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"Resident cats" in nursing home: Pilot study of residents' and caregivers' attachment to cats in Alzheimer's and disability units

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1) INTRODUCTION

In nursing homes, the presence of pets can be a vector of social stimuli between caregivers and residents, encouraging communication, trust and openness to others (Forget, 2021). This presence can also generate an attachment between the older person and the animal, which has a positive impact on their well-being (Garrity et al., 1987; Stallones et al., 1990).

2) AIM

This study evaluates the attachment that residents and caregivers have to the cat(s) in disability (DISU) and Alzheimer's disease (ADU) units.

Attachment to the cat was assessed by questionnaire based on two scales: CCAS (Zasloff, 1996) and PBS (Angle, 2007).

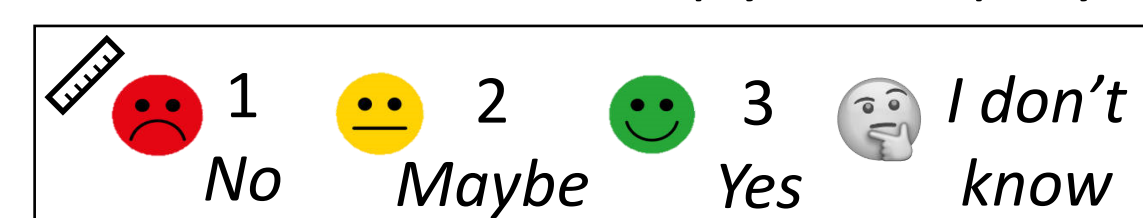
3) METHODOLOGY

RESIDENTS

Questionnaire:

✓ Attachment to their unit's cat:

Ex: *Does the unit cat keep you company?*



For each question, all the residents' comments were recorded.

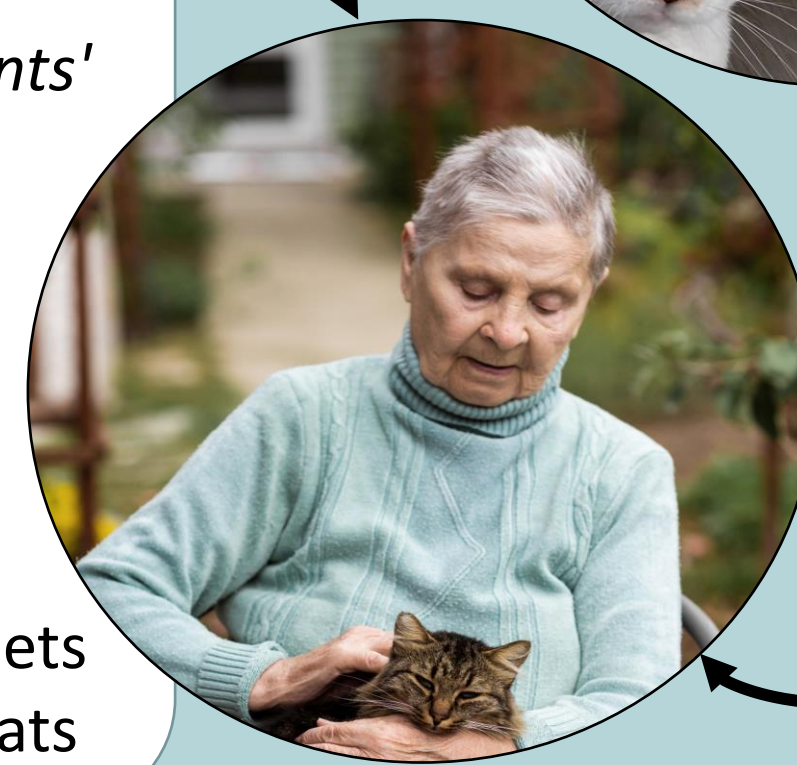
Participants (n=24):

29.2% 70.8%

Mean age: 81.9 ± 9.6 years

83.3% owned one or (+) pets
66.7% owned one or (+) cats

CATS (n=4)

