



Courtesy of Sandra Brackenridge

Brittany McPherson, shown here with a client, was hired as a full-time veterinary social worker at the Center for Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Care in Lewisville, Texas, last spring after completing her social work internship there.

For human needs, some veterinary clinics are turning to a professional

Veterinary practice can be fraught with emotional situations. The reality is most veterinarians and their staff aren't qualified to deal with these predicaments but often are put in that position. In contrast, social workers are trained to work with humans, and some have started to make the case to veterinary practices that hiring a licensed social work professional is not only helpful for clients and staff but also a smart business move.

Sandra Brackenridge, an associate professor with the Social Work Program at Texas Woman's University, has mentored interns at the Center for Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Care in Lewisville, Texas, for a few years.

The program has worked out so well, in fact, that one of the interns, Brittany McPherson, was hired full-time last spring.

Often McPherson's work begins where the clinician's ends. "Some of Brittany's work is hand holding while the client makes a tough decision or talking with them about whether it's time for euthanasia. Sometimes it's them dealing with the grief or trauma. She can support the client while we worry about taking care of the patient," said Dr. Julie Ducoté, the center's owner.

McPherson will also contact owners after they have lost a pet to offer condolences and make them aware of the grief

support group. Clients who need more substantial therapy can be referred to a licensed counselor.

Something McPherson has learned along the way is how much the center's staff needs her support, too. McPherson and the interns are trained and supervised by Brackenridge to give individual 20- to 30-minute, confidential debriefing sessions. Brackenridge says these are not a substitute for professional counseling but are helpful in preventing compassion fatigue.

Dr. Ducoté says she's considering making semi-regular debriefings a requirement of employment "because I truly see every single person who works here—from the customer service representative to the technician or assistant—is exposed to stressful situations on an hourly basis."

She adds that having a veterinary social worker in a practice doesn't mean veterinarians shouldn't communicate well with clients, either.

"There are still times when there's a client who only wants to talk to the veterinarian or when the social worker isn't here. I am a firm believer in communication skills for veterinarians. I don't think we learn that enough in school, and a lot of us suffer from that. So, I don't think having a social worker replaces that. It's an asset to help us with the more challenging situations," Dr. Ducoté said.

McPherson's position at the center is salaried, and clients aren't charged for any social work services. Internships cost the center nothing. Two more interns were scheduled to start at the center after the holidays, and Dr. Ducoté says she hopes the internship program can continue for the foreseeable future.

Brackenridge acknowledges that hiring a social worker is an added cost that might not be feasible for smaller practices; however, she suggests that several clinics could share a contracted veterinary social worker who spends one day a week at each practice, for example. Brackenridge recommends that practices establish a relationship with a local university that has a social work program to find potential internship candidates.

"Having a social worker really strengthens marketability to clients but also to potential staff," she said.

Other benefits are that clients feel their human needs are taken care of, and they are more likely to return. It's also a unique service that has helped the Center for Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Care stand out from other specialty practices. And having a social worker frees up clinical staff members to do their work. ●

Condensed from Jan. 1, 2016, JAVMA News

UK leads by example when it comes to wellness

Dr. David J. Bartram, director of outcomes research for Zoetis, presented "Veterinary Professional Wellness and Support: A U.K. perspective" during the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges' Veterinary Wellness and Social Work Summit, held Nov. 2-3, 2015, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

The U.K. veterinary profession became aware of the magnitude of its wellness problems in the early 1990s when the government published data that showed among male veterinarians, the suicide rate was about three times that of the general male population in the U.K. For female veterinarians, the figure was also significantly elevated.

Dr. Bartram soon became involved in research into mental health and well-being among veterinary professionals. His hypotheses to explain the high suicide risk among U.K. veterinarians include access to and



Dr. David J. Bartram, who has published numerous studies on veterinary mental health, outlines what support services work well in the U.K. and why.

knowledge of lethal means and psychological morbidity (mental distress) attributable to psychosocial factors (one's psychological development in

and interaction with a social environment) during veterinary education and in the workplace.

In the U.K., veterinary professionals have access to a comprehensive range of interventions, including support for vulnerable practitioners, with an increasing reliance on online assistance, according to Dr. Bartram. Over the years, what has worked is a multiagency approach with central coordination and financial resources from several organizations. Data collection and monitoring, too, are key to the efforts, he said.

