

The cruelty of doing nothing at all

Why spaying and neutering matter

ERAZA RONNY

In Bangladesh, the conversation around spaying and neutering often gets stuck on one idea: "it's not natural." It sounds like a fair concern. Animals are meant to reproduce, so why interfere?

But step outside that argument for a moment and look at the streets.

Dogs and cats are not living in forests or balanced ecosystems. They are surviving in crowded cities, feeding on scraps, dodging traffic, and depending entirely on human behaviour. There is nothing natural about that environment. And when animals reproduce within it, the results are rarely gentle.

Around 75% of the world's dogs are free-roaming, not pets in homes. Which may seem cute to those of us who love dogs. But not everyone does and for good reason. Many can become feral, and bite.



cycle of scarcity. Human tolerance also wears thin. Complaints rise. And in too many cases, cruelty follows.

So the real question is not whether spaying and neutering are "natural." It is whether allowing this cycle to continue is humane.

Spaying and neutering are routine veterinary procedures that prevent animals from reproducing. When done properly, they are safe and controlled. Animals recover quickly and often become calmer, with fewer behavioural issues linked to mating instincts.

More importantly, these procedures reduce suffering at scale. Fewer births mean fewer animals fighting for survival. It means less disease spreading through dense populations. It lowers the chances of aggressive encounters between animals and humans.

In countries with structured animal control systems, population management is handled through policy, shelters, and enforcement. Bangladesh does not have that safety net at scale. Responsibility, in practice, falls on individuals, communities, and a handful of organisations trying to manage an overwhelming problem.

In that reality, spaying and neutering are not extreme measures. They are one of the few practical ways to reduce long-term harm.



It is easy to argue for leaving nature alone. It is harder to admit that what we are seeing is no longer nature at all, but the outcome of human environments left unmanaged.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

A single unspayed female dog and her offspring can multiply into dozens within a few years. The same applies to cats. Without any system to manage these populations, the numbers rise quickly. Food does not. Shelter does not. Care certainly does not.

What follows is predictable. Too many animals competing for too little leads to hunger, disease, and aggression. Puppies and kittens are born into conditions where many will not survive. Those that do often grow into the same



MASTURA FARZANA MOHONA
Managing Director
Pawsitive Veterinary Clinic



"True love for a pet is shown through responsible care, requiring regular checkups and timely vaccinations to ensure a long, happy, and comfortable life."

PAWSITIVE care for your beloved pets

Mastura Farzana Mohona, Managing Director of Pawsitive Veterinary Clinic, is reshaping the landscape of pet healthcare in Bangladesh. As pet ownership grows, she advocates for animal welfare as a fundamental pillar of public health. Through Pawsitive, she bridges the gap between basic care and advanced medical services. Mohona discusses why animal health is a communal necessity and how private organisations can lead the way toward a healthier future.

The Daily Star (TDS): From a healthcare organisation's perspective, why is animal care an important issue today?

Mastura Farzana Mohona (MFM): Pet ownership is expanding immensely. Animal care today is closely connected to overall public health and wellbeing. Healthy pets reduce the risk of disease transmission and contribute to healthier communities. To establish a healthy environment for both animals and humans, animal care is now a vital necessity, not a luxury.

TDS: How can private healthcare organisations improve access to better pet care in Bangladesh?

MFM: Improving access requires practical and combined efforts. Private organisations must expand services beyond major cities so more people benefit. Pricing should be affordable and transparent so pet owners feel comfortable seeking medical care. They should also work toward raising awareness about preventive healthcare, as many problems are avoided with early detection.

TDS: What are the biggest gaps in pet care services in Bangladesh right now?

MFM: A crucial gap is the lack of 24/7 emergency services. Facilities often lack transparency and have limited access outside major cities. While many veterinary clinics exist, comprehensive treatment facilities which are capable of handling everything from routine checkups to complex surgeries under one roof are still exceptionally rare today.

TDS: What facilities does Pawsitive Veterinary Clinic offer? Where do you see it in 10 years?

MFM: We offer OT, post-operative care, daycare, vaccinations, deworming, and grooming. We have an exclusive isolation room for viral disease patients to prevent contagion. In 10 years, we aim to become a full hospital with advanced diagnostics and critical care systems like the ICU and CCU while expanding branches to ensure nationwide access.

TDS: What message would you give to pet owners about responsible care and prevention?

MFM: Our pet owners are very loving and caring. However, I suggest that prevention is always better than cure. Focusing on preventive healthcare through timely vaccinations and routine medical checkups is essential. These small yet timely steps ensure your beloved pets spend longer, healthier years with you.

Interview conducted by Samia Chowdhury

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4 Deworming	ECG
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6 Grooming	Emergency
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COMPASSION at the frontlines

On World Veterinary Day 2026, Dr Mir Nishat Tasnim Tania, Senior Veterinarian of Bangladesh Animal Care Center (BACC), emphasises how veterinarians are essential health workers safeguarding public health, food security, and animals.

The Daily Star (TDS): What are the most common health problems you see in pets, and how can they be prevented?

Mir Nishat Tasnim Tania (MNTT): Common issues include gastrointestinal problems, skin conditions, and infectious diseases. While deworming helps, vaccination offers 100% prevention. To avoid accidental injuries like "fall of building" or "hit by car," owners must cat-proof homes and remain vigilant to ensure safety.

TDS: How important are vaccination, deworming, and proper nutrition in responsible pet care?

MNTT: Most infectious diseases have high mortality rates, making vaccination the only total prevention for pets and zoonotic threats like rabies. Contrary to local myths, the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) states puppies and kittens can start vaccinations at 45 days. Additionally, regular deworming prevents anemia, while proper nutrition and filtered water protect against heavy metal-induced kidney damage.

TDS: What role do veterinarians play in protecting public health and food safety?

MNTT: Veterinarians protect public health by ensuring food we eat is free of zoonotic diseases and antibiotic residues, which can cause antimicrobial resistance in humans. They also manage contagious disease outbreaks and promote

vaccination awareness to maintain a healthy community.

TDS: What should pet owners look for when choosing a good veterinary clinic or pet care service?

MNTT: Ensure the clinic follows Bangladesh Veterinary Council (BVC) standards regarding surgery, hygiene, and emergency equipment. One-stop solutions are ideal for immediate diagnosis and treatment. Crucially, verify the vet's BVC license number and avoid illegal home service surgeries performed by unskilled quacks.

TDS: What can be done to improve care for stray and community animals in Bangladesh?

MNTT: We must prioritise rabies vaccination and population control through spaying and neutering to replace cruel culling methods. This requires a coordinated effort between the government, NGOs, and the vet community. Practicing societal empathy is essential for a safe, healthy coexistence with community animals.

TDS: How often should pets have a routine checkup and what does it include usually?

MNTT: Puppies start at 45 days. Healthy adults need yearly checkups, while seniors require biannual visits. At Bangladesh Animal Care Center (BACC), we perform TPR and comprehensive exams covering eyes, skin, and organs. Since patients cannot speak, BACC utilises thorough systemic physicals to identify abnormalities, ensuring accurate treatment. We then proceed with necessary diagnostic testing immediately.

Interview conducted by Samia Chowdhury



DR MIR NISHAT TASNIM TANIA

Senior Veterinarian
Bangladesh Animal Care Center (BACC) vet hospital



"In many localities, people still choose cruelty to control populations. We must prioritise spaying and neutering over violence and practice deep empathy to ensure a healthy coexistence within our society."