Mental health and well-being of veterinary professionals

<1>
Accession Number
20173065136
Author
May, S. A.
Title
Reflection and our professional lives.
Source
Publisher
MA Healthcare Limited
Location of Publisher
London
Country of Publication
UK
Abstract
Despite the concept’s lack of familiarity to many veterinary surgeons, reflection should be an important aspect of our professional lives, both during our daily work and when we have opportunities to take stock of what we have achieved. Reflection aids the transfer of existing skills to unfamiliar contexts, informs learning, and supports continued enhancement of the quality of the work we undertake. In contrast to scientific analysis, reflection embraces our actions and ourselves as actors, and both the rational and emotional aspects of our thinking. Importantly, reflection is appreciative as well as critical and, through cognitive reappraisal, it helps us to judge what we can reasonably expect of ourselves. Ultimately, this contributes to reduced stress and enhanced personal wellbeing.
Publication Type
Journal article.

<2>
Accession Number
20173018391
Title
Assessing and addressing poor mental health in veterinary profession.
Source
Veterinary Times; 2017. 47(3):6-7. 1 ref.
Publisher
Veterinary Business Development Ltd
Location of Publisher
Peterborough
Country of Publication
UK
Publication Type
Journal article.
Accession Number
20173019004
Author
Kerrigan, L.
Title
Modelling compassionate veterinary nursing care - eight steps towards a more compassionate approach to patients, their owners and oneself.
Source
The Veterinary Nurse; 2016. 7(10):556-561.
Publisher
MA Healthcare Limited
Location of Publisher
London
Country of Publication
UK
Abstract
Organisational elements can have a major influence on the capacity to be compassionate, however there are also individual factors that affect this capacity and these are important to address. Being positive can have an effect on the individual and those most adept at compassion may have greater resilience in the healthcare setting. Nonetheless, the demands of frequent contact with patients and their owners who are suffering are generally considered to be a significant stressor that may, at times, limit one's capacity for compassion. This article will outline eight steps that veterinary nurses can seek to undertake daily to help facilitate compassionate behaviour towards themselves, their clients and their patients.
Publication Type
Journal article.

Accession Number
20163321580
Author
Rose, R.
Title
Leading by example: recharging, rejuve and get your groove.
Source
Publisher
North American Veterinary Community (NAVC)
Location of Publisher
Gainesville
Country of Publication
USA
Publication Type
Conference paper.
Author: Squires, J.
Title: Compassion fatigue: an occupational hazard.
Publisher: North American Veterinary Community (NAVC)
Location of Publisher: Gainesville
Country of Publication: USA
Publication Type: Conference paper.

Accession Number: 20163321353

Author: Dobbs, K.
Title: Manager burnout and more.
Publisher: North American Veterinary Community (NAVC)
Location of Publisher: Gainesville
Country of Publication: USA
Publication Type: Conference paper.

Accession Number: 20163300563

Author: Wittke, G.; Bertrand, A.
Title: Assessment of stress factors for veterinary surgeons in clinical practice. [French]
Publisher: Societe Nationale des Groupements Techniques Veterinaires
Location of Publisher:
Stress at work can be defined as the physical and mental consequences of all the constraints experienced by individuals and their capacity to cope with them. An assessment of stressors in veterinary practice was carried out using the questionnaire developed by the Direction de l'animation de la recherche, des etudes et des statistiques (Directorate for the Coordination of Research, Studies and Statistics, or DARES), which is part of the work Ministry. Additional specific questions were added to the questionnaire. A total 494 responses from veterinary surgeons and 438 from veterinary assistants were received. It emerges that veterinarians are in "active" work situations and have higher stress levels than those of the general population. The main stressors for veterinary surgeons are when they are 'on-call' and when they have to work 'out-of-hours'. Secondary stressors include the high work load and the emotional context of work (customer relationships). Economic insecurity, social relationships, autonomy and conflicting values appear to be less important stressors.

**Publication Type**
Journal article.

---

<8>
**Accession Number**
20163270653
**Author**
Crowe, C.
**Title**
Managing stress in the workplace.
**Source**
**Publisher**
British Small Animal Veterinary Association
**Location of Publisher**
Quedgeley
**Country of Publication**
UK
**Publication Type**
Conference paper.

---

<9>
**Accession Number**
20163273594
**Author**
Mamo, E.
**Title**
Why creating a mentally healthy workplace is so important in veterinary practice.
**Source**
In Practice; 2016. 38(7):355-357.
**Publisher**
BMJ Publishing Group
**Location of Publisher**
London
Country of Publication
UK
Abstract
With stress and poor mental health at work commonplace, workplace wellbeing is an issue too big for employers to ignore. In this article Emma Mamo sheds light on the issues facing staff at all levels in veterinary practice and what can be done by employers to tackle the causes of work-related stress, promote wellbeing for all staff and support staff experiencing a mental health problem.
Publication Type
Journal article.

<10>
Accession Number
20163238290
Author
Gnemmi, G.; Maraboli, C.
Title
Job satisfaction parameters of bovine vets. [Italian]
Source
Publisher
Point Veterinaire Italie s.r.l.
Location of Publisher
Milano
Country of Publication
Italy
Abstract
In moments of deep cultural and social-economic crisis, people, regardless of their job position, are more exposed to stress, especially in high-developed societies. In this condition, bovine vets for the type of work they perform, are at high risk of depression. In this article the authors describe the risks related to stressful factors related linked to profession, based on research carried out in the veterinary field.
Publication Type
Journal article.

