

# **Pets & Parkinson's Disease**

Exploring the experiences of  
pet ownership for people with  
Parkinson's Disease

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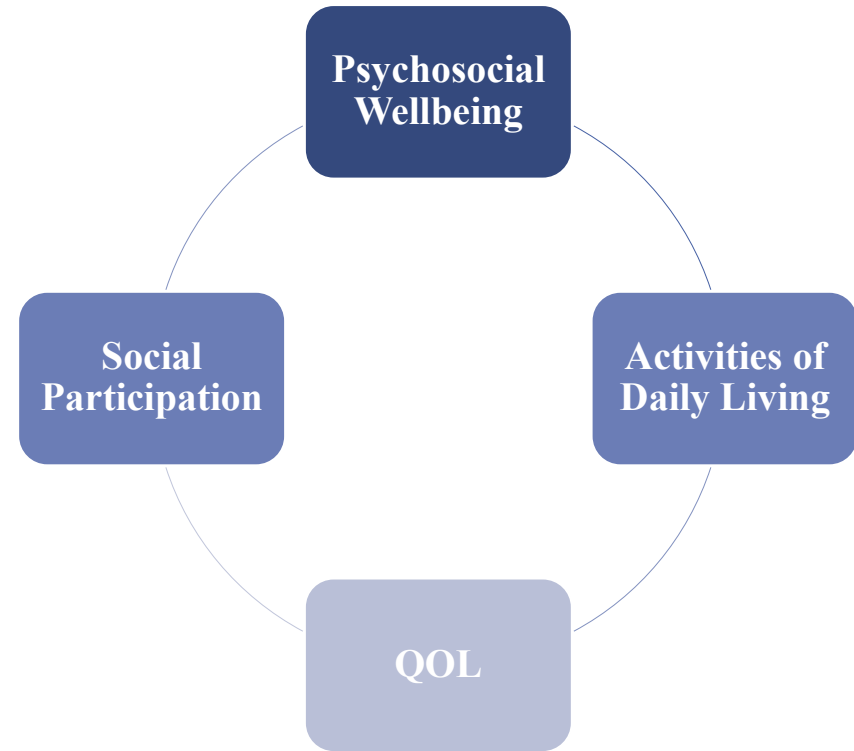
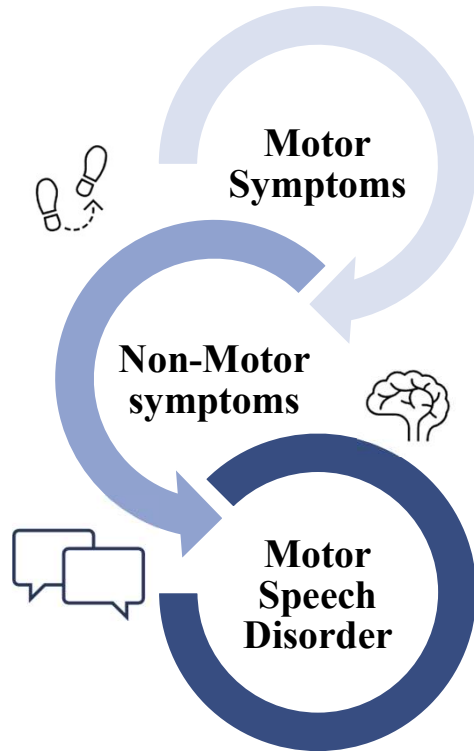
# Parkinson's Disease (PD)



8.5 Million Globally  
(World Health Organisation 2022)



219,000 Australians  
(Ayton et al. 2019)





# Pet Ownership



70% Australian households have pets  
(AMA 2021)



Increased Health and Well Being Outcomes  
(Friedmann et al. 2020)



Effective psychosocial support



Currently not adequately considered by clinicians  
(Hodgson et al. 2017)

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# Research Gap

Large focus medical, pharmaceutical & rehabilitative intervention



Growing body of research into psychosocial interventions



Early onset PD & the positive impacts of owning a dog

(Zakeri & Bain 2010)



