Poster presentations

Pets As Therapy — Impact on Employee Wellbeing

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OBJECTIVES

To determine the evidence base for the impact of Pets as Therapy (PAT) animals on employee wellbeing.

METHODS

Literature search on PubMed for articles related to PAT animals and employee wellbeing. Informal discussion with healthcare workers on a Paediatric Ward about their experiences following interaction with a PAT dog.

RESULTS

8% of UK employees take their dogs to work. Corporations in the UK and USA are involved, including Google, Amazon and Nestle, as well as smaller companies. It has become so popular in the UK there is an annual 'Bring Your Dog to Work Day'. Employee benefits of animals in the workplace include reduced stress from lower cortisol levels, increased co-operation, communication and overall job satisfaction. Healthcare workers on a local Paediatric Ward describe feeling 'happy', 'so much better' and like 'it's a breath of fresh air' following a visit from a PAT dog. They subsequently identified 'better communication', 'improved staff morale' and 'more cohesive team working' as a direct result of staff taking a few minutes out of their day to interact with the PAT dog.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

There is growing evidence around the benefits of PAT animals for patients and employees in the commercial sector. Less is known about the benefits for healthcare staff. The outcome of informal discussions with Paediatric healthcare workers concur with the current literature base regarding the positive benefits of having regular access to PAT animals on overall staff wellbeing and team productivity.

Owners' Perception of Veterinary Specialists in a U.K. Small Animal Referral Hospital

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Wear Referrals, Stockton-on-Tees, United Kingdom

OBJECTIVES

To evaluate owners understanding of the term veterinary Specialist and information obtained prior to the consultation.

METHODS

A questionnaire was designed to assess owner age, medical knowledge, how referral was initiated, options discussed by the primary care practice (PCP) for treatment, expectations of the referral appointment and understanding of the term Specialist and what specialist training is were assessed. Questionnaires were

completed on arrival, prior to consultation at a RCVS Tier 3 Referral Hospital.

RESULTS

151 questionnaires were completed. 56% of owners were aged 40–65, 17% 30–40, 13% >65, 11% 25–30 and 3% 18–25. 94% had no knowledge of the medical industry.

85% of referrals were initiated by the PCP, 7% by the owner and 8% following a request for advice by the PCP. 64% of owners were offered referral as the only option for treatment, 29% were offered PCP treatment as an alternative and 7% by a peripatetic service / other.

50% of owners assumed they were seeing a Specialist; of these, 49% were seen by a Specialist for consultation. 13% correctly identified a Specialist as a clinician with a diploma; incorrect definitions included having experience with a procedure or a postgraduate certificate. 34% correctly identified that an internship and residency constituted Specialist training. 65% of owners did not research the referral process prior to the consultation.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

From the population sampled, a minority of owners understand the term Specialist and the postgraduate training this entails. Owners may erroneously assume they are receiving Specialist consultation/treatment.

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