

Dogs & COVID-19

Impact of the first UK lockdown on dog walking

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Background

'Lockdown' restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have caused major lifestyle changes that may impact dog care and management.

Aims

To identify the impacts of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on walking with dogs (many other outcomes are reported in the paper below¹)

Methods

Online questionnaire of 6004 UK dog owners
Descriptive statistics and multivariable logistic regression



Results

Typically, dogs had fewer but slightly longer walks, which were more restricted with less off lead exercise & fewer interactions with other dogs and people (Figure 1). Factors related to the dog, owner, household and home location were associated with the odds of maintaining or increasing walk frequency, compared with reduction in dog walking frequency (Figure 2).

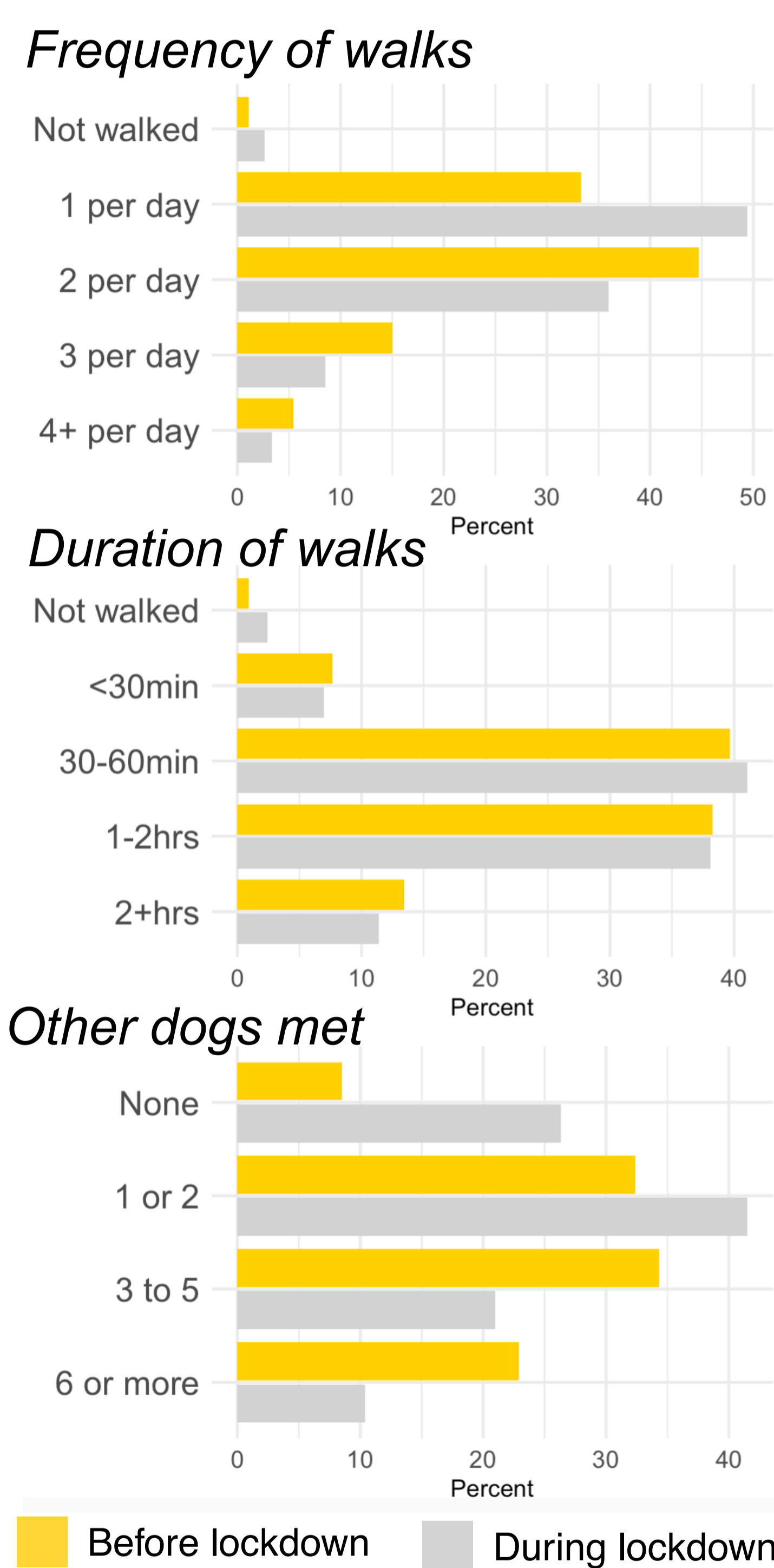


Fig. 1: Frequency & duration of dog walking and interactions with other dogs.