The main organization has been VetLife, an independent charity that provides free and confidential support to the veterinary community through its Vet Helpline, a health support program, and a fund for financial support. ●

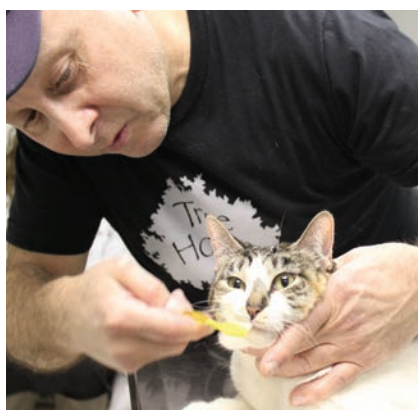
Condensed from Jan. 1, 2016, JAVMA News

Overcoming barriers to preventive dentistry for cats and dogs

The AVMA and other veterinary organizations celebrate National Pet Dental Health Month each February. Many cat and dog owners have been embracing preventive dental care for their pets in recent years, including home care and professional cleanings.

But there is a long list of barriers still to overcome in preventive dentistry for cats and dogs: a perception that care is unnecessary, the difficulty of home care, the cost of professional care, and an abiding fear of anesthesia.

The AVMA, American Animal Hospital Association, and American Veterinary Dental College each provide guidance for general practitioners on veterinary dentistry. Representatives of the organizations agree that preventive dentistry for cats and dogs has come a long way but has a long way to go to truly meet its potential.



Nicholas Perrone brushes his cat Fifi's teeth at Blum Animal Hospital in Chicago. One way or another, he and his wife have acquired 10 cats. Every night, he brushes each cat's teeth.

“The veterinarian should perform an oral examination on all animals at least yearly and discuss preventative measures to keep a patient's mouth

healthy,” according to the AVMA policy “Veterinary Dentistry.”

The AAHA Dental Care Guidelines for Dogs and Cats recommend performing the anesthetized portion of the dental evaluation when abnormalities are seen on the awake exam or at least annually starting at 1 year of age for cats and small- to medium-breed dogs and 2 years of age for large-breed dogs.

Dr. Cindy Charlier, an AVDC board member, consults at general practices on oral health care. She said, “All the barriers can be overcome, knocked down by client education.”

The AVMA provides a toolkit for members to promote pet dental care at www.avma.org/petdental. ●

Condensed from Jan. 15, 2015, JAVMA News

Support for women's leadership initiative among AVMA board actions

The AVMA is providing management services for the Women's Veterinary Leadership Development Initiative as part of continued support for the organization and its mission of promoting women veterinary leaders.

Approving the plan was among the actions taken Nov. 19-21, 2015, by the AVMA Board of Directors at Association headquarters.

AVMA staff executives believe the Association can offer key services to the WVLDI, such as communications management, logistic support for meetings, and program development.

Board members approved up to \$18,000 to sustain the AVMA Veterinary Medical Assistance Team program after the American Veterinary Medical Foundation Board of Directors discontinued funding because of a lack of disaster relief donations. The

AVMA Board will convene a subcommittee to explore program options.

The AVMA has made a three-year funding commitment to the ALL for Students (Achieving, Leading, and Learning) program totaling \$300,000. The program supports the 35 student chapters of the AVMA and one associate organization in the Student AVMA House of Delegates.

The AVMA adopted policies endorsing federal plans for food security and defining the Association's leadership role in international organizations.

AVMA representatives will attend the International Accreditors Working Group meeting Feb. 11-12 in Melbourne, Australia, including a session with World Veterinary Association President René Carlson on developing tools for assessing the implementation of day-one competencies for veterinary graduates and a model core curriculum.



Dr. Beth Sabin, AVMA associate director for international and diversity issues and a founding member of the Women's Veterinary Leadership Development Initiative, fields questions from the AVMA Board regarding the WVLDI management proposal.

The AVMA will convene a meeting among veterinary and human health professionals to collaborate on their mutual goals of judicious use of antimicrobials and minimizing antimicrobial resistance. ●

Condensed from Jan. 15, 2016, JAVMA News

Survey: Global public confused on antimicrobials

World Health Organization survey results show confusion worldwide on how antimicrobials should be used and why drug resistance develops.

Only 70 percent of those surveyed reported having heard the term “antibiotic resistance.”

Also, of the 9,800 respondents from 12 countries, 65 percent reported having taken antibiotics in the previous six months, with more frequent use among residents of countries with lower incomes and among younger respondents, according to a WHO report published Nov. 16, 2015, at the start of the WHO-sponsored World Antibiotic Awareness Week. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are among participants in the campaign.

