An investigation into Nottingham SVMS students' pre-clinical EMS experiences

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OBJECTIVES

Extramural studies (EMS) requirements set by the RCVS are an essential component of veterinary education. All UK veterinary students must complete 12 weeks' pre-clinical EMS (pcEMS) placement before entering third year. As working conditions on placements are largely unregulated, student experiences vary. This study aimed to evaluate students' experiences of pcEMS.

METHODS

An online survey was designed, piloted and distributed to the 601 veterinary students in years 2–5 at the University of Nottingham SVMS. The survey contained a mixture of

open and closed questions evaluating topics including working conditions, finances, working hours and experiences of discrimination.

RESULTS

Preliminary results of the current 102 responses suggested pcEMS is fundamental to veterinary education but this study highlights students' clear concerns over some aspects. Students felt they did not receive adequate support from hosts. A substantial proportion (31.4%) said 12 weeks of pcEMS was too long. Concerns included negative impacts to mental wellbeing (reported by 32.4%) and financial stress. A substantial proportion of respondents (46.1%) reported being asked to complete unsafe tasks, many of which were not animal husbandry related; almost all students (93.1%) had completed at least one placement with a high proportion of non-animal related farm maintenance work. Overall most students felt pcEMS had made them more confident in performing simple procedures such as stomach tubing and injections (95.1%).

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

This abstract is among the first to consider students' self-reported experiences of pcEMS. With increasing numbers of veterinary students, data from this study is crucial to evaluate and optimise current and future training activities.