

Male and female attitudes to five statements on dog fouling in Ireland

Laura Keogh¹, Alison Hanlon², Catherine Devitt³, Andrew Kelly⁴, Locksley Messam²

¹ Whitehouse Veterinary Clinic, Derry, Northern Ireland

²University College Dublin (UCD): School of Veterinary Medicine, Dublin, Ireland

³Independent Consultant, Glendalough, Ireland

⁴Freedom for Animals, UK

Introduction:

- Dog owners are required by law to pick up after their dog when they foul in a public place
- No research on society's attitudes to when this should apply

Aims:

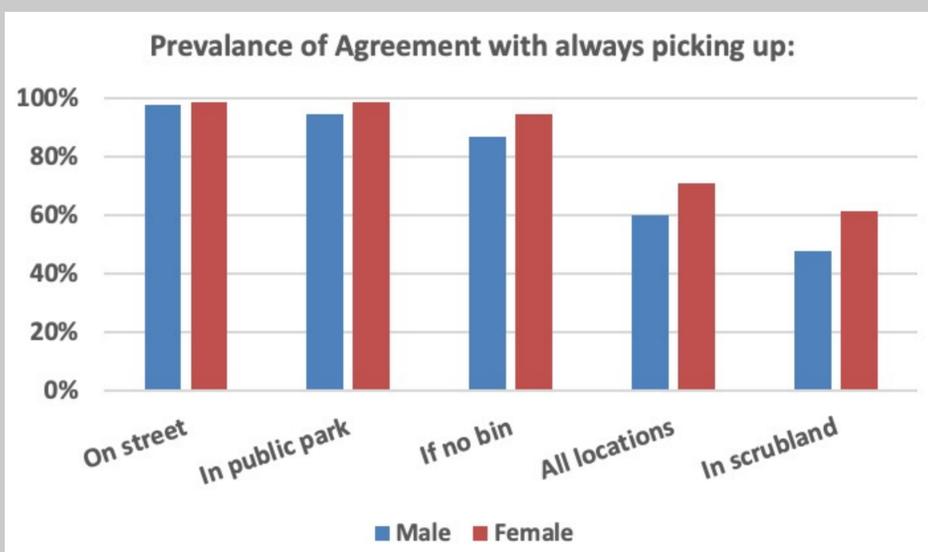
- Estimate the prevalence of agreement with the five statements related to dog fouling, among males and females
- Determine the influence of owner gender on whether it is necessary to pick up after their dog in different situations

Methods:

- Cross-sectional study of 659 University College Dublin employees conducted (2016) (21% response rate)
 - 238 Males
 - 441 Females
- Data were collected via online questionnaire
- Participants asked to state their level of agreement with 5 statements
- Mann-Whitney: Compare knowledge (owner vs. non-owner, female vs. male)

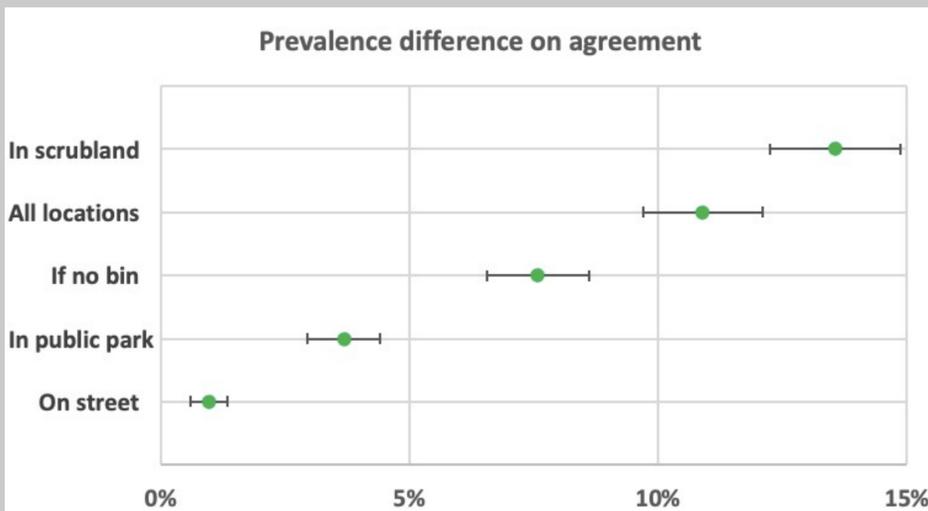
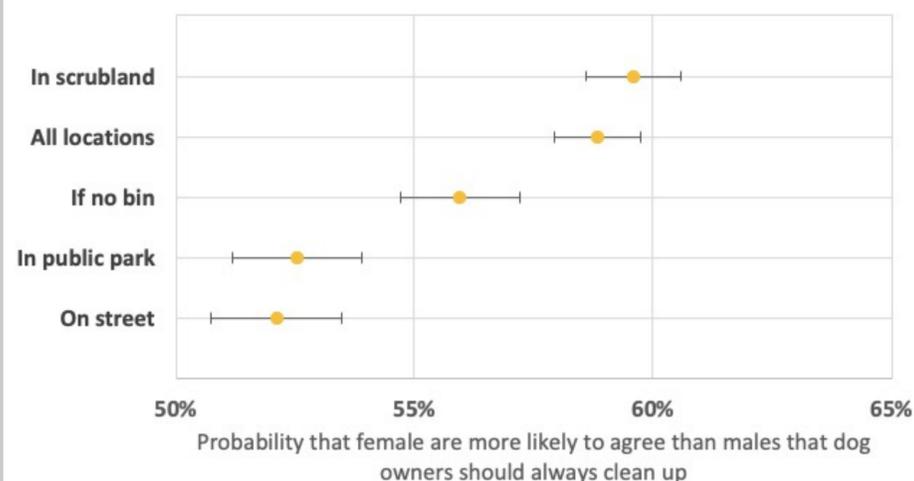
"Dog owners should always clean-up after their dogs..

- ... when the dog has fouled on a street pavement or paved walkway (On Street)
- ... when the dog has fouled in a public park or playing field (In Public Park)
- ... whether or not there is a bin facility nearby (If No Bin)
- ... after their dogs regardless of the location (All Locations)
- ... even when the dog has fouled in scrub-land, open countryside or farmland (In Scrubland)



Graph (a)- Prevalence of males and females who agreed or strongly agreed with the five statements

Probability that females are more likely to agree than males



Graph (b)- Prevalence difference between males and females who agreed and strongly agreed

Results:

- High level of agreement for males and females that owners should pick up 'in street', 'In public Park' and 'If No Bin'
- Lower agreement for 'All locations' and 'In scrubland'
- Across all 5 statements, females more likely to agree
- Difference in prevalence of agreement, females-males, for 'if no bin', 'all locations', and 'in scrubland' substantial

Conclusion:

- The results show that in this university community, there was a high level of agreement that dog owners should always clean up after their dogs
- Substantial differences in the observed attitudes of males and females based on 'all locations' and 'in scrubland' with females being at least 10% more likely to agree
- The lack of agreement relating to "if no bin", "all locations", and "in scrubland" is consistent with the frequency of complaints about dog fouling received every year

