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Background

The Staffordshire Bull Terrier (SBT) is one of the most popular breeds in the UK*. Recently there has been an increase in the number of SBTs relinquished to animal welfare centres and found as strays^ and it is suspected that some people obtain them as 'status' dogs.



"they look tough so I am less likely to be mugged when out for a walk", Female, 54yrs

"they make great family pets", Male, 34yrs



"having a staffy is better than carrying a knife", Male, 19yrs

"people judge me because of the way I dress, I'm a responsible dog owner", Male, 22yrs



- To determine the reason why people obtain Staffordshire Bull Terriers.
- To determine where people get SBTs from and do they breed from them.
- To compare these results with those of other breeds.

Objectives

Methods

- A pilot study was conducted at 2 locations during February 2008 to assess the questionnaire and the most appropriate questionnaire administration method. At one location a self-administered questionnaire was used, at the other location an interviewer approached people with the questionnaire.
- The self-administered questionnaire achieved a very poor response rate and therefore the face-to-face interview method was used for the rest of the study.
- The study was conducted at 4 locations during 2008: RSPCA Harmsworth London, RSPCA Salford Manchester, PDSA Leeds, PDSA Huyton Liverpool.



• At each location between 100 to 150 interviews were conducted by the same interviewer using a standard questionnaire. A PDA was used to collect the data using CyberTracker v3.072 software. This was then synchronised with a laptop which automatically transferred all the collected data into a database.

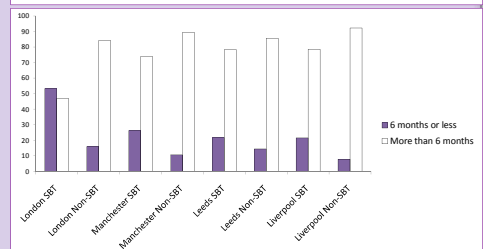
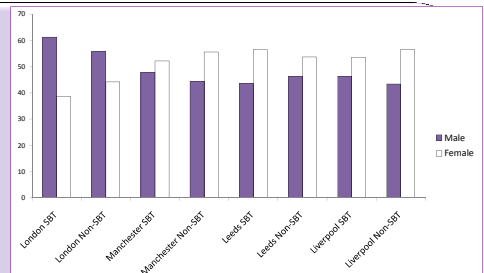
• The data were then transferred to Stata v9 for descriptive analysis. Staffordshire Bull Terriers and their cross breeds were classified into one group called SBTs and all other breeds were classified as non-SBTs.



Results

	Number interviewed	Number of SBTs (%)	Number declined to participate
RSPCA Harmsworth	157	62 (39.5)	3
RSPCA Manchester	139	23 (16.5)	2
PDSA Leeds	119	23 (19.3)	4
PDSA Liverpool	134	28 (20.9)	0

- significantly higher proportion of male dogs in London ($p=0.034$)
- significantly higher proportion of SBTs aged <6months in London ($p=0.047$)
- SBTs significantly more likely to not be neutered compared to non-SBTs (OR 1.6, 95%CI 1.2-2.1)
- in London, owners were significantly more likely to have obtained a SBT from a friend than the owners of non SBTs (OR 2.7, 95% CI 1.8-4.2), similar result for Manchester and Liverpool
- in all locations, SBTs were more likely to be owned by owners aged <24 years ($p<0.001$)
- in London, SBTs were more likely to come from households with 2 or more children (OR 1.9, 95%CI 1.1-3.5)
- only in London, image was more likely to be mentioned as part of the reason for obtaining a dog in the SBT group compared to the non-SBT group (OR5.7, 95%CI 2.0-16.5)
- availability of the breed was more likely to be mentioned amongst the SBT group as part of the reason for obtaining a dog compared to the non-SBTs (OR3.4, 95% CI 1.9-11.8)



- Very few owners declined to participate; therefore it is likely there was a low response bias. However, only those people attending these veterinary hospitals were surveyed which may not be representative of all dog or all SBT owners.
- A large proportion of dogs seen at the study locations were SBTs, the largest proportion seen was at the RSPCA Harmsworth in London.
- 'Image' was an important factor in some people's decision to obtain a SBT, particularly in London.
- The high proportion of SBTs <6 months age in London could indicate a new or growing problem.
- Many people stated that the reason for obtaining a SBT was due to them being easily available.

Discussion