<11>
Accession Number
20163238273
Author
Hubbard, R.
Title
A veterinary focus on well-being.
Source
VN Times; 2016. 16(7):16-17.
Publisher
Veterinary Business Development Ltd
Location of Publisher
Peterborough
Country of Publication
Stress in new graduates: can the profession do more to help?

Veterinary Record; 2016. 178(25):635-636. 8 ref.

Relationships between workplace well-being, job demands and resources in a sample of veterinary nurses in New Zealand.

New Zealand Veterinary Journal; 2016. 64(4):224-229. 39 ref.
classified themselves as veterinary nurses in the 2013 New Zealand census. In the final structural model job demands were associated with emotional exhaustion (standardised regression coefficient beta =0.57), which was related to cynicism (beta =0.52) and intention to leave (beta =0.56). Job resources were negatively related to emotional exhaustion (beta =-0.32). Higher work engagement was associated with lower emotional exhaustion (beta =-0.29) and lower intention to leave (beta =-0.30). Job resources were associated with work-to-family enrichment (beta =0.69), which was related to work engagement (beta =0.57); and job resources were associated with positive team relationships (beta =0.79). CONCLUSION: It is important that job resources are available to help deal with demanding work. Without resources, demanding work is associated with exhaustion, cynicism and increased intention to leave, while positive spill over between work and family life are related to higher work engagement.

**Conclusion**

**Journal article.**

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<14>
Accession Number
20163153243
Author
Taylor, J.
Title
Handling stress in vet practice.
Source
Veterinary Times; 2016. 46(17):20, 22. 3 ref.
Publisher
Veterinary Business Development Ltd
Location of Publisher
Peterborough
Country of Publication
UK
Publication Type
Journal article.

---

<15>
Accession Number
20163176423
Author
Labbafinejad, Y.; Danesh, H.; Imanizade, Z.
Title
Comparison of the perceived quality of life between medical and veterinary students in Tehran.
Source
Journal of Veterinary Medical Education; 2016. 43(1):41-46. 23 ref.
Publisher
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Location of Publisher
Washington
Country of Publication
USA
Abstract
Medical and veterinary professional programs are demanding and may have an impact on a student's quality of life (QOL). The aim of this study was to compare the perceived QOL of these two groups. In this study, we used the SF-36 questionnaire in which higher scores mean a better perceived QOL. Only the students in the internship phase of their program were selected so that we could compare the two groups in a similar way. In total, 308 valid questionnaires were gathered. Apart from age and body mass index (BMI), the two groups were demographically similar. The scores of five domains (physical activity limitation due to health problems, usual role limitation due to emotional problems, vitality, general mental health, and general health perception) and also the total score were statistically higher in medical students. Only the score of one domain (social activity limitation due to physical or emotional problems) was statistically higher in veterinary students. BMI, physical activity limitation due to health problems, and vitality lost their significance after binomial logistic regression. We found that, in general, veterinary students have lower scores for the perceived QOL with social function being the only exception. It can be assumed that in medical students, interaction with human patients may have a negative impact in the score of this domain. Even though medical students have shown lower perceived QOL than the general population in previous studies, veterinary students appear to have slightly lower perceived QOL than medical students.

Publication Type
Journal article.

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<16>
Accession Number
20163148028
Author
Crowe, C.
Title
Stress management for equine vets.
Source
Publisher
BMJ Publishing Group
Location of Publisher
London
Country of Publication
UK
Abstract
Equine practice brings its own particular pressures, says Carolyne Crowe, who offers some advice on how to recognise and counteract the stress that might result.
Publication Type
Journal article.

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<17>
Accession Number
20163095654
Author
Title
Mental and physical distress of field veterinarians during and soon after the 2010 foot and mouth disease outbreak in Miyazaki, Japan. (Plurithematic issue of the scientific and technical review, 2015.)
Source
An outbreak of foot and mouth disease occurred in Miyazaki, Japan, in April 2010, and nearly 290,000 animals were culled to control the disease. This study was conducted to demonstrate the causes and intensity of mental distress felt by the field veterinarians participating in the control programme. A focus group discussion was conducted with ten veterinarians to understand their distress during the outbreak, and a questionnaire to quantify the degree of distress experienced each week was administered to 16 veterinarians. A detailed questionnaire was separately administered to 70 veterinarians six months after the outbreak was controlled, to assess mental distress status and to identify the risk factors for serious mental illness (SMI) using the six-item Kessler scale (K6). Overall, mental distress (mean 3.1) was significantly greater than physical distress (mean 1.9, p<0.001). The risk factors for mental distress were categorised into three groups: culling, communication with farmers, and gender; each category was qualitatively described. Only two respondents (2.9%) had high K6 scores suggesting SMI. In the final generalised linear models with quasi-Poisson errors, the risk factors for SMI that remained were: disinfecting vehicles (p=0.01), distress (p<0.001), and increased alcohol consumption (p=0.057), and a protective factor: participation in culling (p=0.07), which suggested healthy worker bias. Sensitive individuals had been allocated to non-culling activities during disease control. In conclusion, human resource management was adequate during the outbreak from a public-health perspective. However, monitoring delayed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder is recommended.

