



Module 34

Veterinarians as Animal Welfare Educators

Student Activities

In-class activities

Discussion – attitudes towards animal welfare

Allow 45 minutes for this activity. For this discussion divide the class into groups. For five minutes ask:

- One group to recap on research findings regarding how female and male veterinary students' attitudes towards animals and animal welfare might vary during veterinary education.
- One group to recap on research findings regarding how first and final year veterinary students' attitudes towards animals and animal welfare might change during veterinary education.
- One group to recap on research findings regarding how veterinary students' attitudes towards animals and animal welfare might differ to that of faculty staff.
- One group to discuss to what extent there are attitudinal differences towards animals and animal welfare amongst vets in practice?

Next, each group will spend 10 ten minutes considering and discussing within their group their experiences of veterinary education so far and the extent to which they think that the attitude differences identified by the research according to gender, year of study and student vs. faculty status have been evident to them or not. Make sure that each group focuses on a different source of attitude variation to that which they considered for the first part of the discussion.

Finally, each group will spend five minutes sharing what they have discussed with the rest of the class.

Discussion – veterinary oaths and animal welfare

Allow 45 minutes for this activity. For this discussion divide the class into small groups. Spend the first five minutes recapping with the students the existence of veterinary oaths and how these may relate to animal welfare.

Ask each group to spend five minutes considering the oaths shown in the box in terms of their similarities and differences. After doing this each group is to then spend a few minutes sharing with the rest of the class one of the similarities or differences they have identified.

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), 2004 (voluntary):

*“I will strive to promote animal health and **welfare, relieve animal suffering, protect the health of the public and environment, and advance comparative medical knowledge.**”*

The Conselho Federal de Medicina Veterinaria (CFMV) of Brazil, 2002 (mandatory):

*“I will fulfil legal and regulatory requirements, with special regard to the Code of Ethics of the profession, always seeking harmonization between science and art and applying my knowledge to the scientific and technological development in benefit of the health and **welfare of animals**”*

American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), 2010 (voluntary):

*“I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health **and welfare, the prevention and relief of animal suffering.**”*

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS, UK), 2012 (mandatory):

*“I promise and solemnly declare that my constant endeavour will be **to ensure the welfare of animals** committed to my care.”*

Next allocate one or two of the following questions to each group for them to discuss within the group for 10 minutes.

- Should veterinary oaths make reference to animal welfare at all?
- Do you think references to animal welfare in existing veterinary oaths could be improved? If so how?
- What should and should not be included in veterinary oaths? For example: duties to animals, duties to humans, society, the environment.

- Should veterinary oaths widen veterinarians' responsibilities to include wider issues? For example, requiring vets to:
 - Be more or less proactive through commenting on animal welfare issues (should the national veterinary association have public position statements on major horse racing events or new legislation for example?)
 - Take fewer or greater steps to promote welfare in their communities
- Should swearing allegiance to veterinary oaths be a voluntary or obligatory condition for graduates entering the veterinary profession?
- When should veterinary oaths be sworn? For example, when veterinary students first embark on their veterinary training or when veterinary students enter the profession upon graduation, and could oaths be reaffirmed later on in the careers of practising veterinarians'?

Next, ask each group to take turns to share their outcomes with the rest of class for about five minutes.

Finally, ask the class to share their views about any pre-existing veterinary oaths in their country which they may swear allegiance to upon graduating. If there is not already a veterinary oath in existence for a particular country consider asking the class, either in the remaining class time or as a homework exercise, to create one.

Notes for lecturer:

Some useful references to help students prepare for this discussion:

Bones, V.C. & Yeates, J. (2012). The Emergence of Veterinary Oaths: Social, Historical, and Ethical Considerations. *Journal of Animal Ethics*, 2(1): 20-42 (www.jstor.org/discover/10.5406/janimaethics.2.1.0020?uid=3738032&uid=2134&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21101139104837)

Hewson, C.J. (2006). Veterinarians who swear: Animal welfare and the veterinary oath. *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, 47: 807-811. (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1524840/)

Debate – influencing clients

Should vets proactively influence the client's decision-making and behaviour with regard to animal welfare?

Allow 35 minutes for this debate. Briefly reiterate that vets inevitably experience a difficult time ensuring that they fulfil their commitments to meeting the needs of the animal and those of their clients – the animal's owner. The example of the vet having to balance whether to tend to a) the needs of the owner (who is obviously very attached to their pet) to keep their beloved dog alive for as long as possible even though it has brain damage or b) to the needs of the dog who may be faced with prolonged exposure to suffering even if given the best possible treatment.

Divide the class into two groups. The debate can be moderated by the lecturer or another nominated person.

One group will propose that vets should proactively influence the client's decision-making behaviour with regard to animal welfare.

The other group will propose that vets should not proactively influence client's decision-making behaviour with regard to animal welfare.

For the first 10 minutes each group must prepare their arguments. During this process the groups should be sure to factor in and represent the interests of the animal, client, individual vets and the veterinary profession as a whole. During this time each group will appoint a spokesperson, and the remaining group members will provide talking points that are to be used in the debate to their spokesperson.

