MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. In your practice you have 1 unit of feline blood. Which of the following cats would you give the whole blood transfusion to?
 - (A) A 19-year-old cat with chronic kidney disease, and a packed cell volume (PCV) of 20% showing no clinical signs
 - (B) A cat with hypoproteinaemia
 - (C) A 5-year-old cat that has been attacked by a dog and has a PCV of 12% following acute haemorrhage and is decompensating
 - (D) A cat with thrombocytopenia

2. Which of the following statements is TRUE?
 - (A) A cat only needs to be blood typed on its second transfusion
 - (B) A cat should be blood typed on its first transfusion
 - (C) A cat only needs to be blood typed if receiving dog blood
 - (D) A cat never needs to be blood typed
3. Before donating, what should the donor's PCV be?

(A) $\geq 25\%$	(C) $\geq 35\%$
(B) $\geq 30\%$	(D) $\geq 40\%$

Keeping the hospitalized cat happy

Suzanne Rudd

Cats have evolved from the African wild cat. African wild cats are a solitary species living in the desert, therefore they do not socialize and are not used to confrontation. In the event of a threatening situation a cat would choose to run away (flight response to stress) rather than confront the threat (fight response). However, if the cat feels at risk or there is nowhere to escape, the cat will resort to aggression in defence. This behaviour exists in the domestic cat of today and is the most common cause of aggression in the veterinary practice. By the time the cat reaches your veterinary practice they will already be in a state of high anxiety, stress and possibly fear. Because the cat has no escape and is in a very vulnerable situation, a cat may resort to fear aggression out of pure terror and defence if it feels it has no other option. Therefore cats that are showing aggression are not 'evil', 'nasty', 'angry', etc. they are TERRIFIED! A nurse that can recognize and empathize with this will have the right attitude and can take steps to try and reduce the cat's fear. However reducing fear in a cat who is showing signs of fear aggression is a lot more difficult and will take much longer (potentially days/weeks/months) than reducing fear in a cat less terrified, so the aim should be to make your practice as cat friendly as possible in every way, from the environment to the way the cat is handled to try and reduce aggressive behaviour and ultimately make feline nursing much easier.

It is more difficult to interpret cats' behaviour when the signs of stress are low. They do not use the same facial expressions as dogs, so often anxiety, stress and fear are not recognized until the cat is very fearful. Becoming familiar with cat behaviour is invaluable when working with cats to ensure anxiety is reduced and does not escalate into fear.

Every aspect of the veterinary practice should be considered when thinking of how to reduce the cat's stress. The key elements to consider for each area are:

- Reducing noise
- Reducing 'foreign' smells, increasing familiar smells

- Reducing the cat seeing other animals, especially cats and dogs
- Providing a calm environment
- Allowing cats to use their flight response
- Allowing extra time.

All of these aspects will be discussed in the lecture along with low-stress handling techniques.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To recognize the importance of low-stress techniques in practice
- To evaluate how to make your practice more cat friendly
- To recognize anxiety, stress, fear and frustration in cats

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose making your practice cat friendly?
 - (A) To reduce fear in cats
 - (B) To reduce injury to staff
 - (C) To show cat owners you care
 - (D) All of the above
2. Which of the following is NOT a method of allowing the cat to use its flight response?
 - (A) Giving the cat food
 - (B) Giving the cat somewhere to hide
 - (C) Providing shelving in the hospital kennel
 - (D) Giving the cat a larger kennel
3. Which of the following statements is FALSE?
 - (A) Cats may benefit from being given butorphanol or gabapentin to reduce their anxiety
 - (B) It is best always hold on to the cat by whatever means and for however long to get the blood sample taken
 - (C) Cats can be held effectively without having to scruff them
 - (D) Local anaesthetic cream should be allowed to work for 30–40 minutes before venepuncture is tried

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