Veterinary medical school challenges students academically and personally, and some students report depression and anxiety at rates higher than the general population and other medical students. This study describes changes in veterinary medical student self-esteem (SE) over four years of professional education, attending to differences between high and low SE students and the characteristics specific to low SE veterinary medical students. The study population was students enrolled at the Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine from 2006 to 2012. We used data from the annual anonymous survey administered college-wide that is used to monitor the curriculum and learning environment. The survey asked respondents to rate their knowledge and skill development, learning environment, perceptions of
stress, skill development, and SE. Participants also provided information on their academic performance and demographics. A contrasting groups design was used: high and low SE students were compared using logistic regression to identify factors associated with low SE. A total of 1,653 respondents met inclusion criteria: 789 low SE and 864 high SE students. The proportion of high and low SE students varied over time, with the greatest proportion of low SE students during the second-year of the program. Perceived stress was associated with low SE, whereas perceived supportive learning environment and skill development were associated with high SE. These data have provided impetus for curricular and learning environment changes to enhance student support. They also provide guidance for additional research to better understand various student academic trajectories and their implications for success.

Publication Type
Journal article.

<19>
Accession Number
20153440594
Author
Scotney, R. L.; McLaughlin, D.; Keates, H. L.
Title
A systematic review of the effects of euthanasia and occupational stress in personnel working with animals in animal shelters, veterinary clinics, and biomedical research facilities.
Source
Publisher
American Veterinary Medical Association
Location of Publisher
Schaumburg
Country of Publication
USA
Abstract
Background - The study of occupational stress and compassion fatigue in personnel working in animal-related occupations has gained momentum over the last decade. However, there remains incongruence in understanding what is currently termed compassion fatigue and the associated unique contributory factors. Furthermore, there is minimal established evidence of the likely influence of these conditions on the health and well-being of individuals working in various animal-related occupations. Objective - To assess currently available evidence and terminology regarding occupational stress and compassion fatigue in personnel working in animal shelters, veterinary clinics, and biomedical research facilities. Data Sources - Studies were identified by searching the following electronic databases with no publication date restrictions: ProQuest Research Library, ProQuest Social Science Journals, PsycARTICLES, Web of Science, Science Direct, Scopus, PsychINFO databases, and Google Scholar. Search terms included (euthanasia AND animals) OR (compassion fatigue AND animals) OR (occupational stress AND animals). Study Appraisal and Synthesis - Only articles published in English in peer-reviewed journals that included use of quantitative or qualitative techniques to investigate the incidence of occupational stress or compassion fatigue in the veterinary profession or animal-related occupations were included. On the basis of predefined criteria, 1 author extracted articles, and the data set was then independently reviewed by the other 2 authors. Results - 12 articles met the selection criteria and included a variety of study designs and methods of data analysis. Seven studies evaluated animal shelter personnel, with the remainder evaluating veterinary nurses and technicians (2), biomedical research technicians (1), and personnel in multiple animal-related occupations (2). There was a lack of consistent terminology and agreed definitions for the articles reviewed. Personnel directly engaged in euthanasia reported significantly higher levels of work stress and lower levels of job satisfaction, which may have resulted in higher employee turnover, psychological distress, and other stress-related conditions. Limitations and Conclusions - Results of this review suggested a high incidence of occupational stress and euthanasia-related strain in animal care personnel. The disparity of nomenclature
and heterogeneity of research methods may contribute to general misunderstanding and confusion and impede the ability to generate high-quality evidence regarding the unique stressors experienced by personnel working with animals. The present systematic review provided insufficient foundation from which to identify consistent causal factors and outcomes to use as a basis for development of evidence-based stress management programs, and it highlights the need for further research.

Publication Type
Journal article.

<20>
Accession Number
20153404780
Author
Cake, M. A.; Bell, M. A.; Bickley, N.; Bartram, D. J.
Title
The life of meaning: a model of the positive contributions to well-being from veterinary work.
Source
Journal of Veterinary Medical Education; 2015. 42(3):184-193. 76 ref.
Publisher
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Location of Publisher
Washington
Country of Publication
USA
Abstract
We present a veterinary model of work-derived well-being, and argue that educators should not only present a (potentially self-fulfilling) stress management model of future wellness, but also balance this with a positive psychology-based approach depicting a veterinary career as a richly generative source of satisfaction and fulfillment. A review of known sources of satisfaction for veterinarians finds them to be based mostly in meaningful purpose, relationships, and personal growth. This positions veterinary well-being within the tradition of eudaimonia, an ancient concept of achieving one's best possible self, and a term increasingly employed to describe well-being derived from living a life that is engaging, meaningful, and deeply fulfilling. The theory of eudaimonia for workplace well-being should inform development of personal resources that foster resilience in undergraduate and graduate veterinarians.
Publication Type
Journal article.