Factors associated with reduced walk frequency

Young to middle aged people in 'built up areas' with 'less easy' access to off-lead walking

Juvenile & young-adult dogs

'Social networks'

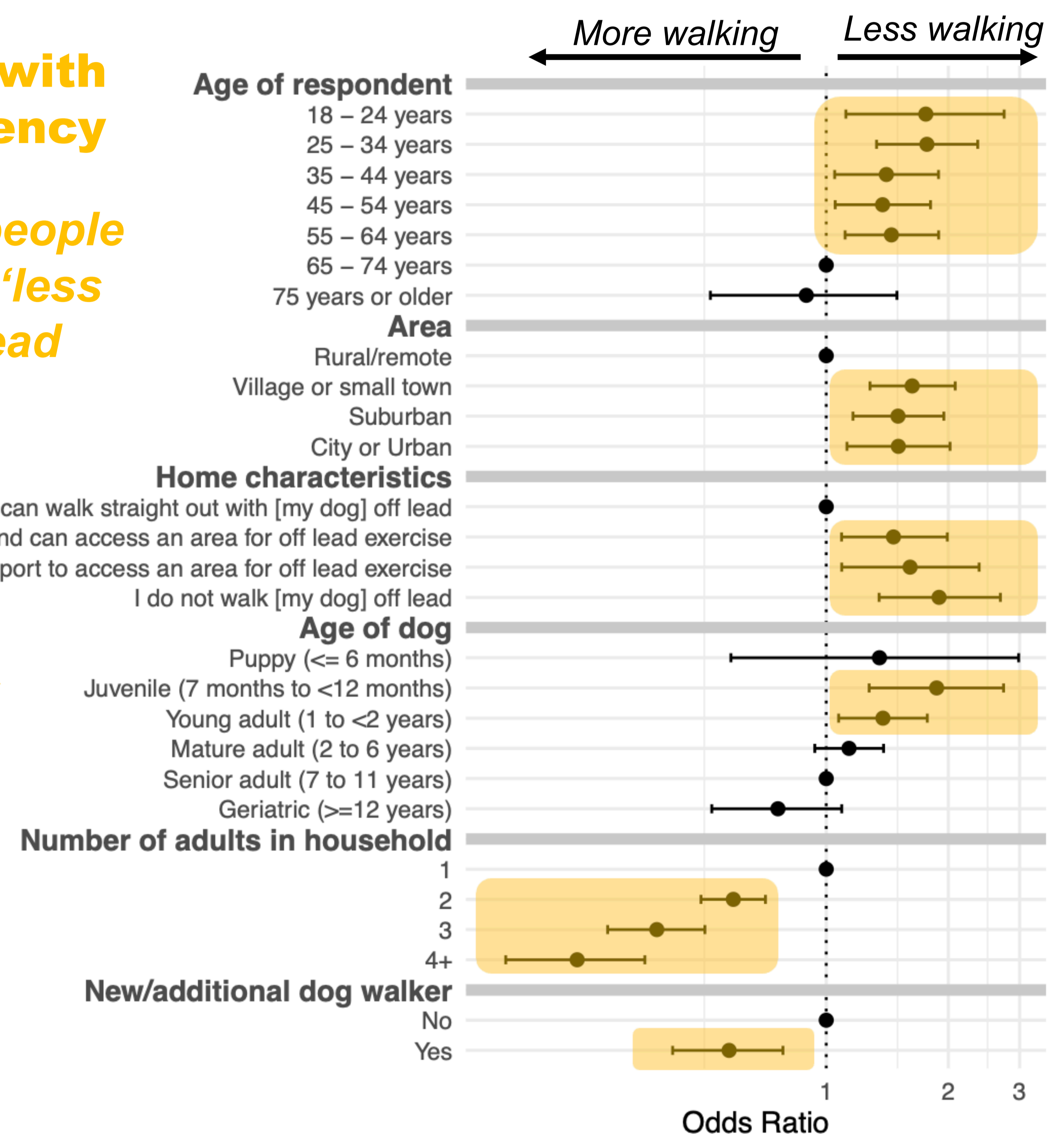


Fig. 2: Variables associated with decreased dog walking frequency compared with maintained or increased walking frequency (n=3336).

Conclusions

Dogs were typically walked less often during lockdown compared to pre-lockdown, with less impact on walk duration. However, this was influenced by a range of factors related to the dog, owner, household and home location. Larger 'social networks' appeared to buffer changes to walking practices.

This study is described in detail here:

¹[Animals \(2021\) 11,5. doi:10.3390/ani11010005](https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11010005)

Other related publications

[Project report - bit.ly/382pPcD](https://bit.ly/382pPcD)

[Animals \(2021\) 11, 240. doi: 10.390/ani11010240](https://doi.org/10.390/ani11010240)

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