

Suitable military- or police dogs display fear-induced behavioural responses

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Foto: Martina Lundberg

Introduction

The temperament of military- and police dogs are of great importance for the efficiency of the working dog teams, the security of the military staff and civilians, and the welfare of the military- or police dogs.

Behavioural tests are therefore often used to select suitable military- and police dogs.

Aim

To investigate which motivational system that is underlying the behavioural responses of the dogs that pass the standardised behavioural test used by Swedish Armed Forces to select suitable future military- and police dogs.

Methods

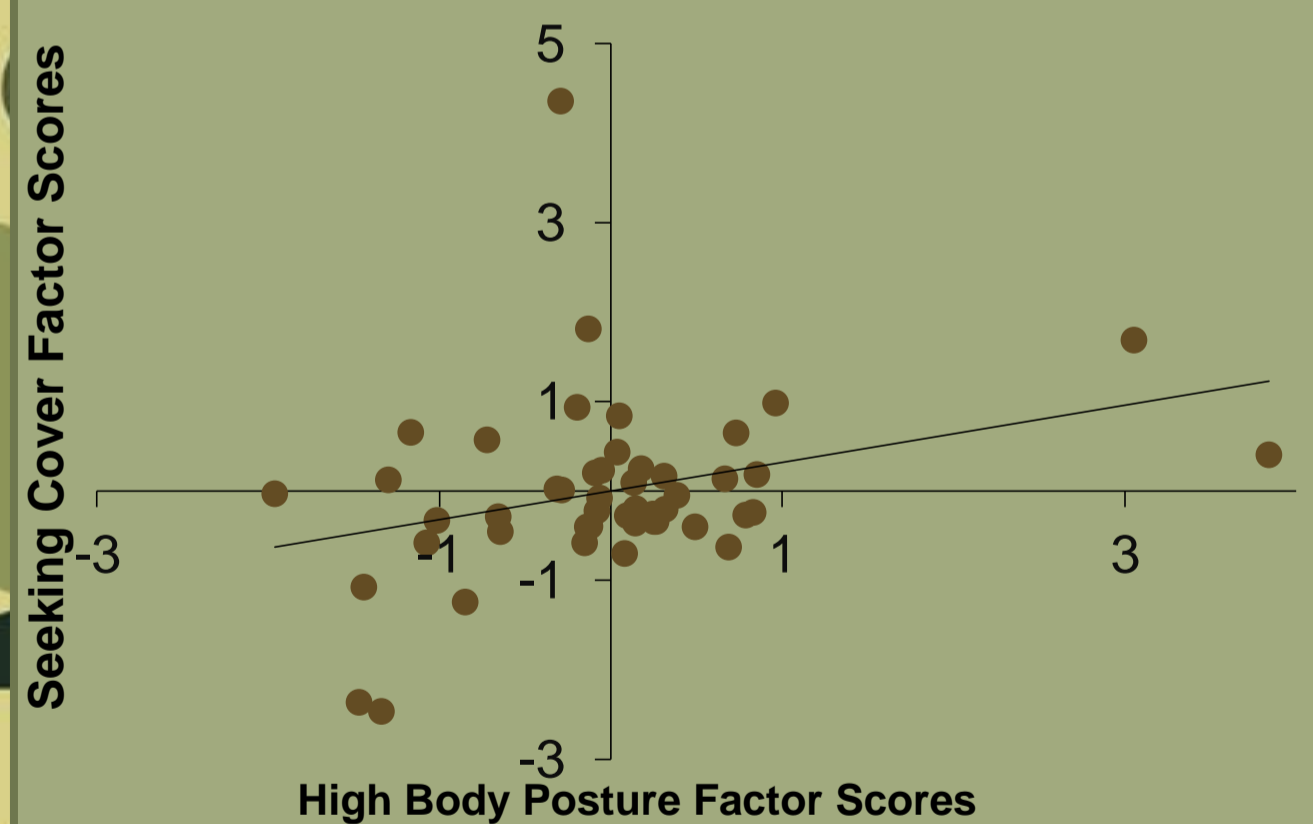
Behavioural coding was done using video recordings of a total of 48 German Shepherd dogs (28 males, 23 females) performing four different subtests of the standardised behavioural test. The data was then submitted for Principle Component Analysis.



Results

- Dogs that pass the standardised behavioural test have significant higher index value (based upon the dog's test result) than dogs that fail the test
- Negative correlation between anxious body posture and the index value
- Positive correlations between High Body postures from two subtests and index value

Correlation High Body Posture and Seeking Cover



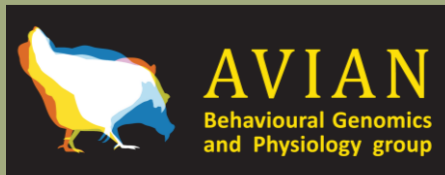
Positive correlation between high body posture and seeking cover, which is fear-related.

Conclusion

The underlying motivational system of the dogs' behavioural responses during startling subtests of the standardised behavioural test used by Swedish Armed Forces is the fear system.

Acknowledgements

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