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NOVA EX BIBLIOTHECA VETERINARIA



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In the last few years journals that concern veterinarians indirectly are gaining significance. For example *Anthrozoös* which deal with the mysteries of the human-animal bond (anthrozoology), *Animal Welfare* which sets the animals' wellbeing in its focus, or *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* which is about veterinary training. In its 1st number of the year 2011 we can find several quite interesting studies from which we summarized a few, hoping to create mood for browsing some "non-hardcore" veterinary journals. The articles can be read or ordered at our library.

The mind of students¹

In the recent past Massey University of New-Zealand made a psychological survey amongst its veterinary students examining the optimism, self-esteem and social support's mediator role in relation to workload, stress and wellbeing. The research in high summary is about the effects of regular stress and workload on personal characteristics – such as optimism-pessimism, self-esteem – and about how these characteristics make the students resistant or sensitive towards stress and workload. There are several similar researches already carried out about medical and other student's mental health, but veterinary students had not been examined in this regard so far.

The result of the research shows that veterinary students with more optimism and self-esteem are



feeling that their studies are less stressful, than those who are rather pessimistic and have less self-esteem. Those students who – by their own admission – feel that they are under higher workload pressure are living under more stress than those who feel more optimistic and less workload on them. Consequently the levels of stress-sensation are highly depending on personal attributes and attitude. There were no significant differences between genders and different years of study.

Massey University – where the research was made – holds up social support services for helping students to cope with stress and workload, however the students are often reluctant to turn to these solutions, so it is also recommended to the social environment – teachers, classmates, university psychologists – to pay attention to

those who might be in need of this kind of support.

Those personal characteristics which are relatively stable, like optimism, are hard to change, however, efforts can be made by both the students and the teachers to avoid unnecessary stress by creating adequate circumstances.

Teachers should aid the students' workload management by appropriate teaching strategies, specifying expectations and tasks clearly, making examinations well organized, and planned. These "trifles" spare the students a lot of stress and this cannot be incurious for the teachers.

The veterinary students of Massey University characteristically consider stress management trainings insignificant. However, they appreciate lectures, courses about communication with clients, human-animal relations and animal psychology as a part of their studies. Beside this they more willingly turn with their problems to their teachers, to university staff members than to a specialist. This could develop into a mentor-student connection functioning well in some situations, but not in every case.



**MASSEY
UNIVERSITY**

As it was unambiguously stated by the authors of the study

that due optimism, sufficient self-esteem, and reliable social support does not reduce stress by themselves, however they raise the ability to cope with it. Students as future veterinarians have to learn how to recognize their own limits and needs, both from the mental and the physical point of view, because beside the animals they also have to take care of themselves.

Animal ethics and empathy²

The attitudes toward animals have changed a lot recently, there are more laws concerning animal keeping which affect work of veterinarians and possible treatments. As animal welfare comes to the front, veterinary education has to take up the question through lectures and trainings.

At the Australian Adelaide University factors and circumstances are influencing the veterinary student's attitudes toward animals, the rate and kind of their empathy for animals and how these can be changed with an animal ethics course were examined. Veterinary and animal science students who started their university studies in 2008 were the subjects of the research. As a part of the project students took part in an animal behavior, welfare and ethics course in their first and third school years. Both courses consisted of 24 lectures and 24 practicals. Before and after the courses students' attitudes and empathy were surveyed.

The survey was targeted at five main hypotheses related to the students' attitudes and the efficiency of animal ethics education. Students' attitudes toward animals are different according to the animals "category" which are: pet, pest, profit. There were also measurable differences between genders in the empathy levels: female students had more

empathy toward animals than males. Attitudes were further influenced by which animal category the student wanted to focus on in his work, if he had animals in his childhood, or if he had any around him now and that if he was vegetarian. At the end of each course the veterinary student's empathy levels raised toward the pest and profit animals. However the animal-science student's empathy levels decreased toward pet animals at the end of the first year course.

By observing the research closely we can see that empathy toward animals depends on several factors and these can affect a veterinary student's later work differently. The research result that has been published by the *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* reviews the connections and details from different viewpoints. In brief: the animal-ethics course has benefits in veterinary education, although empathy toward animals does not definitely depend on this education, it is more likely to be a natural attribute which can be highly affected by studies (lectures in ethics) or especially the healing of the animals.

Let's stay up-to-date!³

Reading or scanning professional journals and review articles, attending conferences and seminars, taking continuing education courses, and participating in journal clubs are excellent ways to keep up-to-date professionally. Routine and thorough searching of the veterinary literature is necessary to maintain the level of expertise and knowledge. Clinicians who want to stay current need to know about the latest publications that relate directly to their topic of interest and this may inspire new approaches or generate new ideas. Two methods are available to survey literature:

searching specific topics and browsing veterinary literature.

The only way to find all of the relevant publications that cover a defined topic is a comprehensive search of all the bibliographic databases. To stay current it is necessary to periodically perform well-constructed searches in appropriate library databases. The choice of the database to search depends on the topic, but most veterinarians will find searching a few adequate, whereas a comprehensive search requires searching additional databases. These databases include most of the veterinary literature, e.g.: *CAB Abstracts, PubMed, Web of Science, Zoological Record*, etc.