For the next 10 minutes, each of the two groups in turn will spend five minutes presenting their case to the other group.

For the final 10 minutes the groups will challenge the others' positions.

In the final five minutes the debate moderator will ask the students to vote as individuals either for or against vets proactively influencing client's decision making behaviour with regard to animal welfare.

Notes for lecturer:

Some useful references to help students prepare for this debate include:

Main, D. 2011. Viewpoint: Influencing clients. *The Veterinary Record*, 168:383-384.

<http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/168/14/383.full>

Coleman, G. J., 2010. Educating the public: Information or persuasion? *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* 37(1):74-82.

<http://jvmeonline.metapress.com/content/p0711k44r1304556/fulltext.pdf> (free access)

Personal reflection – is there a silent curriculum?

In this lecture, you have learned what a silent curriculum is. Consider whether you think a silent curriculum might exist within veterinary education in relation to the ways in which animals are managed, cared for and used. For this you should spend some time thinking about: all the different contexts within which veterinary students work with different species of animal in practical classes (for example learning handling, bandaging, surgical procedures and anatomy); and work experience in practice with companion animals, out on farms, out in the field with working animals, or within research laboratories. Alternatively you can focus on the similarities or differences in terms of one species of animal within different contexts, for example a pet dog and a stray dog undergoing castration. What might be the positive and/or negative outcomes of a silent curriculum in terms of animal welfare in these contexts? The table below is provided to help frame your thinking and you can make your own version if you choose. One example is completed for you.

Animal Species	Context	Procedure / Treatment	Animal welfare outcome	Interpretation
<i>E.g. Dog</i>	<i>Owned pet</i>	<i>Castration using anaesthesia and analgesia</i>	<i>Dog's experience of pain related to castration is minimised</i>	<i>Castration is a painful procedure for dogs. Therefore it is important to provide pain relief</i>
<i>E.g. Dog</i>	<i>Stray</i>	<i>Castration without analgesia</i>	<i>Dog's experience of pain related to castration is not minimised</i>	<i>Castration is not a painful procedure for dogs. Therefore it is not necessary to provide pain relief</i>

Notes for lecturer:

Reflective exercises encourage students to spend time considering the subject, and question their own morals and ethics. Personal reflection is a valuable tool for personal and professional development, but it cannot be judged or assessed. You may wish to see evidence of thoughts in a notebook, in which case you should encourage students to keep a welfare diary. You should be sure to clarify that you will want to see evidence that the reflective exercises have been completed without reading any contents which the student may wish to keep private

Applied Learning Opportunity

Humane education workshop

For this activity students will be working in groups to plan and deliver a humane education workshop at a local school.

Students first need to get in touch with a local school of their choice to see if it would be possible to run a humane education workshop with a class or during a whole school assembly.

Students need to focus the workshop on a specific animal welfare issue that they can select from the list below:

- population control (e.g. stray animal control)
- conservation of wild animals (e.g. human-wildlife interactions, whaling)
- caring for pets (e.g. responsible pet ownership, understanding animal body language)
- caring for working animals (e.g. importance of well-fitted equipment, rest)
- caring for animals in disasters (e.g. building an emergency kit for you and your pet)

The students should prepare a lesson plan that encompasses the following:

The learning objectives

The learning objectives are the things that the students will be able to do by the end of the lesson. Words like 'define', 'recall', 'state', 'identify', 'be able to' and 'explain' are good sentence starters for lesson objectives.

Materials and resources to be used

The materials and resources required to help achieve the learning objectives. Students can look up what pre-existing resources are available in the Education Resources section of the Animal Mosaic website (<http://animalmosaic.org/education/resources/>).

The workshop

How the objectives will be shared:

Starter activity: a short, five minute activity. It can be interactive or facilitate personal reflection and should act as a 'mental warm-up' in preparation for the content that will follow.

Main lesson content: the general aim will be to increase children's awareness and understanding of animals and their needs, the importance of the specific animal welfare issue and of treating animals humanely. Children must be supported through the learning cycle to:

- Recall and explain the information to others
- Apply what they have learnt to new scenarios and to
- Evaluate how what they have learnt is relevant and differs to what they knew before the workshop.

A plenary activity: where the children are given an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned.

Notes for lecturer:

After delivering the workshop students should be encouraged to feed back their experiences to the class. The following points are potential areas for reflection:

- Consider how the humane education workshop might have changed the knowledge and attitudes of the children to animal welfare
- How could vets be encouraged to promote, plan and deliver more humane education outreach activities
- Identify factors they think influences the children's attitudes towards animals. These could include:
 - demographic factors: country, school, gender, age, whether the child has pet animals, whether the family or parents work with animals, diet, ethical, religious, and political ideology; gender; health status; income
 - personality variables
 - factors within education: curriculum used, interval between classes, total number of hours, whether HE is part of national curriculum or not.

Link to a useful reference to help students prepare for and deliver this activity:

Pedagogy: Teaching animal welfare to children

http://animalmosaic.org/Images/Pedagogy_Teaching%20Animal%20Welfare%20to%20Children_tcm46-29462.pdf