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\(^1\)
- Just petting a dog has been proven to reduce blood pressure and pulse and alleviate stress\(^2\)

**Assessment Plan**
- Induce Stress: Take Quiz
- Relieve Stress: Sit, Pet Dog

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.

**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,” Ball, Minn. 2009, mmttvU/Associated Press.

**Reduction of Student Stress Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Level</th>
<th>0 Minutes</th>
<th>5 Minutes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>Dog</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time After Quiz</th>
<th>0 Minutes</th>
<th>5 Minutes</th>
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<tbody>
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\(^1\) MTVU/Associated Press.\n