

Social Capital Assessment in Farmers Group and Implications for Beef Cattle Business Development: A Case Study in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the effect of social capital on the performance of a beef cattle farmers' group to develop a beef cattle business. The study was conducted in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. Participants in the study were 62 farmers. The research data were collected by interview questionnaire, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews with several key participants. The results showed that social capital (trust, networking, reciprocity, and norms) in the beef cattle group is in the moderate category, indicating that the current level of social capital for improving the livestock group's performance is not

optimal. Social capital's influence on the performance of beef cattle groups empirically proved that the better the social capital, the better the group's performance. Trust and networking have no significant effects on group performance, whereas reciprocity and norms indicate a significant effect on group performance. Therefore, increasing the application of social capital to beef cattle groups would improve the group's performance in developing the beef cattle business in community farms.

Keywords: Beef cattle business, farmers' groups, social capital

What is already known on this topic?

- *Social capital is important to increase the performance of beef cattle farmers group that can lead the beef cattle business development.*
- *Reciprocity and norm significantly influenced on the performance of beef cattle farmers group in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia.*

What this study adds on this topic?

- *The outcomes of the social capital assessment underscore the intricate interplay between trust, social network capital, and social norms and their direct impact on the performance of beef cattle groups.*

Introduction

As a primary source of protein and meat nationwide, beef cattle play a crucial role in sustaining a profitable livestock industry (Sugeng, 2006). Despite its significance, the productivity of the beef cattle business in Indonesia still needs to be higher to meet consumer demands. In 2018, meat production reached 403,668 tons, falling significantly short of the demand, which stood at 663,290 tons (Directorate General of Animal Husbandry and Health, 2018). Recognizing the potential of beef cattle to fulfill national meat demand and enhancing the breeding business by addressing challenges such as low birth rates and the need to elevate farmers' skills is imperative. This can be achieved through collaborative efforts within farmer groups.

A farmer group, defined as a collection of individuals with shared norms, interdependence, and common goals, is pivotal in fostering cooperation and driving agricultural development (Mulyana, 2005; Stuart & Laraia, 2001). Livestock groups, formed explicitly by farmers united by familiarity, harmony, and shared interests, offer numerous advantages, including more accessible access to capital, the establishment of partnerships with financial institutions, and accelerated technical skill development through mutual guidance (Ismawan, 2000; Leenders, 2014; Wakhid, 2013; Winardi, 2003).

Participation in farmer groups aligns with the government's livestock population increase program, aiming for its success and providing a means for breeders to access government assistance for economic improvement in rural areas (Hermanto & Swastika, 2011). As these groups become pivotal in the success of governmental initiatives, it becomes essential to empower them effectively.

Empowering farmer groups necessitates a focused study on strengthening social capital, considering the integral role of social interactions in daily activities for livestock development. The symbiotic

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relationship between social capital and the participation of beef cattle farmers is evident, emphasizing the importance of cohesive group dynamics (Hadi, 2014; Putra et al., 2017). Groups adapting to change and maintaining cohesiveness demonstrate actual strength, with changes such as new memberships or leadership transitions influencing trust levels within the group, a vital component of social capital (Bjørnskov & Méon, 2013; Knack & Keefer, 1997).

The various dimensions of social capital, including bonding and bridging social capital, contribute to the positive impact on farmer welfare, collaboration between farmers, conflict resolution, financial capital enhancement, and the development of farmer group institutions (Barki et al., 2017; Kawulur et al., 2017; Linawati & Solikin, 2020; Prasthita et al., 2014; Putra et al., 2017; Sanjaya & Sudarwati, 2015). In the context of beef cattle farmers, the relatively high social capital within the group positions each member to contribute to and benefit from the collective strength, thus alleviating internal pressures (Hadi, 2014; Lestari et al., 2018).

South Sulawesi's substantial potential in animal husbandry, particularly beef cattle farming, exemplifies the intricate relationship between livestock development and regional progress. Polongbangkeng District, Takalar Regency, within South Sulawesi, boasts a Beef Cattle Group with significant potential. This study analyzes the effect of social capital on the performance of a beef cattle farmers' group in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The investigation aims to shed light on the intricate dynamics influencing the development of the beef cattle business within this region while recognizing the broader implications for similar endeavors in diverse geographic contexts.