The survey responses—a mix of online and in-person responses—came from residents of Barbados, China,

Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, Sudan, and Vietnam. The WHO selected the countries to provide for variety in region, income, and population size, among other factors, according to the report.

Almost one-third of those surveyed by the WHO thought they should stop taking antibiotics when they felt better, with more than half of those surveyed from China, Egypt, and Sudan agreeing with that position. And two-thirds of respondents thought antimicrobials could be used to treat influenza and similar viral illnesses.

The responses also indicate 57 percent of those surveyed think they can do little to stop antimicrobial resistance from developing, a noteworthy concern to the report authors because resistance is a problem requiring action from all. ●

Condensed from Jan. 1, 2016, JAVMA News

Education, research wanted on antimicrobials

Two associations of universities and colleges want more education and research on antimicrobial resistance connected with agriculture.

A task force of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities published a report Oct. 29, 2015, advocating those goals as well as increased collaboration and advocacy by the associations on the education and research goals. The task force members included representatives from the two parent organizations and from the agriculture and pharmaceutical industries, according to the report.

Dr. Lonnie King, a professor and former dean at The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine and co-chair of the task force, said the recommendations are aimed mostly at colleges and universities. Those institutions, he said, can help federal agencies implement the National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic-resistant Bacteria, which President Obama’s administration published in March 2015.

But the report also is intended for the federal agencies, whose officials could learn about the recommendations as well as the expertise and skills

available from academic institutions, Dr. King said.

The AAVMC-APLU report, “Addressing antibiotic resistance,” states that antibiotic drug discovery has slowed while use has risen, and achievements in controlling infectious disease “could be reversed with catastrophic consequences.” And the speed and volume of international travel give microbes opportunities to share genetic material and spread. ●

Condensed from Jan. 1, 2016, JAVMA News

American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia

The American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia welcomed 13 new diplomates following the certification examinations held May 7-8, 2015, in Lexington, Kentucky, and Sept. 16-17, 2015, in Washington, D.C. The new diplomates are as follows.

Ludovica Chiavaccini, Davis, California
Jill S. Coats, Las Vegas
Katherine Cummings, Columbus, Ohio
Ana del Alamo Foster, Corvallis, Oregon
Gregg Griffenhagen, Fort Collins, Colorado

Stefania Grasso, Montreal
Martin Kennedy, Newport, Kentucky
Nicole Karrasch, Washington, D.C.
Stephanie Kleine, Athens, Georgia
Christopher Norkus, Cheswick, Pennsylvania
Dianna Ovbey, Pittsburgh
Monique Pare, Philadelphia
Caitlin Tearney, Denver ●

From Jan. 1, 2016, JAVMA News

GE salmon gain FDA approval

U.S. regulators approved for sale a type of salmon modified to grow to market size in half the time of conventional relatives.

The modified Atlantic salmon produced by AquaBounty Technologies is the first genetically engineered food animal to gain approval from the Food and Drug Administration, which regulates the recombinant DNA construct in the fish



Courtesy of AquaBounty Technologies

One of AquaBounty's genetically engineered salmon

as a drug. The agency issued the approval Nov. 19, 2015, determining the fish are as safe for human consumption as conventional Atlantic salmon.

AquaBounty spokeswoman Genevieve Nyren said that the approval was the last one needed to sell the salmon in the U.S., but she declined to say when that could happen.

The modified salmon grow to market size of 3 to 4 kilograms (6.6 to 8.8 pounds) in 16 to 18 months, about half the time needed to grow conventional salmon. They contain a growth-promotion gene from Chinook salmon controlled by a promoter sequence—which activates expression of a gene—from ocean pout, according to the FDA.

All the fish produced for consumption are female and sterile, reducing the likelihood they could reproduce in the wild and redirecting energy toward growth rather than reproductive development. The fish also will be produced and raised in tanks at land-based facilities with redundant barriers preventing escape, according to the FDA.

AquaBounty will produce eggs on Prince Edward Island in Canada and grow the fish in Panama. ●

Condensed from Jan. 1, 2016, JAVMA News

Research awards conferred

The following individuals are winners of the 2015 Zoetis Award for Veterinary Research Excellence. The Zoetis award recognizes researchers whose innovative studies have advanced the scientific standing of veterinary medicine.