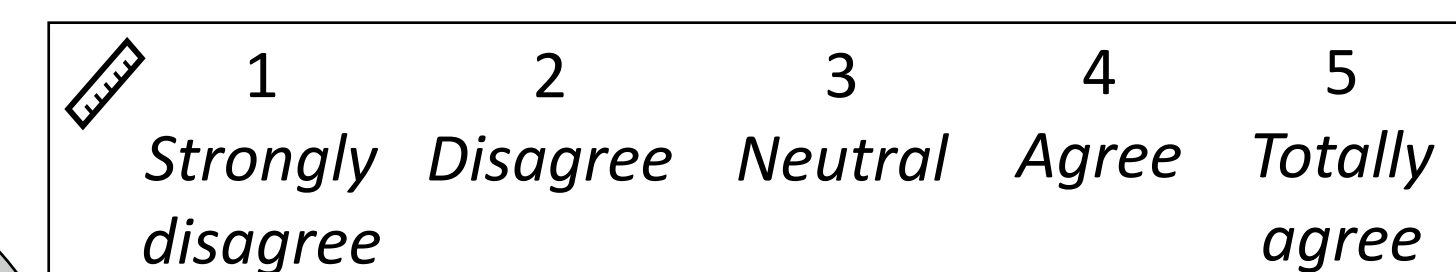


CAREGIVERS

Questionnaire:

✓ Attitude to the presence of cats in the unit
✓ Impact of the cat's presence on residents' well-being
✓ Attachment to the unit's cat:

Ex: *the units' cat provides you with companionship:*



"Comments" section for presence of the cat in the unit and on the residents' well-being

Participants (n=24):

8.3% 91.7%
62.5% owned one or (+) pets
45.8% owned one or (+) cats

4) RESULTS

CAT(S) IN UNITS

DISU: Félix & Gizmo
(♂) 2 years

ADU1: Gizmo
(♂) 7 years

ADU2: Mitsy
(♂) 5 years

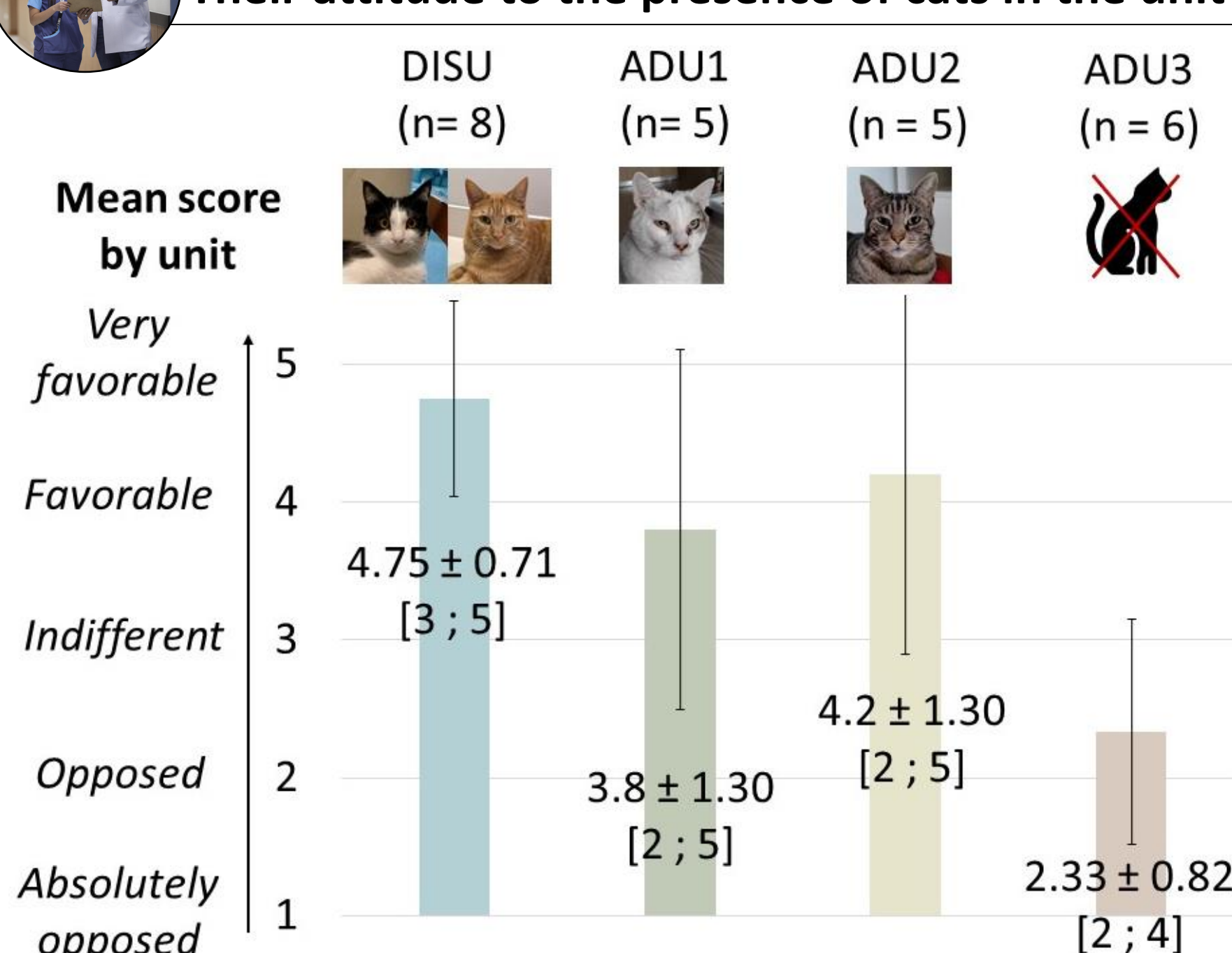
ADU3: No cat
Caregivers were interrogated about the past presence of the cat in the unit.

