

**Presentation Type:** Podium

**Title:** A Cross Program Statistical Analysis of Spay/Neuter and Adoption Programs to Reduce Dog and Cat Overpopulation

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Abstract: Millions of healthy dogs and cats killed annually in United States shelters. One response to this tragedy has been the growth of the “no kill” movement in the last decade. Although the philosophy and the use of the term “no kill” is somewhat controversial in the animal welfare community, there is growing unity across all types of animal welfare organizations to work together to reduce dog and cat deaths at shelter through innovative programs and the use of broad coalitions. Perhaps the leader in these efforts is Maddie’s Fund, a privately funded organization with unprecedented financial resource and a goal of creating communities that do not kill any healthy or treatable dogs or cats. Maddie’s Fund has funded programs across the United States from small cities to entire states, with a focus on efforts to increase adoptions and increase the number of people spaying/neutering their animals.

These Maddie’s Fund programs present a unique opportunity to statistically analyze the impact of spay/neuter and adoption programs. The most important finding of this research is that it statistically demonstrates that increased spay/neuter rates are related to lower shelter intake. This is a very important finding since a vast amount of public and private funding and effort are put into spay/neuter programs and no prior statistical test has ever shown scientifically that such a relationship exists across regions and programs. The results also demonstrate that well-managed low cost spay/neuter programs need not come at the expense of reducing the number of full-cost procedures performed by veterinarians. In terms of adoption programs, the results demonstrate that “no-kill” shelter adoptions need not come at the expense of animal control/public shelter adoptions. The results are encouraging and suggest that the current programs are having a positive impact at reducing shelter deaths.