# K9 Aggression

## Categorization Issues

## Aspects

## Types

Categorization Issues

## Moyer (1971, 1976) presents 8 types of aggression. Mackenzie (1996) presents 14. Other authors present still other categorizations.

## Thus, this is a somewhat controversial area. Part of the problem is that not all types are mutually exclusive.

## We will look at 10 types (along with some subtypes).

Aggression Aspects

## For each type of aggression (when relevant), we will discuss:

## Stimulus - involved in triggering the behavior.

## Response - the pattern of behavior shown.

## Motive &/or Function.

Aggression Types

## Predatory

## Comments Occurs when animals attack & kill their natural prey. Typically predators are selective in the species that they will eat.

## Stimulus A specific attribute of the prey usually releases the aggressive behavior. In K9’s, quick fleeing motions are the *“releasers”*.

## Response Stereotyped with little affect (eye, stalk, chase, bite, shake). This MAP can be improved with experience. Ex. can learn to aim bite & avoid getting damaged.

## Motive/Function Although motivation is food (deprivation will shorten kill latency), satiated animals will also kill & will even work for the opportunity. Thus, killing prey is intrinsically reinforcing. This is adaptive, since young animals can learn.

## Social/Dominance

## Stimulus Actual stimuli which elicit aggression are postures, behavior, & odor. Latter is key in *intermale aggression*.

## Response

### In males is highly stereotyped & ritualized.

### Possible outcomes include fleeing, submission, or possibly death.

### Learning appears to influence the likelihood of fighting. The more defeats in the past, the less likely the animal is to fight & vice-versa.

## Function Establishment of dominance hierarchies (reduce conflict, enable group to function as cohesive unit, & determine who mates).

## Fear-induced

## Stimulus When animal is afraid it tries to escape the situation. If it cannot, aggression may occur.

## Response Is a defensive reaction & is typically intense, with a strong affective component.

## Motive/Function Survival.

## Irritable

## Stimulus - Elicited by the affective reactions of anger &/or frustration. Exs.:

### *Shock induced* aggression in rats.

### *Flanking* - in protection, decoy pinches dog.

### *“Pain induced”* would fit here.

### Another variant is *“redirected aggression”*.

## Response

### Intensity varies with amount/type of stimulus.

### Typically impulsive & characterized by ANS arousal.

### In humans, may be directed at human, animal, or inanimate object.

## Motive/Function

### Remove the irritant and/or *“let off steam”*.

### Studies show behaving aggressively is highly reinforcing to irritated animals & people. Ex. irritated animals will work for the opportunity to be aggressive against a conspecific.

## Instrumental

## Comments - Aggression, like most other forms of behavior, can be learned.

## Stimulus - Is Variable

## Response - Aggression

## Motive/Function - To gain something pleasant or avoid/terminate something unpleasant.

## Territorial

## Stimulus

### An intruder. Various stimulus factors can influence.

### Territory defined as *“any defended area”*.

### Diagram of territory types.

#### Feeding/hunting, rearing, mating, & sleeping.

#### For dogs, the home (especially eating & sleeping areas), property, car, & even people & toys (*“protective aggression”*).

### Stimulus Factors

## Sex of the Defender - males are more likely to be territorial.

## Characteristics of the Intruder - some attack any intruders, other attack only conspecific strangers.

## Species of the Defender - some are just more territorial than others.

## Time of Year - breeding season is a time when territoriality is particularly likely.

## Type of Territory - may determine the degree of intensity with which it is defended.

## Response Relatively common among animals (& highly variable). May bark, growl, chase, &/or bite (& bite may be a nip or something more serious).

## Motive/Function To get rid of intruder.

## Maternal

## Stimulus

### Mother perceiving a threat to her young.

### Similar to fear-induced aggression. Mom perceives danger, but presence of young prevents escape.

### Important Variables

## More likely to attack a stranger.

## More likely to attack an adult than a youngster.

## More protective of young in nest than elsewhere.

## As the young age, intensity of maternal aggression decreases.

## The more maternal behavior is shown, the greater will be the maternal aggression.

## Response

### A direct attempt to harm the intruder.

### Persists until intruder leaves or dies.

### Often occurs without warning.

### Several variables are important.

## Motive/Function

### Removal of the threat.

## Sex-related

## Stimulus Moyer believed sexual behavior & sex-related aggression were aroused by the same stimuli. Ex. Ferrets duke it out for a while before copulating. Aggression is also found in sexual activities of some humans (i.e., biting off pieces of eyebrows, etc.).

## Response Typically controlled & thus serious injury does not occur. However, exceptions (i.e., rape).

## Motive/Function Arousal?

## Play

## Rough & tumble play is a way of practicing aggression skills.

## Typically is preceded or intermixed with the *“play bow”*.

## Analogous to football or other contact sports.

## Medical - Due to a medical problem. Exs:

### Tumor

### Epilepsy

### Other CNS or endocrine abnormality

### Etc.