Disability Living Unit (DISU)
Intellectual disability
Autism Spectrum Disorders
Down and Turner syndromes

Alzheimer's Disease Units (ADU)
Alzheimer
Korsakoff syndrome

CAREGIVERS' RESPONSES ABOUT ...

Their attitude to the presence of cats in the unit

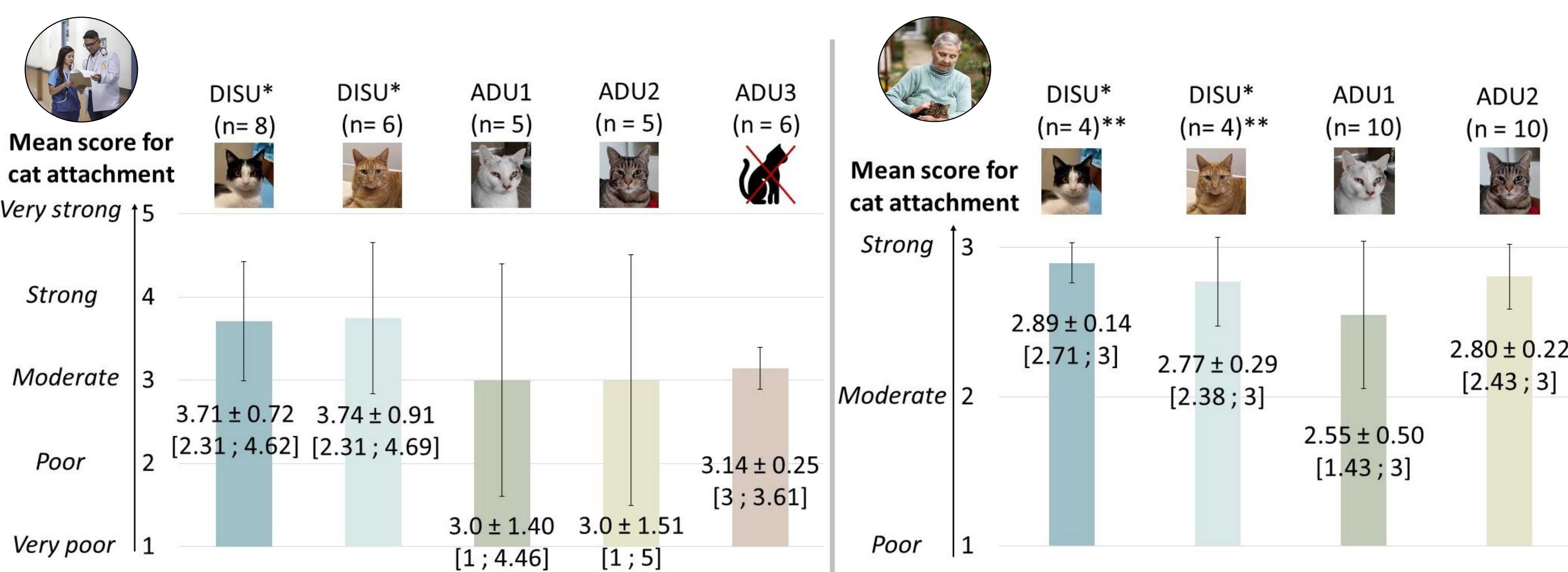


Impact of the cat's presence on residents' well-being

A strong impact of the cat on their **psychological** (4.29 ± 0.69) and **emotional well-being** (4.17 ± 0.81) &
A moderate impact of the cat on their **physical well-being** (3.54 ± 0.88)

Mean score ± SD [min ; max]

CAREGIVERS & RESIDENTS ATTACHMENT TO THEIR UNIT'S CAT(S)



*DISU caregivers/residents evaluated both cats (two caregivers assessed only Félix) ** only four residents were able to answer the questionnaire.

