

Promoting Facility Dogs in Japan

This paper examines how to increase the use of facility dogs in Japan. I became interested in this topic because my dog has always helped me feel better when I was sad or stressed. I learned about facility dogs from a TV program and found that they are common in the United States but not well known in Japan.

Facility dogs are specially trained dogs that work in one place, such as a hospital. The system started in the U.S. around 2000. In America, facility dogs work in children's hospitals, courts, and special education classes. Their role is to reduce stress and fear. However, in Japan, only one organization supports this system, and only four dogs are currently working in four children's hospitals.

Facility dogs are different from therapy dogs. Therapy dogs visit many places with their owners, but facility dogs work full-time in one hospital. In Japan, handlers must have a nursing license and five years of experience, which makes the system more difficult to expand.

I conducted a survey at my school. Only 6% knew about facility dogs, but after reading about them, about 80% said they would like to use one if hospitalized. Many people also said they would donate money. Some were worried about allergies and hygiene.

The main problems in Japan are low awareness, high costs, and strict handler requirements. To improve the system, I suggest increasing publicity through social media, expanding activities to more places, and reviewing the handler conditions. Facility dogs can provide emotional support, and I hope more people in Japan can benefit from them in the future.