Oral presentations

The role of veterinary practices in the temporary care of healthy stray dogs: do veterinary personnel and members of the public agree?

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OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to compare the attitudes, beliefs and predicted behaviour of veterinary personnel (VP) and members of the public (MOPs) in respect of the role of the veterinary practice in the temporary care of healthy stray dogs.

METHODS

An online cross-sectional survey distributed across social media and in the veterinary press that targeted VPs and MOPs, with Likert-type questions designed to assess attitudes, beliefs and behaviour across scenarios VP-evaluated for veterinary practice relevance.

RESULTS

Usable responses were obtained from 312 VPs and 345 MOPs. Most VPs (64%) and MOPs (67%) believed that it was morally equally the responsibility of the finder and the veterinary practice to ensure the welfare of the dog. MOPs were significantly ($P \leq 0.018$) more likely than VPs to consider it unacceptable for a veterinary practice to refuse to temporarily house healthy strays because of patient/staff welfare considerations, impact on VP personal life or stakeholder availability. Telling a finder to contact the dog warden as the dog was not the practice's issue would cause significantly ($P = 0.008$) more (28.8%) MOPs than VPs to change vet practice if it was their dog turned away. In the absence of dog identification, telling the finder to keep the dog at their house had a similar significant effect ($P = 0.004$).

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

Veterinary practices should be mindful of the potential damaging reputational effects of not being seen to be willing to assist with the temporary care of healthy stray dogs. This should inform practice policy decision-making.

Euthanasia and How It Effects Veterinary Nurses Mental Health

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OBJECTIVES

1. To determine if veterinary nurses feel there is adequate support and training when dealing with euthanasia in practice
2. To determine the effects assisting with euthanasia has on veterinary nurses' mental health

METHODS

An anonymous survey was created and circulated amongst registered and student veterinary nurses within the UK, via social media platforms. The respondents were asked to evaluate the effect of assisting with euthanasia on their mental health on a numerical scale, from 0 (No Effect) to 5 (Severe Effect).

RESULTS

A total of eligible 595 responses were received. The following factors were reported to have the most severe effects on mental health (Figure 1):

- Assisting with the euthanasia when the respondent has had their own animal euthanised ($n=378$; 65.53%)
- Assisting with euthanasia despite not being in agreement with the owner and/or the veterinary surgeon's decision, for example in the case of euthanising a healthy animal ($n = 249$; 41.85%) 35.29% ($n = 210$) of respondents reported that euthanasia assistance triggered grief from previous personal experiences to resurface, causing a moderately negative effect on their mental health (Figure 2). 78.99% ($n = 478$) of respondents are able to opt out of euthanasia assistance in practice, should they request to .85.88% ($n = 511$) of respondents felt there was inadequate support and training available to nurses assisting with euthanasia and end-of-life care.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

This study highlights veterinary nurses should have support and optimum training for assisting with euthanasia. Dismissal of assisting with euthanasia should be given on request especially those individuals experiencing personal grief.

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