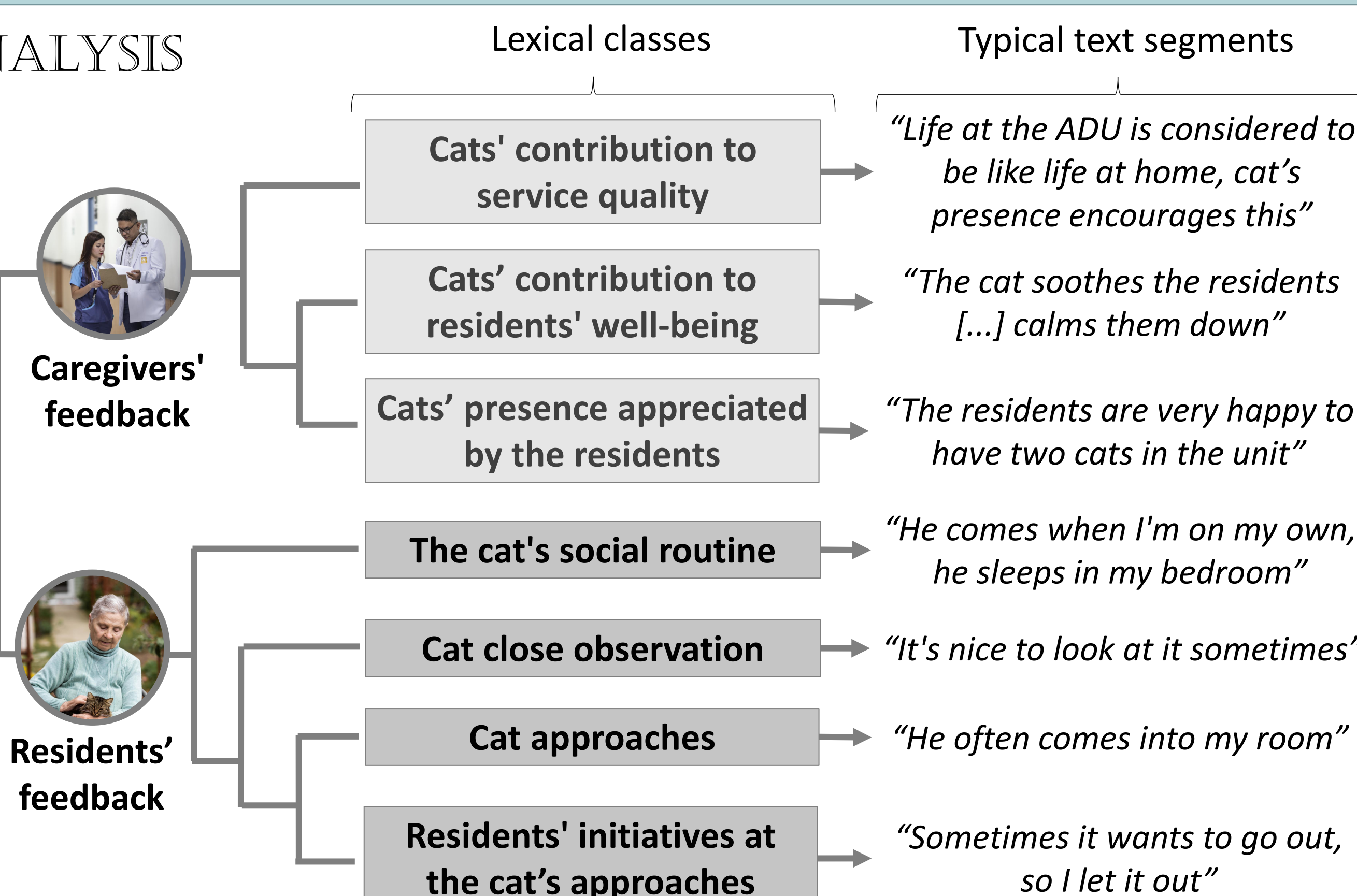
LEXICOMETRIC ANALYSIS

IRaMuTeQ
(Ratinaud, 2009)

Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) based on a simple text segment (Reinert, 1983) on:

All of residents' and caregivers comments

80.39% of text segments divided into 7 lexical classes (caregivers' and residents' feedbacks)
460 different graphic forms/words



5) DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Impact of the cat's presence

- ✓ ↗ service quality
- ✓ Moderate cat attachment
- ✓ In favor of cat's presence, except for ADU3 (death of the cat one month before the study)
- ✓ ↗ their well-being
- ✓ Strong cat attachment
- ✓ Daily observation of the cat
- ✓ Reciprocal social interactions (cat's approach → resident's response)

Potential factors influencing the impact of cat's presence in the units