<21>
Accession Number
20153397553
Author
Title
Risk factors for suicide, attitudes toward mental illness, and practice-related stressors among US veterinarians.
Source
Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association; 2015. 247(8):945-955. 43 ref.
Publisher
Objective - To evaluate the prevalence of suicide risk factors, attitudes toward mental illness, and practice-related stressors among US veterinarians. Design - Cross-sectional survey. Sample - 11,627 US veterinarians. Procedures - Between July 1 and October 20, 2014, a Web-based questionnaire was made available through the Veterinary Information Network (VIN), VIN News Service, JAVMA News, and email messages to US veterinarians sent by a veterinary medical association, agriculture or livestock department, or health department of each state (except Maine) and Puerto Rico. Results - Of 11,627 respondents, 3,628 (31%) were male. Modal age category was 30 to 39 years, and modal range for years practicing veterinary medicine was 10 to 19 years. There were 7,460 (64%) respondents who primarily practiced small animal medicine, and 4,224 (36%) who were practice owners. There were 1,077 (9%) respondents with current serious psychological distress. Since leaving veterinary school, 3,655 (31%) respondents experienced depressive episodes, 1,952 (17%) experienced suicidal ideation, and 157 (1%) attempted suicide. Currently, 2,228 (19%) respondents were receiving treatment for a mental health condition. Only 3,250 of 10,220 (32%) respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that people are sympathetic toward persons with mental illness. The most commonly reported practice-related stressor was demands of practice. Conclusions and Clinical Relevance - In this survey, approximately 1 in 11 veterinarians had serious psychological distress and 1 in 6 experienced suicidal ideation since leaving veterinary school. Implementing measures to help veterinarians cope with practice-related stressors and reducing barriers veterinarians face in seeking mental health treatment might reduce the risk for suicide among veterinarians.
are factors responsible for social and economic losses. This study presents the legal limitations associated
with the performing work by female veterinarians in relation to the protection of their health. Health risks for
women employed in veterinary clinics are presented and discussed from the aspects of particularly
dangerous and arduous work activities.

Publication Type
Journal article.

<23>
Accession Number
20153357365
Author
Crane, M. F.; Phillips, J. K.; Karin, E.
Title
Trait perfectionism strengthens the negative effects of moral stressors occurring in veterinary practice.
Source
Publisher
Wiley-Blackwell
Location of Publisher
Melbourne
Country of Publication
Australia

Abstract
Objective: Moral challenges are a unique class of workplace stressor where behaviours violate one's
personal moral beliefs regarding how things should be done or one's perceived obligations. Morally
challenging stressors exist in many workplaces and at times can transform into marked emotional distress,
referred to as moral distress. In this study we investigated the degree to which morally significant stressors
are related to psychological distress and resilience in a sample of Australian veterinarians. Further, we
explored the role of trait perfectionism in strengthening the relationship between exposure to morally
significant stressors and psychological distress. Trait perfectionism is the tendency to have very high and
rigid standards for the self and/or others and is often implicated in the experience of psychological distress.

Methods: A cross-sectional online survey sampled 540 Australian-registered veterinarians (64.2% female),
ranging in age from 23 to 74 years. Results: Although morally significant stressors were related to increases
in milder expressions of distress, they did not appear to be associated with more severe decrements in
psychological wellbeing. Rather, it was the combination of these triggering stressor events and trait
perfectionism that appeared to create the vulnerability to moral stressors. Conclusion: The findings suggest
that trait perfectionism is an individual difference that enhances vulnerability to the risk of greater distress in
response to morally challenging events in veterinary practice. The implications of these findings and
directions for further research are discussed.

Publication Type
Journal article.

<24>
Accession Number
20153326526
Author
Herron, M. E.
Title
Low-stress handling in veterinary practice - the new norm or still a novel concept?
Source
Publisher
Elsevier Inc.
Location of Publisher
Philadelphia
Country of Publication
USA
Publication Type
Journal article.

<25>
Accession Number
20153321617
Author
Milner, A. J.; Niven, H.; Page, K.; LaMontagne, A. D.
Title
Suicide in veterinarians and veterinary nurses in Australia: 2001-2012.
Source
Australian Veterinary Journal; 2015. 93(9):308-310. 25 ref.
Publisher
Wiley-Blackwell
Location of Publisher
Melbourne
Country of Publication
Australia
Abstract
Background: Whether veterinarians have an elevated suicide rate compared with the general population is controversial. Methods: Reported cases of suicide among veterinarians and veterinary nurses in Australia over the period 2001 to 2012 were investigated in a retrospective case-series study. Results: The standardised mortality ratio of veterinarians (n=18) was 1.92 (95% CI 1.14-3.03) and that of veterinary nurses (n=7) to the general population was 1.24 (95% CI 0.80-1.85). Overdosing on drugs (pentobarbitone) was the main method of suicide in these occupations. Conclusion: The reasons for veterinary suicides are likely to be multifactorial, including work- and life-related stressors, and individual characteristics. This research highlights the need for targeted suicide prevention and intervention for veterinarians.
Publication Type
Journal article.

<26>
Accession Number
20153247982
Author
Aylott, A. M. S.
Title
Practice and people well-being.
Source
Abstract
This work presents the results of the 2014 Survey of the Veterinary Nursing Profession, carried out on behalf of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) in the UK regarding demographics, work status, working outside and within the profession, working within clinical practice, internet use, opinions regarding the veterinary nursing profession and well-being.
Vets can face a variety of career setbacks and workplace stressors which can profoundly affect their professional and personal lives. This article considers how vets can learn and implement coping skills that can protect against those stressors and foster resilience.

Publication Type
Journal article.

