Oral presentations

cardiac drugs. Their text responses were subjected to a thematic analysis and appropriately coded. Respondents were also asked to score their opinion of four statements regarding the educational value and ethical justification of the class on a Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A small number of respondents took part in a telephone based semi-structured interview.

RESULTS

All 50 graduates replied to the request for their opinions. The majority (46 of 50) considered that the practical class

was of little educational value and thus not particularly ethically justified. Several respondents noted that a video demonstration and computer-based learning would be more appropriate.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

As a result of the survey the practical class was changed to a predominantly video demonstration and computer-based learning session. The study shows the value of appraising student opinion in optimising practical classes in their education.

“Trust me I’m a vet...” Vet-client trust in small animal consultations: a mixed methods approach

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OBJECTIVES

In human medicine, doctor-patient trust is correlated with positive outcomes such as medication adherence and patient satisfaction. The aim of this study is to report the perceptions and assessments of vet and client trust.

METHODS

A convenience sample of vets and clients were invited to participate in focus groups and semi-structured

interviews. Data was transcribed intelligent verbatim, a thematic analysis performed, and themes identified. Subsequently, clients attending six practices for specific health problem appointments were invited to participate in consultation recording and post-consultation surveys assessing vet and client satisfaction, and client trust in the vet.

RESULTS

Qualitative analysis highlighted the importance of trust in the vet-client relationship, leading to easier decision making, especially in high-emotion and uncertain situations. In post consultation surveys, percentage client satisfaction was high (median 88.7%, IQR 15.8), as was percentage trust in the vet (median 100%, IQR 5.5). In addition, client trust was positively correlated with client satisfaction (Spearman’s rho = 0.531, p < 0.005).

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

This research highlights the mis-match between vet and client perceptions of trust and provides an insight into the importance and complexity of the vet-client relationship. The findings add further support for a relationship-centred approach to small animal consultations and could impact the morale and wellbeing of the veterinary profession.

Owner perceptions of problem behaviours in dogs aged 6 months

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OBJECTIVES

To investigate early recognition of potentially problematic canine behaviours by UK and Republic of Ireland dog owners.

METHODS

Puppy owners taking part in a longitudinal study relating to canine health and behaviour completed online

questionnaires detailing their dogs' responses to varied situations and experiences, and any canine behaviour(s) they found a problem.

RESULTS

In the questionnaire for 6-month old dogs, owners reported problem behaviours in 199/636 (31.3%) dogs. Of the 199 dogs, help had only been sought for 78 (39.2%); from dog trainers (57/199;28.6%), behaviourists (22/199; 11.1%) and/or vets (9/199;4.5%).

Behaviours most commonly reported as problems were pulling on lead (26/199;13.1%), jumping up at people (22/199;11.1%), mouthing people (22/199;10.1%), and separation-related behaviour (SRB) (unwanted/undesirable behaviour in owner absence) (17/199;8.5%). Elsewhere in the 6-month questionnaire, data were available as to whether 'jumping up at people' and SRB

were displayed. Despite not noting the behaviour as 'a problem', a further 128/621 (20.6%) of dogs were reported to have jumped up at people and 345/619 (55.7%) had shown SRB (≥ 2 signs were considered an accurate indication of SRB). Owners were more likely to report SRB than 'jumping up at people' as a problem, (OR = 4.85, 95% CI 3.77–6.23, $P = <0.0001$).

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

This study highlights behaviour(s) that owners of 6-month old dogs find problematic, thus enabling development of specific training plans to address these problems. Future work will include analysis of risk factors for owner-reporting of specific canine behaviours and assess escalation/resolution of specific behaviours in relation to perception of a problem and help sought.

The referral surgeon-first opinion practitioner interaction is a source of communication breakdown in the surgical care pathway – a review of 112 questionnaire responses from first opinion practitioners

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OBJECTIVES

Communication breakdown in the human healthcare environment has been identified as a source of patient morbidity and mortality. While many clinicians across all clinical veterinary roles employ protocols to ensure effective communication within their own institutions, the referral surgeon-first opinion practitioner interaction has not been previously investigated. The aim of this study

was to identify sources of communication breakdown in the referral surgeon-first opinion practitioner interaction.

METHODS

A 15-question questionnaire was designed to investigate first opinion practitioner attitudes and approaches to performing postoperative examinations on referred surgical cases. The questionnaire was posted on a social media-based veterinary discussion forum (Veterinary Voices UK) inviting anonymous responses from small animal first opinion practitioners who referred at least one surgical case to a referral institution during the previous 12-months. The questionnaire remained open to responses for seven days. Results were presented as descriptive data.

RESULTS

One-hundred and twelve first opinion practitioners responded to the questionnaire. Results reveal that 75.0% and 58.0% of respondents never, rarely or sometimes felt adequately prepared to formulate future care plans in referred surgical cases with and without complications, respectively. In addition 23.2% of respondents never, rarely or sometimes informed referral surgeons of complications and 26.8% of respondents never, rarely or sometimes discussed future management of complications with the referral surgeon.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

Results of this study suggest that the referral surgeon-first opinion practitioner interaction is a source of communication breakdown bilaterally. Referral surgeons and first opinion practitioners should ensure that communication between both parties is sufficient to ensure appropriate continuity of care.