

Read the text and answer all the questions. For questions 1-8 choose the correct answer.

### **CREATURES THAT CURE!**

10-year-old Emma wouldn't speak or get out of her hospital bed. Diagnosed with a serious disease, Emma had had to undergo months of therapy. With each passing day, she seemed to be deteriorating. That was until she met Harvey - a big, fluffy seven-year-old Golden Retriever. 'The first day we walked into her room, Emma actually spoke and managed a faint smile. It was incredible! From that first visit on, Emma's recovery accelerated,' gushes Harvey's handler, Doris. She insists just the sight of a therapy dog or cat creates a room full of smiles and more importantly: hope.

Those of us who own pets know how happy they make us, but a growing body of research is showing that animals can also make us healthier. The effect seems to go beyond just comfort and companionship to what a lot of people are saying is actually therapeutic. Animal assisted therapy, once rare and met with opposition as something unproven that would only bring germs into hospitals, is gaining momentum. Animal therapy programmes can now be found in settings ranging from hospitals and nursing homes to schools, jails and mental health facilities.

As the practice of animal therapy becomes more widespread, the focus isn't on whether it works but rather how. There is not one single answer but a number of theories are in the works. One is the 'biophilia' hypothesis that essentially states humans have an innate propensity to connect with other living things resulting sometimes in profound physiological effects. Another is the social support theory with the idea that therapy animals provide a form of nonjudgmental support that breaks down barriers in therapy allowing people to relax, trust and open up to medical staff.

While research on the subject still has a long way to go, the idea that animals are good for our health has been around for some time. There are cases of doctors trying to incorporate animals into psychiatric settings with the intention to calm patients that date back to the 1700s. More recently, studies have shown that having a pet around can lower blood pressure, and even reduce the risk of heart disease. Research has shown that just petting a dog for a few minutes can raise levels of hormones that make us feel better. Dramatic therapeutic effects were seen by medical researchers at a hospital in Australia. Analysis of data showed that after the introduction of therapy dogs, average recovery time of seriously ill patients was reduced by 30%.

The therapeutic effects are not only limited to medical illnesses or only involve dogs. Other animals such as horses, cats, rabbits and even dolphins have assisted in therapy for people with disabilities and those affected by some kinds of trauma. For example, horses often assist in physical therapy with often impressive results. 'The beauty of a horse is that it can be therapeutic in a variety of ways' says physiotherapist Drew Greenwell. 'Patients benefit from the connection they build with their horse enabling them to be more willing to work in therapy as well as the physical benefits of improved strength and control they gain working overtime with the horse.' Victims of natural disasters or accidents respond very well to animal assistance. Many are unable to communicate following such events but a lick on a cheek or the wag of a tail has an immediate soothing effect. As it turns out, a cold wet nose and a fuzzy face make most of us smile- an animal is unconditional love and that crosses all boundaries

1 Harvey visited Emma quite often.	T	F	DS
2 Initial reactions to animal therapy were positive.	T	F	DS
3 Current research examines the reasons why animal assisted therapy works	T	F	DS
4 Horses provide a multitude of advantages in physiotherapy.	T	F	DS
5 Animals can help trauma victims communicate.	T	F	DS

6 One theory explaining the effectiveness of animal assisted therapy suggests that

- a) humans can learn to form strong bonds with animals.
- b) it causes patients to be more receptive to traditional therapy.
- c) it teaches caregivers to be non-judgemental in their approach to patients.

7 Research has shown that interaction with animals

- a) results in a faster recovery time.
- b) helps calm patients down.
- c) helps heal heart disease.

8 According to the article, horses

- a) can be used in a variety of therapies.
- b) have an immediate effect on a patient's physical condition.
- c) create a bond with patients giving them an incentive.