<29>
Accession Number
20143377388
Author
Drake, A. S.; Hafen, M., Jr.; Rush, B. R.
Title
Promoting well-being among veterinary medical students: protocol and preliminary findings.
Source
Journal of Veterinary Medical Education; 2014. 41(3):294-300. 34 ref.
Publisher
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Location of Publisher
Washington
Country of Publication
USA
Abstract
The veterinary medical profession has been the focus of increased concern as students and professionals have been found to be at risk of poor mental health outcomes. Two interventions were proposed as an attempt to improve student well-being individually and within romantic relationships. Preliminary results indicated that students who participated in the interventions experienced significant improvements in decreasing symptoms of depression and stress and relative improvements in relationship satisfaction with their partner. These noteworthy findings provide encouragement for the development of new interventions and future research focused on enhancing veterinary medical students' well-being.

Publication Type
Journal article.

<30>
Accession Number
20143377387
Author
Laakkonen, J.; Nevgi, A.
Title
Relationships between learning strategies, stress, and study success among first-year veterinary students during an educational transition phase.
Source
Journal of Veterinary Medical Education; 2014. 41(3):284-293. 55 ref.
Publisher
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Location of Publisher
Washington
Country of Publication
USA
Abstract
We investigated the relationships between stress, learning strategies, and study success among first-year veterinary students at the very beginning of their veterinary studies. The study was carried out during the first course on macroscopic anatomy (osteology), which students have in the past found to be exceptionally stressful. Students (N=45) completed a questionnaire concerning their self-reported views on stress and learning strategies, which were compared with their self-reported written-test scores. Participants who had previously gained university credits did not have significantly better test scores, but they achieved the learning goals with significantly less stress than other participants. Previous experience of university study helped students not only to adjust to a new type of course content and to achieve the learning goal of the osteology course, but also to cope with the stress experienced from taking concurrently running courses. Of the respondents who specifically named factors relating to self-regulation and modification of their learning strategy, all had gained prior credits. These students were able to use their study time efficiently and adjust their schedules according to the course demands.

Publication Type
Journal article.

<31>
Accession Number
20143152845
Author
Foster, S. M.; Maples, E. H.
Title
Occupational stress in veterinary support staff.
Source
Journal of Veterinary Medical Education; 2014. 41(1):102-110. 32 ref.
Publisher
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Location of Publisher
Washington
Country of Publication
USA
Abstract
A mixed-method study was used to characterize the occupational stress, health status, and coping strategies of 104 members of the Alabama Veterinary Technician Association. A Web-based survey was used to administer three validated and reliable instruments to gather the quantitative data, and interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data. Quantitative and qualitative data validated each other in all aspects of mental health, indicating that veterinary support staff's mental health status was low. Participants' mental health scores were lower than the US norm of 50, and a correlation between health status and occupational stressors indicated that those with higher perceived stress had lower mental and physical health. Interviews supported this finding. The results suggest that workload, death and dying, and conflict with veterinarians were prominent sources of stress and that veterinary support staff experience high stress that affects their health. Coping strategies were found to be related to mental health status, and those used by this workforce have been linked to negative outcomes. This study's findings indicate that staff health may have negative economic implications for practice owners and staff members.
Publication Type
Journal article.

<32>
Veterinary medicine is regarded as a rewarding profession by many students and veterinarians but in working life emotional factors might lead to disillusion and compromised enthusiasm and might even cause severe health problems. To investigate work-related aspects, both positive and negative, the occupational satisfaction and emotional stressors of veterinarians working in a university setting were surveyed. Fifty-five volunteers completed survey sheets that consisted of 31 questions. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS v.17. A p-value of <0.05 was considered as significant. Analysis showed that love of animals, medical interest and the desire to help animals are important factors in choosing this profession. Although various workplace-related factors have a negative impact on the emotional well-being of the respondents, over 95% would choose the job again. Over 70% of participants knew at least one colleague who had taken his life, underlining the high suicide risk of the profession. Helping animals, having an interesting job, interaction with colleagues and lifelong learning were rated as positive sides of being a veterinarian working in a university setting. Despite great odds, being a veterinarian can be a profoundly fulfilling profession. However, it is advisable to inform prospective students better about the high emotional burden the job can impose, compounding the problems caused by long working hours and a low income. Veterinary medicine is more than a profession: it is a calling and the choice of the job should be well considered. Appropriate training of veterinary students and the availability of counselling services for veterinarians would be desirable.

Author
Shibly, S.; Rodl, C. A.; Tichy, A.
Title
Vet - a ‘dream job’? Survey of work-related satisfaction and possible emotional stressors of veterinarians in a university setting.
Source
Publisher
Fairdrucker GmbH
Location of Publisher
Purkersdorf
Country of Publication
Austria
Abstract
Veterinary medicine is regarded as a rewarding profession by many students and veterinarians but in working life emotional factors might lead to disillusion and compromised enthusiasm and might even cause severe health problems. To investigate work-related aspects, both positive and negative, the occupational satisfaction and emotional stressors of veterinarians working in a university setting were surveyed. Fifty-five volunteers completed survey sheets that consisted of 31 questions. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS v.17. A p-value of <0.05 was considered as significant. Analysis showed that love of animals, medical interest and the desire to help animals are important factors in choosing this profession. Although various workplace-related factors have a negative impact on the emotional well-being of the respondents, over 95% would choose the job again. Over 70% of participants knew at least one colleague who had taken his life, underlining the high suicide risk of the profession. Helping animals, having an interesting job, interaction with colleagues and lifelong learning were rated as positive sides of being a veterinarian working in a university setting. Despite great odds, being a veterinarian can be a profoundly fulfilling profession. However, it is advisable to inform prospective students better about the high emotional burden the job can impose, compounding the problems caused by long working hours and a low income. Veterinary medicine is more than a profession: it is a calling and the choice of the job should be well considered. Appropriate training of veterinary students and the availability of counselling services for veterinarians would be desirable.

