Poster session 1: Wednesday July 30, 10:45-11:45 and 14:45-15:30 Poster 38

**91-days-old** **piglets** **recognize** **and** **remember** **an** **old** **aversive** **handling**

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The aim of this study was to perceive if piglets can recognize their aversive handling and if they

can remember this aversive handling after three weeks with no contact with this person. For

this, 16 piglets received an aversive treatment during their first 70 days of life: between day 1

and 28 this treatment was applied daily and, from day 29 to day 70, during alternate days. This

aversive treatment was made by the same person (AH), a woman wearing orange coveralls

and black boots. For the aversive treatment, AH was noisy, moved harshly and unpredictably

and shouted frequently during routine cleaning of facilities and animal handling. After day

70 they received a gentle treatment with another person (GH – a woman wearing dark blue

coveralls and white boots) and never had contact with AH again. For the gentle treatment,

GH used a soft tone of voice and was careful during the same routine. The Human Approach

Test was applied to measure the avoidance response of piglets to the approach of AH and an

unfamiliar handler (UH) in a novel place, at 35 days and at 91 days after birth. Scores ranged

from 1 (experimenter could touch piglets) to 5 (piglets escaped as soon as person moved). The

UH was wearing white coveralls and white boots. Data were analyzed by t-test at day 35 and

ANOVA and Tukey at day 91. At 35 days, piglets kept more distance from AH than from the

UH (2.37±0.33 and 1.69±0.22 respectively, P=0.04), indicating that the piglets could recognize

the aversive handler. At 91 days, piglets still kept more distance from AH than UH and GH

(2.75±0.33; 1.31±0.15; 0.25±0,11 respectively, P<0.001), indicating that aversively treated

piglets do not avoid an unknown handler, but still can remember the aversive handler with

whom they had contact early in life. In conclusion, 35 and 91 days-old piglets show different

avoidance responses to a human, according to the quality of handling received. Moreover, they

recognize their handler and remember her after three weeks with no contact.

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