DIET AND FEEDING FOR WELLBEING: EARLY FINDINGS FROM GENERATION PUP.

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Generation Pup is a longitudinal cohort study, investigating risk factors for a range of health and behavioural outcomes in dogs. This includes data on diet and feeding behaviours which may influence a range of outcomes at different life stages. Here, descriptive data from 476 dogs with complete datasets at both 7 and 12 months old are presented, including initial findings on body condition scores (BCS) and husbandry practices linked to obesity. In addition, logistic regression models investigating risk factors associated with two owner behaviours previously suggested to be important in canine obesity (feeding table scraps and frequency of feeding chews) were built using survey data from 720 dogs aged 12 months. Descriptive statistics and Cohen's kappa co-efficient for agreement between owner-reported and veterinary-reported BCS were assessed, while gamma coefficients were used to assess association between age and factors such as use of food-filled toys and feeding human food scraps. Of the 720 dogs, 488 received a chew more than once per week, while 379 received table scraps. For dogs aged 12 months, only 11% had a BCS>5 (based on a 9-point scale) and minimal agreement existed between owner-reported and veterinary-reported BCS (kappa=0.29). Multiple dogs in a home increased (p=0.011, OR 1.54; 95% CI=1.11-2.14), and dogs having been neutered decreased (OR 0.69; 95% CI = 0.495, 0.973) the odds of feeding chews more than twice/week. Having children in the home significantly reduced the odds of owners feeding table scraps (p= 0.004; OR 0.56; 95% CI=0.377-0.833). Food-filled toy use declined in dogs between 7 and 12 months (γ=-0.166), suggesting possible missed opportunities for enrichment in the older dogs. However, use of chews were commonplace and may have provided alternative

enrichment opportunities. Low prevalence of BCS>5 suggested diets were balanced for energy intake; however, habits being formed by owners in this period (e.g. feeding human food scraps) could be a factor in weight gain later.