Materials and Methods

Data Collection

The study was conducted in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The respondents were 62 beef cattle farmers who belonged to a group in the village of Massaturue. Data were collected through a survey implemented as an interview questionnaire. We asked closed and open questions (Arikunto, 2010) and conducted focus group discussions with farmers who belong to groups. Through these discussions, we sought to identify various problems and actual conditions regarding social capital for the development of the beef cattle business. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with several key informants.

Variables and Data Analysis

The variables in this study were social capital and group performance. Social capital consisted of trust, networking, reciprocity, and norms (Fathy, 2019). Group performance consisted of group functions as a forum for learning, a vehicle for collaboration, and a production unit. Measurement of research variables was done through measuring indicators, using a Likert scale consisting of three levels, each given a score of 1 (poor), 2 (moderate), and 3 (high). Measurement of each research variable was done through calculating the average value of the scores of all indicators and sub-variables. The sub-variables for the variable norm were compliance with rules between members and administrators in group meetings, compliance with agreed rules and sanctions, and each member having the same right to express his opinion. Meanwhile, for the variable reciprocity, the sub-variables were concern among members in deliberations, cohesiveness between group members and with the management

of Santa both within the group, and helping each other in developing livestock businesses if there are members who have difficulties. The sub-variables for the networking variable were the existence of a network between mentors and the government, the occurrence of interaction between members and groups, and the interaction between members and administrators. For the variable trust, the sub-variables were trust between fellow members, trust between members and administrators and assistants, and members' trust in the government. The mathematical model for this study was indicated in Equation 1.

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e \quad (1)$$

Where Y : group performance, a : constant, X_1 : trust variable, β_1 : trust variable coefficient, X_2 : networking variable, β_2 : networking variable coefficient, X_3 : reciprocity, β_3 : reciprocity variable coefficient, X_4 : norm, β_4 : norm variable coefficient, and e : error value.

The scale or standard percentage obtained to qualify as high, moderate, and poor was the percentage of each scale, namely the regression of the effect of social capital on group performance. Data analysis from the survey was started by tabulating data and conducting descriptive analysis of the data on averages, percentages, and frequencies, which were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 14.0 software (SPSS Inc.; Chicago, IL, USA) and multiple regression analysis.

Results

Social Capital

Beef cattle farmers in Polongbangkeng Utara Subdistrict are groups formed to receive cattle assistance carried out on a rolling basis aimed at increasing the productivity of livestock populations and household incomes. The results of social capital research on beef cattle farmers are assessed by variables: trust, networking, reciprocity, and norms.

The results showed that the government program for livestock assistance to groups has not been effective because there are still group members who do not understand the cattle rotation process. This process means the cattle distribution will be returned to the local government and rotated to other farmers. The description of social capital for trust in livestock groups in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency, can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows that the social capital trust among the beef cattle group members is in the moderate category, with a percentage of 53. Social capital in terms of group members' trust in management/companion (40%) and trust in the government is in the moderate category (37%). From the results of interviews with respondents, the factors that cause group members and their companions to distrust each other include the delivery of information about group activities. Additionally, cattle distribution and herding are not based on the results of deliberations but are carried out by the management/chairman directly. This happens because, in the case of cattle rotation, there is no precise arrangement in its implementation. Livestock rotation should be carried out by the caretaker, and the group members should know the tasks and obligations that must be carried out and have the same goals in developing the group. Group trust in the companion also leads to more activity and problem-solving in group meetings. The facilitator's involvement in helping a group only occurs when making plans to get beef cattle assistance. After that, the management and