PD & the negative impacts of dog walking

(O'neal, Eikenberry & Russell 2020)



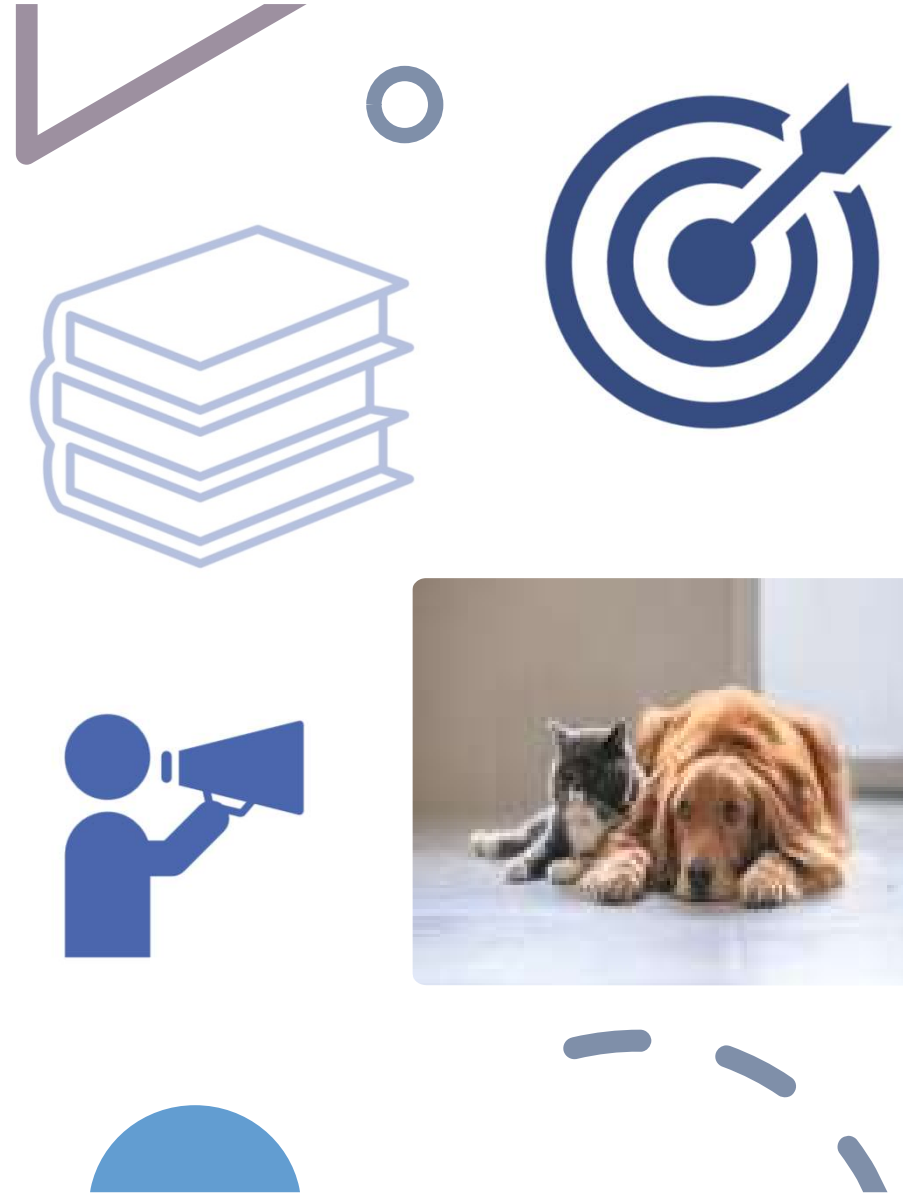
The ICF & pet's as environmental factors

(WHO, 2001).



# Research Aim

To explore pet ownership's impact on people with Parkinson's Disease as part of a broader research project on pet ownership and acquired communication disorders.



