

„THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES” – THE TRUE NATURE OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THE DOMESTIC DOG *CANIS LUPUS FAMILIARIS*

Summary

The dog has accompanied man for many thousand years, but it was quite recently when its behavior attracted scientific interest. Intensive relations between man and dog have not eliminated problems with dogs' behavior. The most serious of these is aggressive behavior, eight types of which have been distinguished in the present study: predatory, maternal, fear-induced, pain-induced, re-directed, territorial, competitive, and learned.

A useful method of counteracting aggression is a correctly conducted socialization process, which has to begin in the period of the greatest sensitivity (3rd–12th week of life). In its course, the puppy learns self-control and correct functioning in the interactions with dogs and humans. Dogs then learn using calming signals, which enable them avoiding conflictual situations. The signals facilitate proper communication between dogs, but also between man and dog. The socialization also consists in making dogs accustomed to

various stimuli originating in the external environment, which reduces the risk of the appearance of behavioral problems. Suitable training is very important in educating a good-tempered dog. A useful method of early discovering an inclination for aggressive behavior is carrying out psychological tests in both puppies and mature dogs. To lower the frequency of aggressive behavior and to prevent the reproduction of extremely dangerous dog's castration should be performed. Another method of reducing the level of aggression, used when training does not produce desirable results in this respect, is the application of pharmacological products.

However, it should be kept in mind that dogs have both anatomically and biologically developed to exhibit aggressive behavior, and thus such behavior should not be considered only pathological, because it is also of adaptive character, enabling dogs to survive.