Publication Type
Journal article.
The Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R model) was used as the theoretical basis of a tailormade questionnaire to measure the psychosocial work environment and personal resources of recently graduated veterinary professionals. According to the JD-R model, two broad categories of work characteristics that determine employee wellbeing can be distinguished: job demands and job resources. Recently, the JD-R model has been expanded by integrating personal resource measures into the model. Three semistructured group interviews with veterinarians active in different work domains were conducted to identify relevant job demands, job resources and personal resources. These demands and resources were organised in themes (constructs). For measurement purposes, a set of questions ('a priori scale') was selected from the literature for each theme. The full set of a priori scales was included in a questionnaire that was administered to 1760 veterinary professionals. Exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were conducted to arrive at the final set of validated scales (final scales). 860 veterinarians (73 per cent females) participated. The final set of scales consisted of seven job demands scales (32 items), nine job resources scales (41 items), and six personal resources scales (26 items) which were considered to represent the most relevant potential predictors of work-related wellbeing in this occupational group. The procedure resulted in a tailormade questionnaire: the Veterinary Job Demands and Resources Questionnaire (Vet-DRQ). The use of valid theory and validated scales enhances opportunities for comparative national and international research.
Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate occupational stress and risk factors among veterinary surgeons. The present cross-sectional study was performed in 2012 via a web-based survey. Data of 223 individuals who responded to the survey are presented. In order to evaluate the occupational stress Turkish Version of "Swedish Demand-Control-Support Questionnaire" was used. Mean age of participants was 37.45±9.11 and 28.3% of subjects were female. Work load, work control, skill, decision latitude, and social support mean points with standard deviations were found to be 9.42±1.86, 10.27±2.72, 7.06±1.78, 3.21±1.64 and 11.26±3.94, respectively. It was reported that 92 subjects were working for public institutions and 131 were working for private sector. Decision latitude and social support levels in surgeons working for public institutions were statistically significantly lower than their counterparts in the private sector. There was no statistically significant difference in work load, work control and skill use between two groups. Of participants 54.3% reported that they had car accidents, 19.3% reported that they had the accident in the last one year, and 9.9% reported that they had the accident during a patient visit. Majority of Turkish veterinary surgeons in our study group reported that they experienced occupational stress. Occupational stress and related factors in work environment can influence work health negatively by causing physical, mental and social problems.

Publication Type

Journal article.

<36>

Accession Number

20133327578

Author


Title

A cross-sectional study of mental health in UK veterinary undergraduates.

Source

Veterinary Record; 2013. 173(11):266.

Publisher

BMJ Publishing Group

Location of Publisher

London

Country of Publication

UK

Abstract

Wellbeing (positive mental health) and mental ill-health of veterinary students from a single UK school were quantified using validated psychological scales. Attitudes towards mental ill-health and suicide were also assessed. Results were compared with published data from the UK general population and veterinary profession. Of the total student population (N=1068), 509 (48 per cent) completed a questionnaire. Just over half (54 per cent) of the respondents had ever experienced mental ill-health, with the majority reporting a first occurrence before veterinary school. Student wellbeing was significantly poorer (p<0.0001) than general population estimates, but not significantly different (p=0.2) from veterinary profession estimates. Degree of mental distress in students was significantly higher than in the general population (p<0.0001). Despite the majority (94 per cent) agreeing that 'Anyone can suffer from mental health problems', students were significantly more likely than members of the general population to agree that 'If I were suffering from mental health problems, I wouldn't want people knowing about it' (p<0.0001). Students were more likely to have thought about suicide, but less likely to have made an attempt (p<0.001; p=0.005), than members of the general population. The possibility of non-response bias must be considered when interpreting findings. However, strong similarities between results from this study population and the UK veterinary profession, as well as other veterinary student populations internationally, suggest no substantial school-level bias.

Publication Type

Journal article.
Validation of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) as an overall indicator of population mental health and well-being in the UK veterinary profession.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was evaluated as an indicator of mental health and well-being within the veterinary profession in a cross-sectional study among a representative sample of 3200 veterinary surgeons practising in the UK. The WEMWBS mean score for the sample was 48.85 (95% confidence interval 48.43-49.28). The score showed a negative correlation with anxiety and depressive symptoms and a positive correlation with favourable psychosocial working conditions. A 1 unit increase in score was associated with reduced odds of reporting having experienced suicidal thoughts in the previous 12 months, and reduced odds of reporting depressive or anxiety symptoms of clinical significance. The results support the validity of the scale as an overall indicator of population mental health and well-being for this occupational group.

Interventions with potential to improve the mental health and wellbeing of UK veterinary surgeons.

The proportion of UK veterinary surgeons who die by suicide as opposed to other causes is approximately four times that of the general population, and around twice that of other healthcare professionals. Recent research suggests that veterinary surgeons report high levels of psychological distress. This paper proposes a portfolio of evidence-based interventions, for both organisations and individuals, which have the potential to improve mental health and well-being in the veterinary profession.
Journal article.