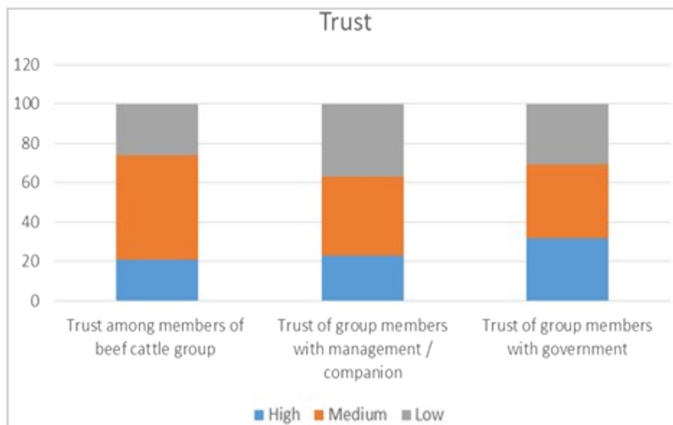


Figure 1.
The Description of Social Capital for Trust in Livestock Groups in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency.

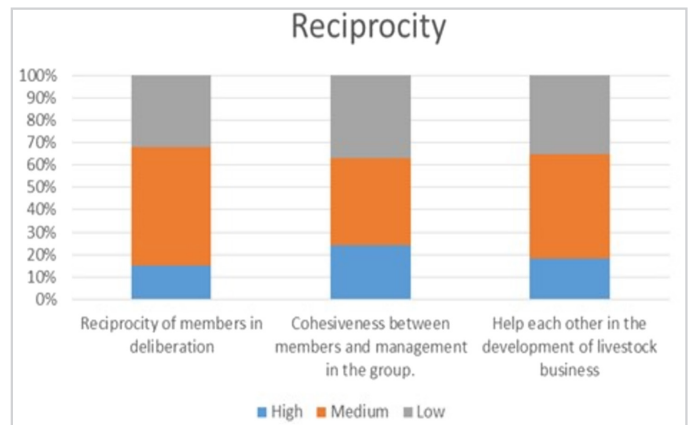


Figure 3.
The Description of Social Capital for Reciprocity in Livestock Groups in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency.

assistants have no role in solving other problems in the group, and they do not involve themselves in group activities, so the group is less developed than expected in achieving common goals.

The results of social capital for networking can be seen in Figure 2. The social capital network between the companion/management and the government, the interaction between members and groups, and the interaction of members and administrators is in the moderate category. A lack of active management in network development is seen as the group's failure to get partners who can help to capitalize on group business development, as well as to prepare group work plans.

Social capital in the reciprocal relationship in Figure 3 shows that 53% of respondents expressed concern among members in deliberation is in the moderate category. Meanwhile, 39% of respondents stated that cohesiveness between group members and with administrators in the group, to help each other develop the livestock

business if there are members having difficulty, is in the moderate category (47%).

The results of the application of social capital norms can be seen in Figure 4. Figure 4 shows the total average score for compliance with rules among members of the board in terms of group meetings. The application of sanctions is in the poor category, with scores of 44% and 45%. This can be seen in terms of group meetings; rules made by the management/chairman are not obeyed.

Group Performance on Beef Cattle

According to Cash and Fischer (1987), performance is defined as the result, which has been produced by group members with performance components. According to Robbin (2003), performance is human output measured by productivity and satisfaction. Group performance in this study is the implementation of group functions as classroom learning, a vehicle for collaboration, and production units. Group performance in the function of farmer/livestock groups can be seen in Figure 5.

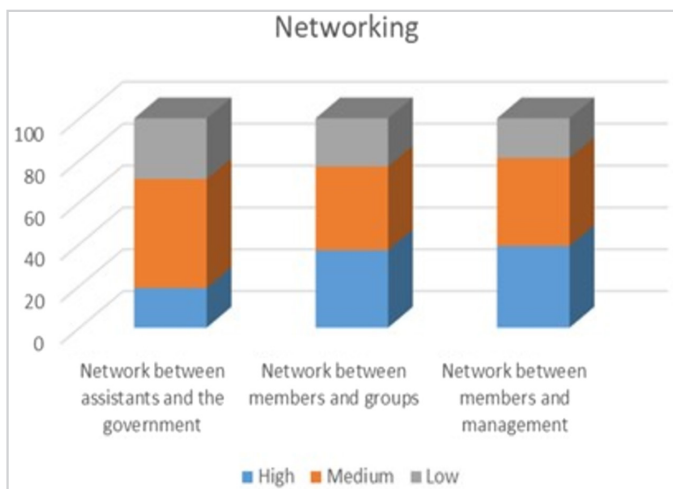


Figure 2.
The Description of Social Capital for Networking in Livestock Groups in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency.

