



# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## New research showing the positive impact of animal companionship on human health

Leading UK and international experts in the field of Human Animal Interaction (HAI) and Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI) will present the latest studies and scientific research to show the benefits of companion animals on the physical and mental health of humans at the [SCAS 2023 virtual annual conference](#) on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September.

This year's theme for the Society for Companion Animal Studies ([SCAS](#)) conference is, *Are Pets Really Good For Us? The role of pets in mental and physical health* and will focus on the evidence-based research demonstrating how human-animal interactions support our physical and mental health.

Conference speaker, Dr. Patricia Pendry PhD from Washington State University in the USA will present findings on campus-based Animal-Assisted Interventions aimed at preventing or alleviating university student stress to mitigate the development of mental health disorders and academic failure in typical and at-risk university students. She examines main effects on socioemotional, physiological, cognitive and behavioral outcomes as well as the moderating role of student risk factors associated with the development of stress-related psychopathology.

Dr. Sandra McCune PhD, from University of Lincoln UK, will speak about dog walking and its role in physical exercise. Given that two thirds of the UK adult population are overweight or living with obesity, the ability of dogs to motivate us to exercise with its links to a healthier lifestyle are of increasing interest to public health scientists.

Peter Reniers, conducting doctoral research at the Open University in the Netherlands, will present the PET@home Toolkit that provides practical advice and encourages Long Term Care at Home (LTCH) clients, family, and professional caregivers to discuss and make agreements about pet-related issues.

Peter will introduce the toolkit which aims to help keep LTCH-clients and pets together and to maintain and improve the quality of life of LTCH-clients, family and professional caregivers, and pets. Click [here](#) to see the full conference programme of speakers and talks.

The SCAS 2023 annual conference will again be a virtual event. This allows us the opportunity to invite people from all over the world to participate in a conference that maybe they couldn't attend before because of travel time and cost restraints. It also widens the circle of knowledge relating to human-animal interaction benefits to regions where these are currently less well understood, and where there is often a deficit of HAI and AAI programmes.

SCAS conferences are known for their lively discussions and ample time is allowed for live Q&A with the experts, and generous sharing of information, resources, and contacts between delegates. Our speakers at this year's conference are some of the UK's and international leading experts on the role of companion animals in supporting human health and wellbeing.

If you work in human-animal interactions, health or social care, policy making or journalism and are interested in hearing the latest evidence-based research from academics, or if you are passionate about the subject and would like to know more, this conference is for you. And, if you become a member of SCAS (for just £25 a year), you will receive discounted conference registration as well as other benefits such as free access to monthly [SCAS webinars](#) throughout the year from expert speakers.

We have two free spaces for students this year! [See here](#) for instructions on how to apply.

[See here](#) for further information and to register. If you have any questions, please contact [info@scas.org.uk](mailto:info@scas.org.uk)