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Temporal trends in intake category data for animal shelter and rescue organizations in Colorado from 2008 to 2018

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ABSTRACT / EXCERPT

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE

To investigate trends in animal shelter and rescue organization intake for dogs and cats in Colorado from 2008 to 2018.

SAMPLE

482 animal shelters and rescue organizations that reported annual intake data to the State of Colorado Department of Agriculture for 1,086,630 dogs and 702,333 cats.

PROCEDURES

Total intake, intake for each of 5 Pet Animal Care and Facilities Act categories (stray, owner surrender, intrastate transfer, interstate transfer, or other), and community-based intake (total intake after exclusion of transfers) of dogs and cats were assessed in total and for each organization type (shelter or rescue organization). The number taken in per year, number taken in/1,000 capita (human residents)/y, and number in each intake category as a percentage of total intake for the same species per year were analyzed with linear regression models.

RESULTS

Trend lines indicated that total dog intake increased over the study period, but there was no change when these data were adjusted for the human population. Cat intake decreased over time according to both of these measures. Total community-based intake decreased, whereas total intake by interstate transfer from other organizations increased for both species during the study period.

CLINICAL RELEVANCE

Increased transfer of dogs and cats across state lines into regions with low community-based shelter intake suggested that regional and national animal disease trends could potentially impact disease profiles for recipient areas. Findings supported efforts toward collecting animal shelter and rescue organization intake and outcome data across larger systems.