

Prompting Dog Owners to Pick Up Dog Droppings¹

Leonard A. Jason,² Edwin S. Zollik, and Francis J. Matese

De Paul University

The present study investigated daily dog droppings and the amount picked up by owners in an urban area. In addition, two behavioral strategies (signs, instructions plus modeling) aimed at increasing the number of dog owners who picked up their dog's feces were evaluated. Findings indicated that during base line only 5% of dog owners picked up after their dogs and over 19 pounds of dog defecations were accumulated on a section of a city block in 1 week. Intervention utilizing signs had little impact; however, introduction of instructions and modeling led to over 80% of the dog owners picking up after their dogs defecated. During a reversal phase, pick-ups decreased somewhat, and upon reintroduction of instructions and modeling, pick-ups again increased. The study's findings were used by a Chicago alderman as support for his ordinance which required dog owners to carry "pooper scoopers." More than likely, the ordinance, which eventually passed, positively influenced follow-up data in both target and nontarget areas.

Behavioral community psychologists have directed considerable research to the problem of litter (Tuso & Geller, 1976). Economic incentives have been successfully employed in increasing appropriate pick-up or disposal of litter in state parks (Clark, Burgess, & Hendee, 1972), movie theaters (Burgess, Clark, & Hendee, 1971), prison lawns (Hayes, Johnson, & Cone, 1975), a zoo (Kohlenberg & Phillips, 1973), and other recreational areas (Powers, Osborne, & Anderson, 1973). Finnie (1973) found that the placement of trash cans on city blocks and highways led to a reduction of litter, whereas Geller, Witmer, and Orebaugh (1976) found that antilitter messages reduced handbill litter in a

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²Correspondence should be sent to Leonard A. Jason, Psychology Department, De Paul University, Chicago, Illinois 60614.