Suicide and the veterinary profession.

It has recently been shown that the veterinary profession in England and Wales has one of the highest incidences of suicide of all occupations. The alarmingly high incidence of suicide within the veterinary profession has attracted a tremendous amount of attention in the veterinary press and has also instigated a discussion in the wider media as to why a profession with such a positive public profile had a so strikingly high incidence of suicide. Whilst it is widely agreed that the veterinary profession needs to address the issue of suicide, there is no industry wide, clear consensus as to what the response should be. Arguably, the most appropriate response is to further explore the issues of suicide through high quality research which will provide the foundation for objective, evidence based initiatives and programmes aimed at reducing the incidence of suicide in the profession. Specifically, there is a need to explore why the veterinary profession has such a high incidence of suicide through a variety of research approaches as well as examining whether this statistic is a reflection of poor mental health well being across the profession. A number of key questions which warrant further research will be highlighted and the ongoing work in some these areas will be reviewed.

Conference paper.

Don't wait for the heart attack: change who you are today.

It has recently been shown that the veterinary profession in England and Wales has one of the highest incidences of suicide of all occupations. The alarmingly high incidence of suicide within the veterinary profession has attracted a tremendous amount of attention in the veterinary press and has also instigated a discussion in the wider media as to why a profession with such a positive public profile had a so strikingly high incidence of suicide. Whilst it is widely agreed that the veterinary profession needs to address the issue of suicide, there is no industry wide, clear consensus as to what the response should be. Arguably, the most appropriate response is to further explore the issues of suicide through high quality research which will provide the foundation for objective, evidence based initiatives and programmes aimed at reducing the incidence of suicide in the profession. Specifically, there is a need to explore why the veterinary profession has such a high incidence of suicide through a variety of research approaches as well as examining whether this statistic is a reflection of poor mental health well being across the profession. A number of key questions which warrant further research will be highlighted and the ongoing work in some these areas will be reviewed.
The contribution of animals to human well-being: a veterinary family practice perspective.

There is considerable evidence that humans can benefit both physically and emotionally from a relationship with companion animals, a phenomenon known as the human-animal bond (HAB). This has not only increased the demand for veterinary services to meet the needs of these non-human family members and their owners, but it has also transformed the nature of those services from reactive medicine and surgery to proactive prevention and wellness. The emotional component of the HAB requires the veterinarian to have a solid understanding of the nature of the attachment between client and pet, and an ability to educate the client about proper care of the animal in order to optimize the relationship. Paying attention to the relationship between client and patient also positions the veterinary family practitioner to refer the client to appropriate community resources for physical, emotional, or other needs of the client that may become apparent during the veterinarian-client interaction. By achieving physical and mental health objectives for patients and collaborating with human health care services, the veterinary family practitioner contributes to the well-being of both patient and client. This new face of veterinary family practice requires research and education in fields that have not traditionally been a part of veterinary training.

Healthy mind, healthy body, healthy bottom line: is your health affecting your performance?

The importance of maintaining physical and mental health on employee performance in veterinary practice is discussed, with emphasis on the effects of obesity on work performance.
Mental health issues of working with animal abuse.
Tiplady, C. Walsh, D.
Animal abuse: helping animals and people; 2013. 117-127. 26 ref.
AN: 20133154191
This chapter collaborates with Dr Deborah Walsh, a social work practitioner, trauma counsellor and clinical supervisor in the area of domestic and family violence. A range of information and guidance to help professionals think about establishing information for when difficult situations arise in practice and the prioritizing of self-care as part of occupational health and safety maintenance was presented.

Mental health in female veterinarians: effects of working hours and having children.
Shirangi, A. Fritschi, L. Holman, C. D. J. Morrison, D.
Australian Veterinary Journal; 2013. 91: 4, 123-130. 45 ref.
AN: 20133134178
Background: Personal, interpersonal and organisational factors have been suggested as possible causes of stress, anxiety and depression for veterinarians. We used established psychological scales to measure (1) levels of distress and work-related stress (anxiety and depression) and (2) the demographic and work characteristics of female veterinarians in relation to anxiety, depression and mental health. Methods: A national cross-sectional survey of a cohort population was conducted and self-administered questionnaires were received from 1017 female veterinarians who completed the mental health section of the survey. Using linear and logistic regression analyses, we examined demographic and work-related factors associated with overall stress measured by the General Health Questionnaire scale and the Affective Well-Being scale (Anxiety-Contentment Axis and Depression-Enthusiasm Axis). Results: More than one-third (37%) of the sample was suffering 'minor psychological distress', suggesting the stressful nature of veterinary practice. Women with two or more children had less anxiety and depression compared with those who had never been pregnant or were childless. Longer working hours were associated with increased anxiety and depression in female veterinarians overall and in stratified samples of women with and without children. Conclusion: Among the work characteristics of veterinary practice, long working hours may have a direct effect on a veterinarian's health in terms of anxiety, depression and mental health. The finding also indicates that women with two or more children have less anxiety and depression than women who have never been pregnant or childless women.
A study of depression and anxiety, general health, and academic performance in three cohorts of veterinary medical students across the first three semesters of veterinary school.