# Research Design



QUALITATIVE  
DESCRIPTIVE



PATIENT PUBLIC  
INVOLVEMENT



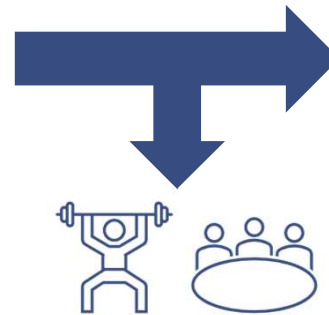
UNISA HREC  
APPROVED

# Recruitment & Sampling

**Convenience**

**Snowball**

1. UniSA Health and Medical Clinic  
City West
2. The Hospital Research Foundation  
Group Parkinson's Disease



# Participants

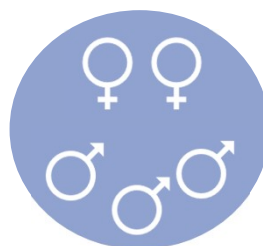
Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Have a diagnosis of PD</li><li>▪ Current or previous pet ownership post PD onset</li><li>▪ Actively involved in the human-pet relationship &amp; pet care roles</li><li>▪ English speaking</li><li>▪ 18+ years old</li><li>▪ Able and willing to provide informed consent</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Severe cognitive, visual, or hearing impairments that impact one's ability to accurately recall their experiences.</li></ul>



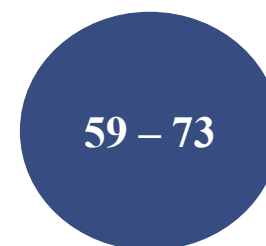
PPI Partner



Total Participants



Gender



Age Range



Pet Species



# Data Collection



## **PPI Partner & Researcher**

- ✓ Develop SSI Guide
- ✓ Pilot Interview guide

## **Semi-Structured Interviews**

- Zoom & Face-to-Face
- 30 -60 minute duration

## **Video & Audio Recording**

- ✓ Participant consent

## **Transcription**

- ✓ Verbatim
- ✓ Principal researcher

# Data Analysis

## Thematic Analysis

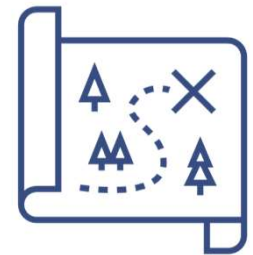
Braun & Clarke Six step Framework (2006)

Regular research team meetings



## The ICF

Themes & Subthemes Mapped to the ICF Model



# Rigour



# Results -Themes

**Companionship**  
**Coping With PD**  
**Purpose\***  
**Pet Care Demands**  
**Pet Health & Behaviour**

**Sharing Care**  
**Changing Activities**



**Exercise\***  
**Falls Risk**

**Communication**  
**Human-Animal Bond**  
**Connection**

Themes (n=3), subthemes (n=12), \*Discussed by dog owners exclusively.



“She helps me a lot, especially when I’m having my off moments” - Grant



“I play with him to improve myself, to feel better...it’s almost part of the therapy, using it to exercise” – Tim

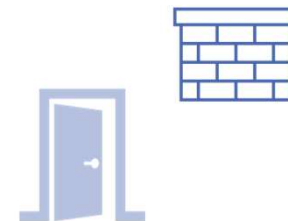
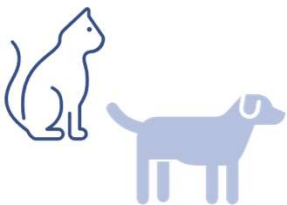
“She stands behind me in the kitchen, I’ve gone to step back and almost tripped” – Catherine