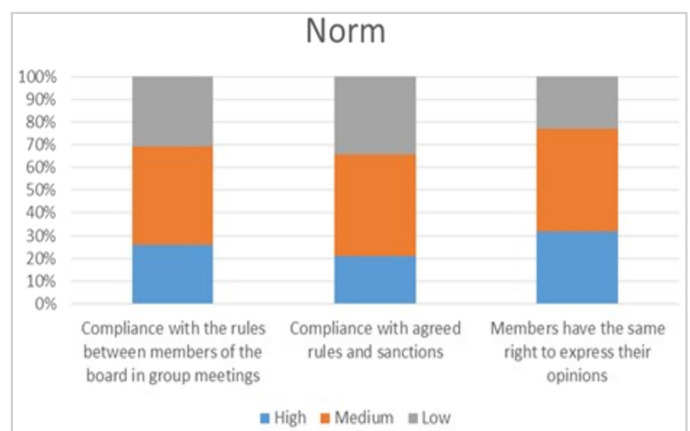


Figure 4.
The Description of Social Capital for Norms in Livestock Groups in Polongbangkeng Utara District, Takalar Regency.

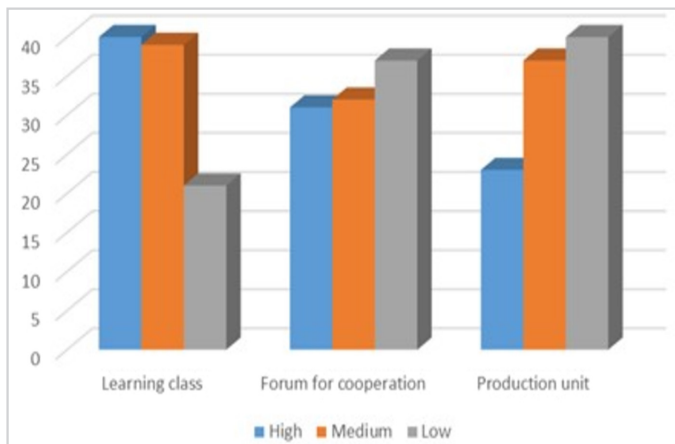


Figure 5.
Group Performance in the Functioning of Farmer Groups.

Effect of Social Capital on the Performance of Beef Cattle Groups

The regression analysis results, as shown in Table 1, shed light on the relationship between the independent variables—trust, networking, reciprocity, and norms—and the dependent variable, group performance. In the beginning, Trust has a coefficient of -0.601 , indicating that increasing Trust has a negative impact on Group Performance; however, this link is not statistically significant ($p = .081$). Similarly, Networking has a coefficient of 0.060 , indicating a modest positive correlation with Group Performance, but it is statistically insignificant ($p = .782$). In contrast, Reciprocity has a coefficient of 0.647 , indicating a statistically significant positive connection with Group Performance ($p = .002$). Furthermore, Norms have a coefficient of 0.920 , indicating a strong positive link with Group Performance that is statistically significant ($p = .001$). Thus, whereas Trust and Networking have no statistically significant effects on Group Performance, Reciprocity and Norms emerge as important predictors. These findings, combined with the F test results in Table 2, help to provide an additional perspective on the impact of social capital on group performance.

The multiple correlation coefficient (R) illuminates the relationship between independent variables, including trust (X1), networking

Table 1.
Results of Regression Analysis

Model		Coefficients ^a				Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		Beta	Std. Error	Beta	T	
1	(Constant)	-0.027	0.823		-0.032	0.974
	TRUST	-0.601	0.339	-0.520	-1.774	0.081
	NETWORKING	0.060	0.216	0.050	0.279	0.782
	REPROCITY	0.647	0.194	0.482	3.327	0.002
	NORM	0.920	0.252	0.760	3.653	0.001

Note: ^aDependent variable: group performance.

