threats world wide

A functioning and innovative dog breeding and parasite control program in the Barkly region of the Northern Territory has resulted in a significant reduction in poor health outcomes for dogs, and their human companions in remote communities in the Barkly region. However excessive canine faecal loading and animal behaviour around internal and external housing environments still provide potential pathway's for *Strongyloides stercoralis* and other parasitic and zoonotic agents which impact on under nourished and immuno-suppressed children and adults

It is widely accepted that the respective prevalence of these parasitic worms and other intestinal protozoan's within a housing context also poses a significant risk to pregnant women and new born health

The dangers of high faecal loading in and around housing environments, and the dog human interface within houses allows for the dispersion elements (eggs, larvae, oocysts) to be spread more widely, therefore proliferating in areas such as sleeping areas (mattresses, blankets), laundry areas (soiled clothing and floor debris), and bathroom areas (soiled clothing, floor wastes, floor debris, and shower recesses

Female lactating dogs with puppies within internal housing environments also contribute a high level of contaminated faecal matter

Excessive faecal contamination in and around housing environments also attract flies and cockroaches which are causative agents of gastrointestinal diseases based on their strong attraction to insanitary conditions and human food which makes them efficient vectors and transmitters of human enteric protozoan parasites and soil transmitted helminthes

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices, in which dog health and parasitic control is an integral mechanism for beneficial outcomes. IPM programs use current, comprehensive information on the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment. This information, in combination with available pest control methods, is used to manage pests by the most economical means, and with the least possible hazard to people, animals, property, and the environment

IPM approaches that fit into a broader integration model of service provision provides another link in a comprehensive model that improves understanding and provides possible solutions of the wide - ranging factors that impact on animal and human host populations, and the determinants that influence the spread of soil transmitted helminthes and protozoan parasites in internal and external housing environments