The most common way to survey current literature is to view the table of contents of selected journals. With automated alerts we can keep up with the rapidly advancing literature. The type of alert to use depends on the searcher's goals: searching specific topics or viewing the literature more broadly. Search alerts can be received through e-mail or RSS. Three types of alerts are available: *search alert* - searches a database for publications on the basis of a specific search strategy, *table of contents alert* is an efficient way to browse current journals without a specific topic in mind. A *citation alert* identifies newly published articles that include a specific article in their reference list.

Once a researcher has identified an effective search strategy and the appropriate databases for a specific topic, using search alerts will save time, increase efficiency and productivity.

With search alerts a relatively small part of the upcoming scientific articles are available free online, but university libraries offer access to thousands of online journals, they also have extensive print collections and

interlibrary services are also available.

Keeping track of references and their full text is most efficiently done with the help of an electronic reference manager which is able to serve as a personal reference database. It can be used to insert references when writing papers and to format the references in the style required by a journal. Several reference managers are available. *EndNote* and *RefWorks* are the most common commercial products, but *Zotero* and *Mendeley* are also useful tools for the task.

Staying current is essential for all veterinarians. To ensure this the above mentioned services can be used. In the appendix the authors present a step-by-step guide to how to set up e-mail notification and RSS in PubMed's My NCBI surface. In case of problems it is advisable to turn to a librarian who can help to build an effective and well aimed search which guarantees us every important and relevant article.

First-Semester Students and Information⁴

There are only a few studies about the information seeking behavior of veterinary students and veterinary practitioners even though the ability of finding, using and publishing information is getting more and more significant in veterinary training. Purdue University made a survey amongst its first semester veterinary students in the fall of 2009, the goal of which it was to get a better understanding of the students past and present information-seeking behavior. 70 students participated in the survey who took the systemic mammalian physiology course.

The survey consisted 20 open-ended and multiple choice questions and, of course, the survey

subjects demographical data to reveal the connections between personal background and information seeking behavior. The questions regarding information seeking behavior were similar to another survey which was made in 1998, but there were questions about the use of more recent sources like Google and Wikipedia, and about lectures and consultations held by librarians about information seeking. The survey included a question on veterinary resources for laypeople because veterinarians need to provide information that is authoritative and understandable to animal owners.

Most respondents were of the age 22-26. Digital technology is a part of their lives, so they use the web confidently for information seeking. The results of this survey indicated that these beginning veterinary students had most often used Google or Google Scholar to find information for their course projects in the college. The same resources and new ones were used for assignments at Purdue. Nearly half of the respondents use the library webpage of Purdue for information seeking for most of their tasks and projects. Academic library Web sites provide a gateway to subscription databases, e-resources, books, journals, and guides to other types of resources to filter information and help students efficiently find scholarly resources for their work. Google searches often return an unmanageable number of hits, many of which are irrelevant. Wikipedia was the least frequently used resource of the mentioned sources, although it could be a useful resource worldwide if its veterinary related information were updated by members of the veterinary community. Many college students all over the world are using Wikipedia in the absence of good library resources because it

is accessible and free. The respondents used only a few of the established criteria to evaluate the quality of websites.

More than half of the respondents were not able to accurately define a "literature review" and almost all of them did not understand that an "exhaustive search" requires multiple strategies. Almost all of the respondents knew that *CAB Abstracts* was the most comprehensive source on veterinary topics. *Veterinary Information Network* or the site of the *American Veterinary Medical Association* as another authoritative web resource were mentioned often. However, one source that they did not mention was the *International Veterinary Information Service*, which is the largest veterinary library on the Internet and it is open access. Although the students knew about some of these resources, it is not clear from the survey to what extent they used them.

On the basis of this survey, the authors made recommendations for educational practice and for further research. The course professor changed aspects of the course assignment to strengthen the student's ability to find, use, and communicate information, to be critical about the available information, and to identify gaps that can be researched. The librarian developed a one-page handout which contains a table that describes the difference between publications, illustrated with several veterinary examples.

In their recommendations the authors have emphasized the importance of collaboration between veterinary faculties and librarians in order to improve information literacy in both educational practice and research. In the appendix of the article the above mentioned survey can also be found.

LIBRARY

Who's who?	Dávid Juhász – readers' service, digitalization, marketing	periodical information, readers' service
Éva Orbán – library director: managing, library issues, publication analysis, museum, Noctua	Margit Kurják Jánosné – photocopying	Orsolya Pálfyné Varga – readers' service, web editor
Ilona Bábásné dr. Apostol – readers' service, book processing	Katalin Miszori – readers' service, user education, Hungarian Veterinary Archive, institution repository, e-journals	Éva Pádár – readers' service , user education, department libraries
Ottília Edelényi – secretary: if you don't know whom to turn to?	Barbara Négyesi – archivist	Aranka Szegedi Nagy – book acquisition, book processing
Gábor Hajdu – system manager: databases, network, computers	Edit Oláh – interlibrary lending, Hungarian Veterinary Bibliography,	Piroska, Tóth Jánosné – document organizing



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