Poster Abstracts

Primary Care Veterinary Educators’ Symposium
Thursday, October 15th - Sunday, October 18th, 2015
Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, VA
Acquisition of Abdominal Palpation Skills: A Pedagogical Study of the Tufts Sunday Community Cat Clinics

Michelle Salob, ND, MPH; Orla Mahony DVM DACVIM; Emily McCobb DVM MS DACVAA

From the Department of Clinical Sciences and the Center for Animals and Public Policy, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, Tufts University

Since 2008 Tufts veterinary students have participated in monthly Community Cat Clinics. Students participate in a variety of procedures during the clinics. While the benefits of practicing surgery using community partners are well documented (Smeak 2008, Snowden 2008), the educational benefits for pre-clinical students in learning physical exam skills, such as palpation have not. The aim of this study was to assess the skill and comfort level of participating students with feline abdominal palpation. We hypothesized that students would experience an increase in self-reported comfort level and that student accuracy would also increase. The study protocol was approved by the Tufts Institutional Review Board and students were recruited from the population of volunteers available at each clinic. Each subject palpated five to ten anesthetized cats. Students were asked to locate and assess the size of bladder and kidneys of each cat. Following recording of results, cats were immediately palpated by an expert (a boarded certified veterinary internist) who was blinded to student responses. Following completion of the exercise, students were asked to evaluate their comfort level with palpation. Forty seven first and second year veterinary students participated in the study. Most students experienced an increase in confidence in their abilities. Students were generally successful at locating the target organs and were modestly accurate in their assessments of size. Overall, the results demonstrated that participating in these clinics and performing abdominal palpation of a number of cats is an effective strategy to teach students palpation skills and to improve their confidence.
Development of Methods Used in Effective Teaching of Lab Work in the Canine and Feline Patient

Drs. Christine Bryan and Diana Eubanks

Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine

As the quality of care provided to veterinary patients steadily increases, veterinarians must be able to read and correctly interpret lab work. A vital part of veterinary education is ensuring that students are able to assess lab work to be able to accurately diagnose a patient. The faculty members of the Community Veterinary Services (CVS) and Small Animal Internal Medicine departments at the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine are developing a study to assess students’ comprehension of routine lab work. The students’ first two years at Mississippi State are didactic while the final two years are clinically oriented. During the third-year CVS rotation, lab work is discussed during three one-hour rounds sessions, as well as during case work-ups. During the fourth-year Internal Medicine rotation, lab work is routinely discussed during rounds sessions and case work-ups. An exam consisting of randomized clinically applicable questions will be administered four times throughout the two clinical years to assess the students’ comprehension of routine lab work. The questions will be randomly selected from a bank written by CVS and Internal Medicine faculty members. The results of the examinations will be analyzed to determine the level of improvement during the CVS and Internal Medicine rotations as well as from the third year to the fourth year of veterinary education. The collected data will then be used to improve methods for teaching lab work comprehension and application.
Students in charge: the development and implementation of a student veterinarian leadership role in primary care practice.

D. Khosa, T. Durzi, S. Gowland, P. Conlon

Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

Developing future leaders in the veterinary profession has been seen as a priority issue for various veterinary economic and education consortiums, including the AVMA funded National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues (Lloyd et al., 2005). Attention to this issue comes in the wake of previous reports (e.g. Burge, 2003) identifying leadership as a potential barrier to success in a veterinary medical career. In more recent years, organisations such as the Veterinary Leadership Institute recognise the need to support and develop strong, confident leaders in veterinary medicine, and have accordingly devoted resources and time to provide relevant training opportunities for stakeholders. At the Hill’s Pet Nutrition Primary Healthcare Centre, educators and veterinarians also recognise the need to encourage, facilitate and promote leadership in the context of mandatory final year rotations, and have designed and implemented a clinical leadership model. In their 3-week rotation through the Fall and Winter semesters of any given year, 10 students are equally divided into a Blue and Red team and are instructed to self-appoint a Charge Student for each team. Charge Students rotate and change on a daily basis so that all students are given an opportunity to assume this role. To support this leadership role, students are given specific instructions and guidance for their daily Charge Student duties. This presentation will outline and highlight the strategies used to encourage and promote student leadership in a clinical setting.
A Reflective Approach to Shelter Medicine

Ruth Serlin B Vet Med Cert VA MRVCS PCGAP FHEA, Louise Allum BSc MA VetMB PGCert FHEA MRCVS, Jill Maddison BVSc DipVetClinStud PhD FACVSc MRCVS SFHEA

Shelter Medicine Program, Royal Veterinary College, Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital, London NW1 0TU

A recent survey of UK shelters and rescues showed they cared for at least 90,000 dogs and 156,000 cats (Stavisky et al. 2012). Primary care veterinary clinicians are frequently asked to provide care for these homeless pets.

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) recognises the challenges that this population poses to graduate veterinary surgeons and, working with our charity partners, Dogs Trust and RSPCA, we started a week long shelter medicine rotation for Final Year students in February 2015.

The rotation’s aim is to provide students with opportunities to perform intake examinations, neuter surgery and dentals whilst in the shelter environments and to develop an appreciation of shelter management and perspectives relating to infectious diseases and behaviour.

Learning objectives were selected from the RVC day one skills (Welsh et al. 2009) including acquisition of skills and professional attitudes.

A problem we faced was the potential lack of cohesion in the student groups who visited different sites with different veterinary surgeons each day. Our blended learning module mitigates this issue. Students engage with online tasks, discussion boards and private reflective logs, encouraging engagement and enhancing reflection on learning, covering all elements of the Kolb cycle (Kolb et al. 2005)

Students share their logs with clinicians during feedback discussions. Examples of the reflections will be discussed showing students’ reflections and learning action plans.

We would like to further expand the rotation aims of learning practical and non-technical skills alongside reflective skills into other areas of teaching primary care in the RVC.


Stavisky, J. et al., 2012. Demographics and economic burden of un-owned cats and dogs in the UK: results of a 2010 census. BMC Veterinary Research, 8, p.163.

The Impact of a Wellness Centered Approach in Practice Growth within a University Primary Care Setting

Amy E.S. Stone, DVM, PhD; C. Michelle Poole Hermansen, BS; Julia A. Wuerz, DVM; Wendy Mandese, DVM and Francesca Griffin, DVM

University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine, Primary Care and Dentistry Service

Objective: To determine if a change in focus to wellness and preventive care in the Primary Care and Dentistry Service (PCD) has affected patient numbers, client satisfaction and student learning.

Design: Retrospective study/surveys

Study Animals/Participants: PCD patients, clients and students

Procedures: Data was gathered retrospectively from the practice software system, Cornerstone, client surveys and student observations.

Results: PCD patients increased from 1184 in the year 2012 to an expected 3291 by the end of the year 2015. The service has also seen a steadily increasing percentage of patients using wellness plans. Surveyed clients reported overall high satisfaction with the wellness plans. Students report that they can now appreciate how focusing a small animal general practice toward wellness and preventive medicine can lead to success and growth. The client surveys and patient data reveal less improvement in drawing feline patients/owners through the Cat Friendly Practice Program.

Conclusion and Clinical Relevance: Several studies have shown a decline in veterinary care usage in recent years. Three contributing factors are the cost of care, pet-owners’ lack of perception of the value of veterinary care and the reluctance of owners to bring cats to the veterinarian. In the academic setting of the University of Florida PCD service, we have been able to increase our patient numbers, client satisfaction and student appreciation for wellness by shifting our approach to a preventive care focus. It appears that the Cat Friendly Practice Program needs to be emphasized more or differently in the future.