Table 2.
F-test on the Regression Model and F-test Independent Variable Trust, Networking, Reciprocity, and Norms and Dependent Variable

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.727 ^a	0.529	0.496	1.12724

a. Predictors: (Constant), Norm, Reciprocity, Networking, Trust

b. Dependent Variable: Group Performance

Analysis of Variance ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	81.314	4	20.328	15.998	0.000 ^b
	Residual	72.428	57	1.271		
	Total	153.742	61			

a. Dependent Variable: Group Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Norm, Reciprocity, Networking, Trust

(X2), reciprocity (X3), and norm (X4), and the dependent variable (Group Performance), yielding a value of 0.727. This value signifies that 72.7% of the variability in Group Performance is collectively explained by these independent variables. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) gauges the extent to which the model can account for the variance in the dependent variable. The calculated R^2 of 0.529 from SPSS analysis reveals that 52.9% of Group Performance can be attributed to trust, networking, reciprocity, and norms, while the remaining 47.1% ($100 - 52.9\%$) is attributable to other variables beyond the scope of the model under study.

Discussion

Social Capital

The research underscores the pivotal role of social capital, mainly trust, in fostering group cohesion and development within beef cattle farmers' associations. Fukuyama (2000) perspective emphasizes that social capital elements act as a driving force for group survival amidst changes, with trust as a crucial binding agent. However, the observed suboptimal network dynamics, including inadequate participation in government-organized training and limited access to financial institutions, highlight missed opportunities for synergy and collaboration among group members (Fukuyama, 1995; 2001). Pratomo (2006) underscores the shared responsibility for positive change, necessitating robust cooperation between farmers, government entities, community elements, and stakeholders for a thriving beef cattle business (Pratomo, 2006; Putnam, 2003).

The research further reveals a deficiency in social care, mutual assistance, and cohesion among group members due to weakened emotional ties, potentially stemming from external obligations. Syahyuti (2006) insight on reciprocity as a determinant of social ties aligns with this observation, emphasizing the need for strengthened kinship in social life to support various group activities. The lack of cohesive leadership contributes to members' reluctance and reduced commitment, hindering the establishment of well-defined group goals. Slamet (2002) emphasizes the importance of group cohesiveness, defining it as a sense of member attraction or group ownership,

reinforcing that a united group fosters enthusiasm and motivation among its members (Syahyuti, 2006).

The compliance between board members based on group meetings and the application of sanctions application is flagged as a concern, with members not receiving sanctions for absenteeism or tardiness. Utami (2012) view on norms as institutionalized rules further underscores the importance of adherence for a harmonious and productive community. The observed deficit in interaction and cooperation within beef cattle groups indicates potential hindrances to group development. To address these challenges, interventions should prioritize fostering social capital, trust, reciprocity, a sense of care, and adherence to norms. Strengthening leadership roles, implementing transparent communication channels, and promoting shared responsibilities can collectively enhance the resilience and effectiveness of beef cattle farmers' associations.

Group Performance on Beef Cattle

Examining group performance in beef cattle farmers' associations, depicted in Figure 5, unravels multifaceted aspects crucial for their effectiveness. The group functions as a learning class, demonstrating a varied classification, with 40% marked as high, 39% as moderate, and 21% as poor. These classifications underscore the importance of regular meetings where farmers exchange knowledge, fostering an environment for skill enhancement. Abdullah et al. (2018) resonate with this, emphasizing the role of these groups as platforms for information and technology transfer to augment member capacities. However, the group's performance as a forum for cooperation presents challenges, with 31% indicating high, 32% moderate, and 37% low ratings. This suggests suboptimal functioning in realizing cooperative goals, exacerbated by discrepancies between government programs and farmers' expectations. Government intervention can play a pivotal role in fortifying social capital, enhancing group formation, and fostering increased social interaction to address poverty in rural areas. As a production unit, the group's performance reveals 23% high, 37% moderate, and 40% low ratings, indicating shortcomings in facilitating members to enhance beef cattle business production. Insufficient facilities for processing livestock by-products and feed technology underscore the need for strategic interventions. Aligning with Silva and Hickman (1984) insights, organizational culture and social capital, particularly trust, communication, and professionalism, emerge as linchpins for the sustained development of these livestock groups. Augmenting social capital, especially trust, becomes imperative for effective group management, fostering honesty, transparent communication, and professionalism to propel the group towards sustained success in achieving its production objectives (Puji, 2018).