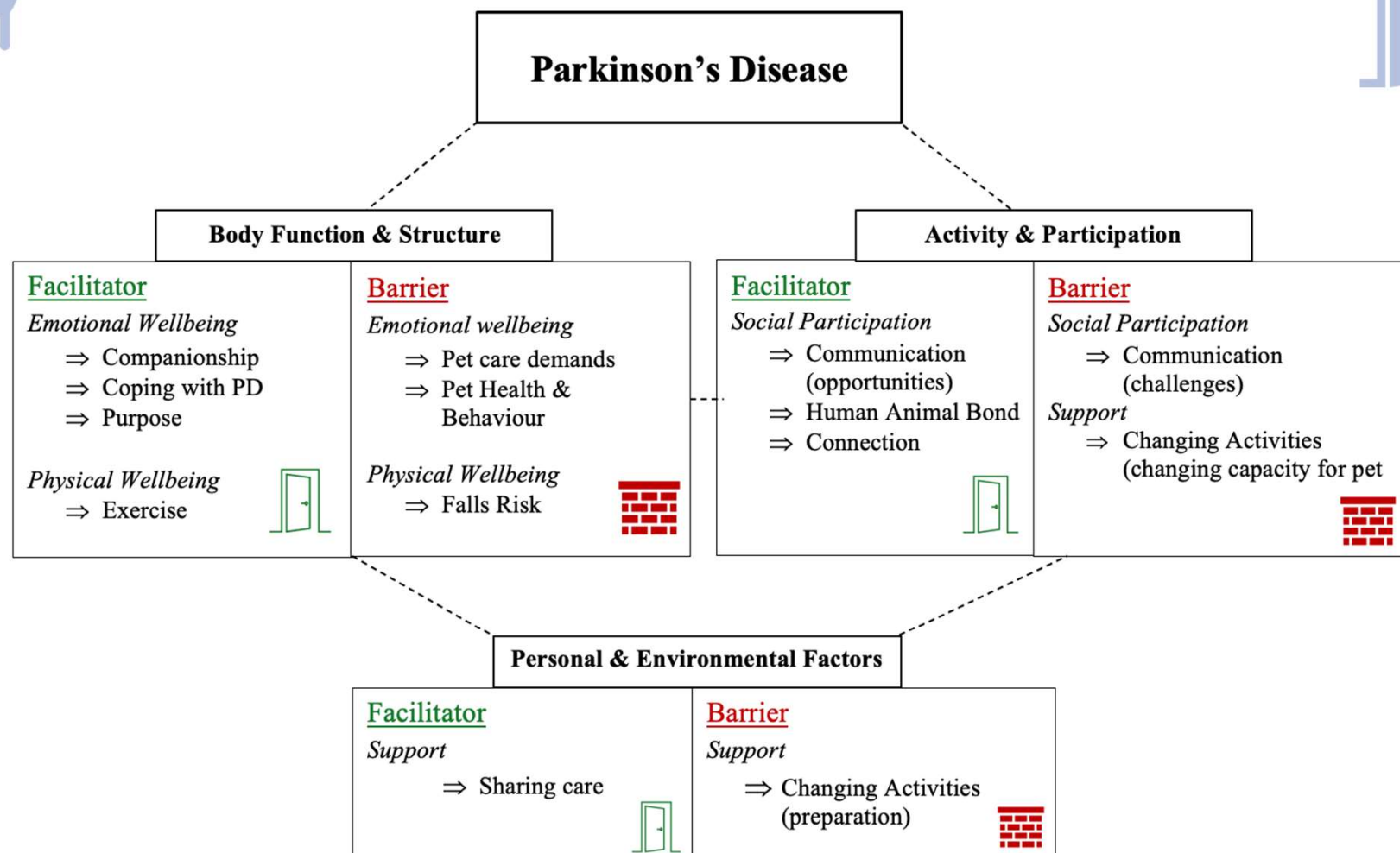
“I have a pet, I take it for a walk, they [healthcare provider] say that it’s good because it makes me exercise, that’s it” - Tim



“it strikes up conversation with the other people at the gym, we all end up talking about our pets” - Dianne



# The ICF



# Discussion



Intersection with Health  
Professionals



Pet Variables



Prospective Pet Ownership

## Limitations



- Small sample size
- Pet species variety
- Early onset PD
- Cross-sectional design
- PPI practical challenges

## Future Recommendations



- Expand demographic range
- Longitudinal studies
- Explore caregiver experiences
- Educational programs





## Conclusion

Pets aren't just environmental factors but influential companions that affect various domains of people with PD's wellbeing.