

# Pet Stress Away

## Using Dogs to Help Students Cope with Stress

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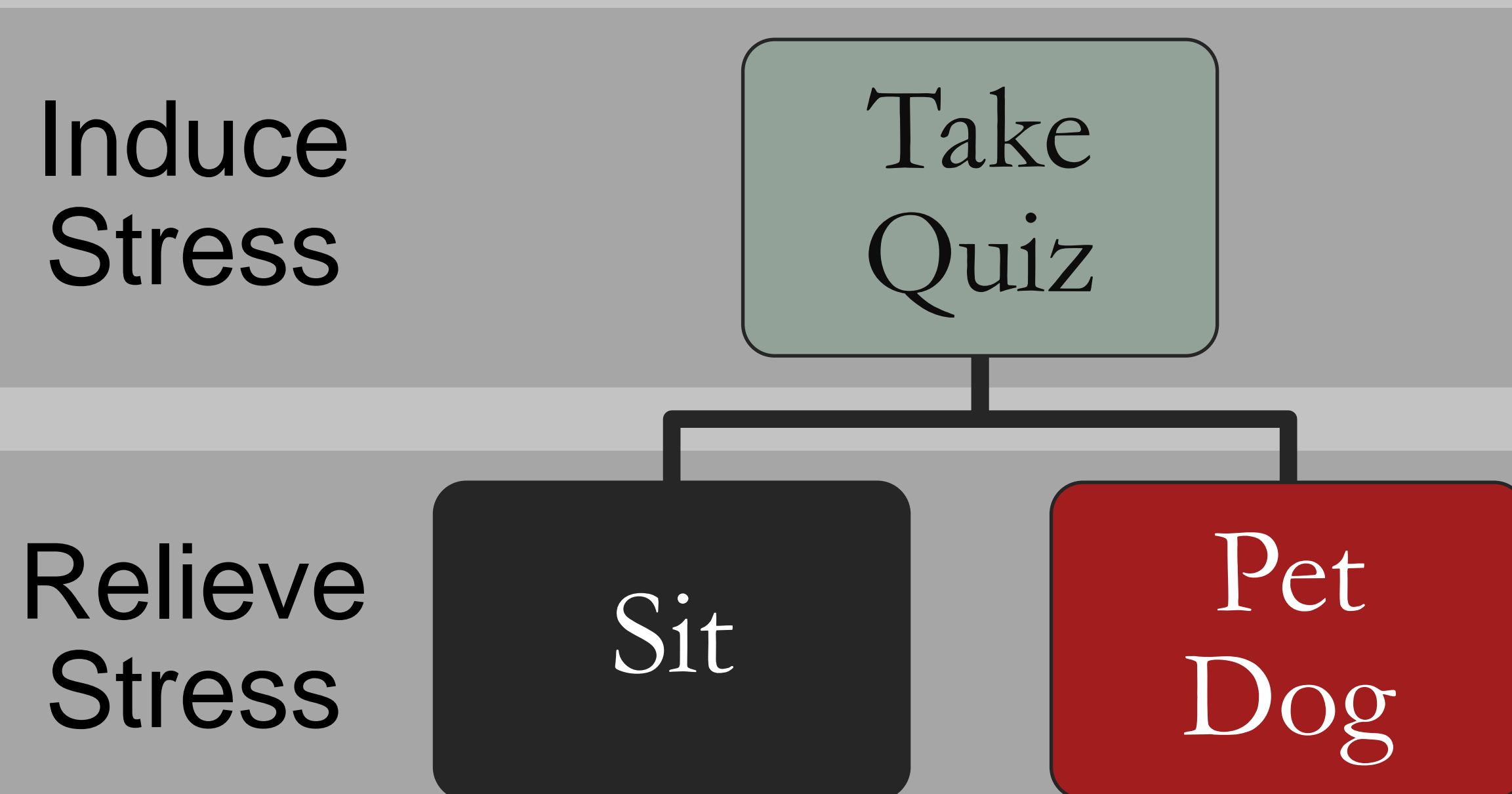
### Problem

College students are under stress. Without healthy coping strategies, stress can lead to undesirable consequences. Colleges offer programs to help, but many are underutilized.

