In one study, 19 articles discussing pet owner preparations were discovered (Day, 2017). In another article, Travers and colleagues (2017) found 38 articles discussing this topic (Travers et al., 2017). Taking this information into account, individual preparedness remains extremely important for all pet owners, service dog owners, and those with service dogs in training (DeYoung et al., 2020). In the seminal work on the ways in which service animal handlers or raisers engage in disaster preparedness, DeYoung and colleagues (2020) state that less attention has been given to these individuals than pet owners (DeYoung et al., 2020). This hypothesis is worth testing with the evidence gap in the literature, if any, acting as the measure. Therefore, in this research, we are interested in examining the evidence gap in the literature by searching five common databases with the same search terms.

**OBJECTIVES**

The significance of this topic for emergency managers is the importance of including working dogs and their handlers/raisers in emergency preparedness plans.

It is estimated that nearly 80 million American households include pets and over half of the global population has at least one pet (Day, 2017). Day (2017) notes that “estimates approximate this figure to surpass 75% of American households, which exceeds the number of households with children” (Day, 2017). In fact, 20 to 30 percent of all human evacuation failures can be attributed to pet ownership (Hathl & Linuary, 2015).

Preparedness activities include determining risk, planning for an emergency, and assembling supplies and resources (Engelke, 2009). Due to the thousands of lost or abandoned pets during Hurricane Katrina, the United States Congress passed the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act of 2006 (Austin, 2013; Engelke, 2009). The PETS Act requires that state and local emergency plans take the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals into account (Austin, 2013; Engelke, 2009). What does the literature say about how individuals who own pets or service animal handlers prepare for disasters?

Although specific plans are not discussed, some of what has been written describes the process of how pet and service animal owners/handlers react to evacuation mandates. Many evacuate with their pets or service dogs (Day, 2017; DeYoung et al., 2020; Farmer et al., 2016; Travers et al., 2017). Others decide to evacuate without their pets, or to stay in place with their pets (Austin, 2013; Brackenridge et al., 2012; Chadwin, 2017; Day, 2017; Engelke, 2009; Farmer et al., 2016; Heath et al., 2001; Heath & Smith, 2013; Liang et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2018; Pulice et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2020; Temple et al., 2017; Warren et al., 2010; Watson et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2015; Xi et al., 2015; Xue et al., 2015).

Two meta-analyses, one by Callaro and colleagues (2020) and another by Caliskan and colleagues (2020), report that 40% and 45% of pet owners evacuate with their pets during a disaster, respectively (Callaro et al., 2020; Caliskan et al., 2020). The remaining two articles mention preparedness steps that can be taken by handlers of search-and-rescue dogs (Chadwin, 2015; Watson et al., 2010).

The results from PubMed retrieved all 11 of the unique titles. The remaining four databases did not include all of the PubMed results. For example, the results from the remaining databases included some titles that were not in the PubMed results. The results from PubMed included all 11 of the unique titles. The remaining 4 databases did not return all of the PubMed results. For example, those 4 databases did not include any of the titles that were not in the PubMed results.

To measure the evidence gap in the literature, we identified and counted applicable papers published on our topic, the activities performed by working dog handlers or raisers to prepare for disasters for animals. Articles were included that described either: (1) the implementation of preparedness activities by handlers/raisers, or (2) recommendations of preparedness actions that can be taken by working dog handlers/raisers. We decided not to use any date restrictions, as this may falsely influence the existence of results.

We searched the following databases: EBSCO Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, JSTOR, PubMed and Web of Science. The following search was performed: handlers (and raisers) and disasters.

**METHODS**

A total of 11 unique articles fit these criteria. Only one article describes working dogs and their handlers preparing for disasters (DeYoung et al., 2020). This hypothesis is worth testing with the evidence gap in the literature, if any, acting as the measure. Therefore, in this research, we are interested in examining the evidence gap in the literature by searching five common databases with the same search terms.

**RESULTS**

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**INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

A total of 11 unique articles fit these criteria. Only one article describes working dogs and their handlers preparing for disasters (DeYoung et al., 2020). Eight of the 11 articles briefly discuss preparedness activities that can be performed by handlers of working dogs (Perry, 2021; Gordon & Ho, 2020; Gordon, 2015; Gordon, 2012; Powell, 2019; Corse, 2016; Chaffield, 2015; Duhaine 1998). The remaining two articles mention preparedness steps that can be taken by handlers of search-and-rescue dogs (Chadwin, 2018; Winterman, 2015).

Many pet owners initially plan to evacuate or make arrangements for their pets during disasters (Brown et al., 2012; Day, 2017). However, these plans are not always executed in the event of a disaster (Day, 2017). In fact, a lack of proper resources related to transporting pets is a major obstacle to pet owners evacuating their own pets (Hunt et al., 2012; Sherman et al., 2010; Thompson, 2013). In addition, Sherman and Morris-colleagues (2010) state that failure to evacuate pets is often the result of households that do not have an evacuation plan (Sherman et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important to study how pets are being prepared for disasters.

There are at least six types of research gaps including: (1) evidence gap, (2) knowledge gap, (3) practical knowledge conflict gap, (4) methodological gap, (5) empirical gap, and (6) theoretical gaps (Muller-Blbch & Krahn, 2015).

An evidence gap arises when a new research finding contradicts widely accepted conclusions (Müller et al., 2010; Thompson, 2013). In addition, Sherman and Morris-colleagues (2010) state that failure to evacuate pets is often the result of households that do not have an evacuation plan (Sherman et al., 2010). This hypothesis is worth testing with the evidence gap in the literature, if any, acting as the measure. Therefore, in this research, we are interested in examining the evidence gap in the literature by searching five common databases with the same search terms.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The results seem to indicate that there is an evidence gap in the literature. This means that more research is needed to determine the existence of this gap in the literature. In this research, we are interested in determining this evidence gap in the literature. How are these research gaps studied? There are still no standard methods for identifying, prioritizing, or reporting research gaps (Nynakhova et al., 2019; Robinson et al., 2011).

**REFERENCES**

The references are obtained from various sources, including academic journals, books, and conference proceedings. The results from PubMed retrieved all 11 of the unique titles. The remaining four databases did not include all of the titles that were not in the PubMed results. The results from PubMed included all 11 of the unique titles. The remaining 4 databases did not return all of the PubMed results. For example, those 4 databases did not include any of the titles that were not in the PubMed results.

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