Group performance as a unit of production is carried out by the group in planning and encouraging the achievement of an efficient business scale, planning business patterns, and preparing plans for providing production inputs. The group's function as a production unit shows that 23% is high, 37% is moderate, and 40% is low. This indicates that the group, as a production unit, does not perform well in facilitating group members to increase the production of the beef cattle business. There is no processing of livestock feces into fertilizer that can increase the added value for group members; there is no facility for processing feed technology. This reinforces the results of research by Silva and Hickman (1984), which state that: "if a strategy is added to the culture of the organization, it will produce privileges."

The group's success influences the herd's success or performance in achieving its goals in implementing management principles and intrinsic factors, namely organizational culture. This shows that the organization's superiority also determines the group's success in carrying out its role as a unit of production. Increasing social capital in terms of trust is very important in group management. Honesty, communication, trust, and professionalism are essential for the sustainability of livestock group development.

Effect of Social Capital on the Performance of Beef Cattle Groups

The outcomes of the social capital assessment underscore the intricate interplay between trust, social network capital, and social norms and their direct impact on the performance of beef cattle groups. As delineated in Table 1, a noteworthy correlation emerges—higher levels of trust within the group correspond to elevated group performance. It aligns with established perspectives from Knack and Keefer (1997), affirming that trust acts as a catalyst for heightened productivity. Elevated trust not only fosters a safe and cooperative social environment but also contributes to increased overall productivity, a critical factor in the success of these groups. Similarly, the higher the social network capital, the more substantial the opportunity for enhanced group performance, particularly in accessing crucial information sources and markets (Yokoyama & Ali, 2009). Recognizing the pivotal role of social norms, it becomes evident that higher adherence to them positively correlates with heightened group performance.

Conversely, low adherence to social norms diminishes the group's overall effectiveness. These findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions to foster trust, strengthen social network capital, and reinforce adherence to social norms. Such interventions can significantly optimize social capital within cattle breeders' associations, ultimately enhancing their performance and effectiveness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In light of the findings from the social capital assessment within the beef cattle farmers' groups in Polongbangkeng Utara Subdistrict, it becomes imperative to delve into specific implications and propose targeted interventions. The empirical evidence firmly establishes the significant impact of social capital, especially reciprocity and norms, on the performance of these groups. Technical steps to increase social capital include increasing cooperation networks, mutual trust, and compliance with rules in cooperation (norms). Cooperation between individuals in groups or groups with other institutions in livestock farming can increase the group's bargaining position and resolve complex problems more efficiently. It can improve group performance in developing beef cattle farming businesses on people's farms. Enhancing social capital emerges as a pivotal strategy for improving group performance and fostering the development of the beef cattle business within community farms. To realize this, interventions should focus on cultivating trust, fostering reciprocal relationships, and strengthening networking capabilities among group members, administrators, and external partners. Moreover, there is a crucial need to develop the existing social capital within farmer groups into economically productive entities that align with the inherent potential of each group. This transformation involves strategic planning, skill-building initiatives, and the establishment of transparent communication channels. Simultaneously,

administrators play an important role in improving group performance by overseeing the overall administration of group facilities and infrastructure. By tackling these subtle issues, beef cattle farmers' groups can reach their full potential and contribute considerably to the development of the beef cattle industry on community farms.

Availability of Data and Materials: The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Ethics Committee Approval: This study did not require ethical approval as there was no treatment to any model animal and the study was performed through a questionnaire.

Informed Consent: The participants filled out the Informed Consent form before answering the questionnaire.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Concept – A.A.; Research Question – A.A.; Data Collection and/or Processing – A.A., J.M.; Statistical Analysis – A.A., J.M.; Writing Manuscript – A.A., J.M.; Review – A.A.

Declaration of Interests: The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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