Pamela J. Lein, PhD
University of California-Davis
Sheryl Magzamen, PhD
Colorado State University
Adam R. Boyko, PhD
Cornell University
Rosanna Marsella, DVM
University of Florida
Biao He, PhD
University of Georgia
Jing Yang, PhD
University of Illinois
Paul J. Plummer, DVM, PhD
Iowa State University
Philip R. Hardwidge, PhD
Kansas State University

Shafiqul Chowdhury, DVM, PhD
Louisiana State University
Robert B. Abramovitch, PhD
Michigan State University
Randall Singer, DVM, PhD
University of Minnesota
Matt J. Griffin, PhD
Mississippi State University
John R. Middleton, DVM, PhD
University of Missouri-Columbia
Samuel Jones, DVM, PhD
North Carolina State University
Chen Gilor, DVM, PhD
The Ohio State University
Pamela Lloyd, PhD
Oklahoma State University
Anna Jolles, PhD
Oregon State University
P. Jeremy Wang, PhD
University of Pennsylvania
Mohamed Seleem, BVSc, PhD
Purdue University
Sean (John) J. Callanan, MVB, PhD
Ross University

Karin Kalchofner Guerrero, Dr.med.
vet.
St. George's University
Maria Cekanova, PhD
University of Tennessee
Noah Cohen, VMD, PhD
Texas A&M University
Lluis Ferrer, PhD
Tufts University
Solomon Olawole Odemuyiwa, DVM,
PhD
Tuskegee University
Sarah M. McDonald, PhD
Virginia-Maryland College of
Veterinary Medicine
Michael H. Court, BVSc, PhD
Washington State University
Babak Faramarzi, DVM, PhD
Western University of Health
Sciences
Thaddeus Golos, PhD
University of Wisconsin-Madison ●

From Jan. 1, 2016, JAVMA News

H3N2 canine flu may require longer isolation

Dogs infected with the H3N2 canine influenza virus may need to be isolated at least three weeks to prevent spread to naive dogs.

Dr. Sandra Newbury, director of the Shelter Medicine Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine, recommends at least 21 days of quarantine for dogs infected with the virus, which emerged in



the U.S. in spring 2015 and was responsible for outbreaks in Chicago and Atlanta.

She has seen dogs shed the virus for up to 20 days after their first positive test results, and results of PCR assays of nasal swab specimens have shown dogs could remain positive for the virus for up to 30 days, she said. But she noted that positive results beyond 20 days were rare.

In contrast, dogs that become infected with the H3N8 canine influenza virus—which emerged in the U.S. in 2004—can have negative test results a few days after clinical signs begin, she said. Yet those infected with the H3N2 virus have been positive or intermittently positive after their illness appeared to end, she said.

The H3N2 virus has spread to at least half of U.S. states, with infections clustered in population centers throughout the country, according to a map from the Cornell University Animal Health Diagnostic Center. Precise figures on number of positive results were unavailable at press time.

The Department of Agriculture has given pharmaceutical makers Merck Animal Health and Zoetis conditional licenses for vaccines against the H3N2 canine influenza virus. ●

Condensed from Jan. 15, 2016, JAVMA News

Eliminating remains of eradicated virus

The cattle plague, or rinderpest, is eradicated in the wild, but stocks of the virus remain in “an unacceptably high number of facilities and countries.”

Officials from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) published that assessment in the December issue of *Emerging Infectious Diseases* (*Emerg Infect Dis* 2015;21:2117-2121). In their article, “Identifying and reducing remaining stocks of rinderpest virus,” they describe a need to account for rinderpest materials distributed to diagnostic laboratories,

vaccine makers, and researchers during the eradication campaign leading up to the 2011 declaration the world was free of the disease.

Only infectious materials in those facilities could cause a rinderpest outbreak, the report states. Vaccination against the disease has ended worldwide, and all cattle populations are naive.

Rinderpest is considered responsible for hundreds of millions of animal deaths over centuries, and it has been linked with famines and the establishment of the world’s first veterinary school. The OIE wants to limit distribu-

tion of remaining rinderpest virus to a small number of facilities that meet OIE standards for biological security.

At least 24 OIE member countries had rinderpest virus in some form in 2015, with 23 keeping live virus. The EID article states that all 180 member countries had responded to the OIE’s request for information on rinderpest stocks, but some of those countries could be storing stocks unknown to national reporting authorities. ●

Condensed from Jan. 1, 2016, JAVMA News