Journal of Veterinary Medical Education; 2012. 39: 4, 341-358. 93 ref.
AN: 20133036434

This study builds on previous research on predictors of depression and anxiety in veterinary medical students and reports data on three veterinary cohorts from two universities through their first three semesters of study. Across all three semesters, 49%, 65%, and 69% of the participants reported depression levels at or above the clinical cut-off, suggesting a remarkably high percentage of students experiencing significant levels of depression symptoms. Further, this study investigated the relationship between common stressors experienced by veterinary students and mental health, general health, and academic performance. A factor analysis revealed four factors among stressors common to veterinary students: academic stress, transitional stress, family-health stress, and relationship stress. The results indicated that both academic stress and transitional stress had a robust impact on veterinary medical students’ well-being during their first three semesters of study. As well, academic stress negatively impacted students in the areas of depression and anxiety symptoms, life satisfaction, general health, perception of academic performance, and grade point average (GPA). Transitional stress predicted increased depression and anxiety symptoms and decreased life satisfaction. This study helped to further illuminate the magnitude of the problem of depression and anxiety symptoms in veterinary medical students and identified factors most predictive of poor outcomes in the areas of mental health, general health, and academic performance. The discussion provides recommendations for considering structural changes to veterinary educational curricula to reduce the magnitude of academic stressors. Concurrently, recommendations are suggested for mental health interventions to help increase students' resistance to environmental stressors.

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Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
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Predictors of anxiety and depression in veterinary medicine students: a four-year cohort examination.
Journal of Veterinary Medical Education; 2012. 39: 4, 322-330. 48 ref.
AN: 20133036432

Mental health needs of veterinary medical students have become the focus of concern in recent years. Literature to date is scarce, but indicates a large number of veterinary medical students experience clinical levels of anxiety and depression. The present study focused on the prevalence of anxiety and depression in a sample of veterinary medical students (N=142) across four-year cohorts. Findings indicate elevated scores of anxiety and depression across the four-year cohorts. Students in their second and third years had the highest anxiety and depression scores. Perceived physical health, unclear expectations, difficulty fitting in, heavy workload, and homesickness were most relevant in explaining anxiety and depression symptom prevalence. Implications for practice and future research are addressed based on these findings.

Publisher
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
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<47>
Recognising and responding to mental health problems in the workplace.
Bartram, D. O'Connor, R. Allister, R. Fowlie, D.
In Practice; 2012. 34: 8, 480-486. 18 ref.
AN: 20123319666
Evidence suggests that levels of psychological distress are elevated in the veterinary profession compared to the general population. Work can play an important role in supporting the health and wellbeing of employees which in turn can enhance the effectiveness and profitability of the workplace. This article provides an overview of various mental health problems that may be experienced by vets and vet nurses, how to recognise possible signs, how to give assistance and when to involve other parties.
Publisher
BMJ Publishing Group
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Potential barriers to veterinary student access to counselling and other support systems: perceptions of staff and students at a UK veterinary school.
Pickles, K. J. Rhind, S. M. Miller, R. Jackson, S. Allister, R. Phiip, J. Waterhouse, L. Mellanby, R. J.
Veterinary Record; 2012. 170: 5, 124.
AN: 20123053423
Considerable evidence suggests that veterinary surgeons’ mental health is often poorer than comparable populations and that the incidence of suicide is higher among veterinary surgeons than the general public. Veterinary students also appear to suffer from high levels of anxiety and stress, and may possess inadequate coping strategies when faced with adversity. Veterinary students may find it difficult to access central university support systems due to their heavy workload and geographical isolation on some veterinary campuses. A previous study of University of Edinburgh fourth-year veterinary students found that support services located several miles from the main veterinary campus was a barrier to students accessing counselling services. Consequently, a pilot project was initiated, which provided a counselling service at the University of Edinburgh's rural Easter Bush veterinary campus one afternoon a week during 2010. As part of the evaluation of this service, web-based questionnaires were delivered via e-mail to all veterinary staff and students towards the end of the 12-month pilot period to evaluate perceptions of barriers to student counselling and to investigate student-valued support services. Questionnaire responses were received from 35 per cent of veterinary students and 52 per cent of staff. Stigmatisation of being unable to cope was a potent inhibitor of seeking support within the veterinary environment, but counselling was perceived as valuable by the majority of staff and students. Provision of an on-site counselling service was considered important for increasing ease of access; however, students viewed friends and family as their most important support mechanism. Workload was cited as the main cause of veterinary student stress. The majority of staff and student respondents perceived veterinary students as having an increased need for counselling support compared with other students.
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Workplace stress, mental health, and burnout of veterinarians in Australia.
Objective: To determine the frequency of the states of depression, anxiety, stress and burnout using internationally validated methods and to relate these to the demographic characteristics of veterinarians in Australia. Methods: A postal survey of registered veterinarians with at least one year’s experience and whose address was available; 1947 returned the questionnaire providing data for analysis. Results: Overall, veterinarians describe higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress and burnout than the general population. The severity of these states was determined by gender, background, type of practice and years after graduation. Conclusions: Modifying the curricula of veterinary schools to include the teaching of personal cognitive and coping skills to undergraduate veterinary students, the provision of the opportunity to enhance these skills throughout their veterinary career and changes in the veterinary workplace could result in improved mental health, increased job engagement and work satisfaction.

Mental health and wellbeing in the veterinary profession: how do government vets fare?
Bartram, D. J.
AN: 20113188776
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Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
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