

**Universiti Teknologi MARA**

**A Survey on The Awareness of Pet Owners on Diseases Transmitted from Pets  
(Cats and/or Dogs) and Its Prevention**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** Pet owners had the risk of getting infection from their pets. Awareness of diseases that can be transmitted from pets is important for pet owners to practice proper infection control. This study intended to determine the level of public awareness on diseases transmitted from their pets and the preventive measures.

**Methods:** A self-administered and online questionnaires were distributed to the pet owners in Papar, Sabah, Malaysia. Pet owners who had cats and/or dogs were invited to participate in the survey.

**Results:** Awareness and prevention of disease transmission from pets were limited. Majority of pet owners were able to accurately classify just slightly more than half (6) of the 11 listed pathogens in the survey as diseases that can be transmitted from their pets to humans (mean 6.2). Less than 30% of the respondents had their pets on deworming program and flea prevention program and took their pets to the veterinarian.

**Conclusion:** There was limited awareness of pet owners on zoonotic diseases transmission by their pets. This lack of awareness could contribute to the low preventative measures taken by pet owners in minimising zoonotic diseases risk. Further research is required to access factors that influence pet owners veterinary care practices such as their attitudes and perceptions towards animal.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Study Background

Pets are known to play important role in human life. Pets can contribute to the owners' physical as well as psychological wellbeing. Dogs for example, can give assistance to blind people, may also give psychological support for the lonely or elderly people and help owners to exercise(Broughton, Verger, & Goffin, 2010). However, pets may also give negative impacts to the owners' health by transmitting diseases to them. Animal transmitted diseases or zoonoses are dangerous to human health and some can even cause death.

Zoonoses can be defined as diseases and infections which are transmitted between vertebrate animals and humans under natural conditions (Zoonoses, Organization, & Nations, 1959). However, in the context of this study, zoonoses are defined as diseases transmitted from animals to humans. This study does not consider the diseases transmitted from human to animals.

Zoonotic disease is of great concern since animals have been known to contribute to most of the emerging infectious diseases in humans. Recent studies had also found