

# The Evidence Is Overwhelming – Or Is It?

*A Review of Dog Training Tools and Methods Research*

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## Analysis

<sup>2</sup> Fernandes J, Olsson IA, de Castro A. Do aversive-based training methods actually compromise dog welfare?: A literature review. *Appl Anim Behav Sci.* 2017;196:1-12.

Is the study Correlational Research or Causal Research?

Correlational Research – As the research title states, this is “A literature review.”

Which sub-type of study best describes the research?

This appears to be a hybrid of meta-analysis (helps researchers compile the quantitative data available from previous studies) and systematic review (examines all the literature related to a specific research question in a standardized way).

Are there any potential problems with the study?

Possibly. Without reviewing all the papers cited in the Fernandes, et al (2017) it cannot be determined if those papers are correlation or causal. If the cited papers are correlation research, the conclusion below, “*the existing literature indicates that, at least at some level, aversive-based methods generate stress in dogs,*” should be qualitative not definitive.” However, AVSAB citations also included Fernandes, et al (2017) are: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, and 18.

Additional Information (*emphasis added*)

Discussion Section:

- 1) “*In the present paper, we present a comprehensive review of the scientific literature on the effects of different training methods on dog welfare and behavioural problems. Generally, the existing research papers on the topic **suggest a correlation** between the use of aversive-based training methods and indicators of compromised welfare and behavioural problems in dogs, **but the evidence at present is not as clear as some advocates in the contemporary dog training discussion claim.**”*

Conclusions and Future Research Section:

- 1) “*Based on this review we conclude that although currently there is limited scientific evidence of the effect of training method on dog welfare, the existing literature indicates that, at least at some level, aversive-based methods generate stress in dogs. **However, further studies are needed to draw strong conclusions on the topic. In particular, empirical and experimental studies are needed.** These should take into account the entire range of training tools and techniques used in aversive- and reward-based training methods, in order to appropriately represent the effects of the two methodologies. Furthermore, to get a comprehensive understanding of the effects of the different*

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*training methods on dogs in general, more studies are needed on companion dogs and they should include different breeds. **Finally, because the effectiveness of the training methods and the consistency and timing of the stimuli delivery may also influence welfare, future studies should also take such aspects in account.***

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