Observations of the subterranean activity of domesticated and wild rats (Rattus norvegicus): A descriptive study.

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AB The behavior of a small group (varying from 5 to 7 members) of domesticated rats was observed for 11 wks in an enclosure (171 * 183 cm) which allowed the viewing of Ss above and below ground. Comparisons of the development and structure of the burrow system constructed by these Ss with burrows built by a group of wild-trapped rats and a pair of devibrissaed laboratory rats revealed no marked differences between the excavation activities of wild and domesticated rats in this context. The excavation, dimensions, and utilization of burrows are described, as well as the social and agonistic interactions of group members in relation to underground habituation.