### Background

- 85% of college students report feeling stress on a daily basis<sup>1</sup>
- Just petting a dog has been proven to reduce blood pressure and pulse and alleviate stress<sup>2</sup>

### Assessment Plan

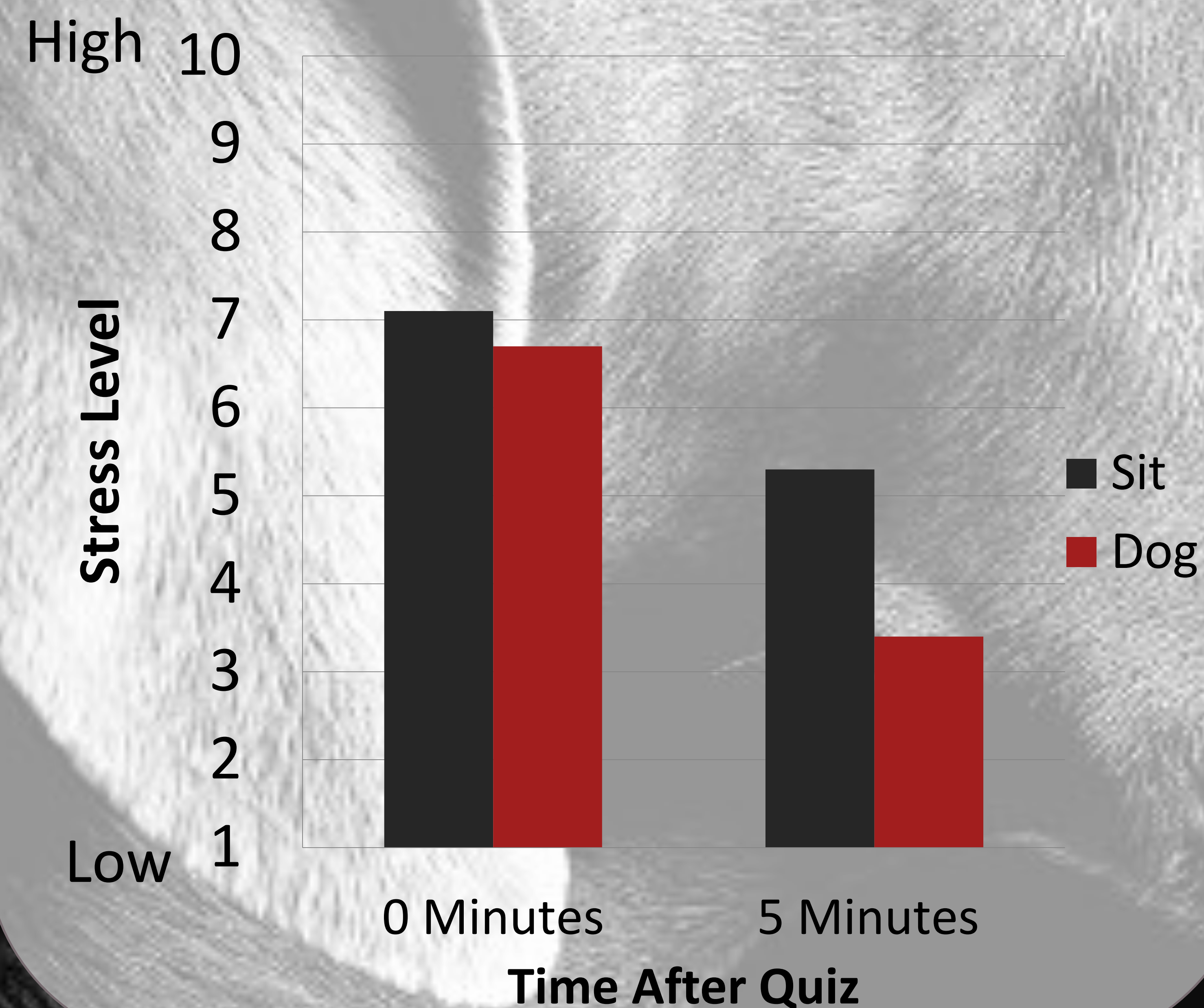


Students reported stress on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) after each step.

### Results and Recommendations

Petting dogs reduced stress levels twice as much as sitting. Colleges should provide access to dogs to enable students to relieve stress in a healthy way.

### Reduction of Student Stress Levels



### Cost - Benefit

- Little to no monetary cost
- Fun and healthy way to relieve stress
- Institutionalizes a new program at WPI

### Long-Term Outcome

The student club PAWS (Promotion of Animal Welfare Society) will use our project to institutionalize a therapy dog program at WPI.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to Gregory Snoddy for helping us bring therapy dogs to WPI, to the IRB for their efficient service, and to PAWS for continuing the program.



### References

1. "College Stress and Mental Health Poll". March 2009. mtvU/Associated Press.
2. Hansen, K., Messinger, C., Baun, M., & Megel, M. (1999). Companion Animals Alleviating Distress in Children.