Special Report

Gender and work: what veterinarians can learn from research about women, men, and work

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The veterinary profession has undergone a dramatic gender shift in the past 20 years. At the same time, there has been a decline in the economic position of veterinarians.¹ There is an income gap between male and female veterinarians that cannot be fully explained by differences in experience, hours worked, or other measurable factors.¹⁻³

A great deal of debate and discussion has ensued regarding the cause and effect relationships of these changes. Much of the discussion revolves around differences in men's and women's personalities, priorities, and interests. A review of the research can help answer some of the questions that have arisen in our profession regarding gender, personality, and income. Some of the questions include: What are the reasons for the income gap between men and women, beyond age and experience factors? Because professions dominated by women seem to pay less, does that mean that women's entry causes lower incomes? Do men and women have different priorities that affect outcomes at work? Do men and women possess inherent characteristics that make them better at certain types of work, and thus affect how much they will earn?

The veterinary literature provides limited information about these issues. Research in economics, social science, psychology, women's studies, and other fields can tell us much about questions that have arisen in the veterinary profession. Reviewing these studies will help our profession to get a jump start on specific positive-action steps we can take to improve the economic condition of the entire profession, for men and women alike.

Each of these studies may be dismissed by veterinarians, because they are not about veterinarians. However, it is not appropriate to dismiss these results in an offhand manner. Many studies have been performed to back up the conclusions presented therein. When there are similar trends in a large number and a wide variety of different professions, it is logical to assume that those trends might also apply to veterinary medicine. It is entirely appropriate to look at basic research regarding behavior and work to learn about how people behave in specific jobs. The study of behavioral research and about how men and women form their attitudes and perceptions has implications for how men and women may behave in any work environment, including that of veterinary medicine.

Interpretations of others' performance are influenced by unacknowledged beliefs about gender differences. Everyday observation of differences between men and women allows people to formulate an easy but often incorrect explanation for economic or lifestyle outcomes.⁴⁻⁵ Only by examining research done about men, women, behavior, and work can one step back and begin to see how those hidden assumptions affect one's conclusions about women in veterinary medicine.

Veterinary Medicine and Gender

There is an income gap between male and female veterinarians that cannot be fully explained by differences in experience, hours worked, or other measurable factors.¹⁴ What else is involved? The veterinary literature does not give us the answer.⁴⁻⁵

From a historical perspective, women are making great strides in the paid working world. Much of the change is attributable to economic conditions and to equal opportunity laws enacted in the 1970s.¹⁰ However, societal changes are not sufficient to explain the dramatic increase of females only in certain professions. An in-depth analysis of a wide variety of professions whose members changed from predominantly men to predominantly women (a greater increase of women than was seen in the overall workforce) was performed. Results revealed that all the professions studied underwent a decline in job prestige and real earnings.¹¹ In most of these jobs (including pharmacy, editing or reporting, and bank management), status and pay had already decreased before the rapid entry of women.¹¹⁻¹² Additional research reveals that ratings by both men and women of occupational prestige and desirability decrease when people anticipate increased numbers of women (and decreased numbers of men) in a profession.¹¹⁻¹⁴

A reduction in male applicants has fueled the increase in female veterinarians. The number of male applicants declined between 1981 and 1990, paralleling a decline in total numbers of applicants. Thereafter the total number of applicants increased, but male applicant numbers remained low. The data reveal that the decrease in male applicants preceded the increased
The accumulation of women in specific jobs is the result of individual decisions but is also the result of societal influences. People's perceptions of their own suitability for a job are influenced by the job's current sex composition, standing, peer pressure, and stereotypes. Children are channeled into specific behaviors and subsequent career choices on the basis of gender stereotypes. Even families that think they are treating sons and daughters identically treat their children differently on the basis of sex. Analysis of textbook illustrations indicates far more men in some positions and women in others. Girls spend years growing up influenced by adults who unconsciously depress their expectations of girls' performance in sports, business, math, and the sciences. Students say that society accepts many different careers for women and men, but they tend to choose sex-stereotyped careers for themselves.

Male and Female Jobs (Occupational Segregation)

Although most of the literature focuses on differences, results of several studies reveal that men and women both want many of the same things: income, independence, responsibility, intellectual work, flexibility for family needs, and personal fulfillment. Among veterinarians, the same proportion of men and women want flexible hours, time off for family and vacations, good salary and benefits, and the ability to use their medical and surgical knowledge and skills.

Results of a national study of 765 women working in a wide variety of jobs revealed that women's first priority is equal pay, followed by affordable health care, family and medical leave, and retirement plans. When these women were asked what they personally wanted most in their jobs, the number one answer was respect.

Occupational segregation is sometimes justified by saying traits held by men or women are suited to particular jobs. Yet overwhelming evidence indicates that those traits are used as after-the-fact explanations for why 1 gender predominates. Every job requires "masculine" and "feminine" traits. The aspects of a job that are seen as "primary" change over time as its gender composition changes. For example, men were once thought to make good bank tellers, because the work involved counting money (math); during war, when more workers were needed, these jobs were "good" for women because they required dealing with the public.

One justification for lower women's pay is that men think pay is important, and women prefer good working conditions. Although men do get higher pay, women do not clearly receive better working conditions (traditional women's jobs do not offer more flexibility or autonomy). The thought that women are more interested in people than in high pay has been used inappropriately to justify wage discrimination.

The masculinity of a job is a strong predictor of salary and prestige. Men or women doing work described in feminine terms expected to earn less money prior to doing the job and thought the pay was more fair than did individuals assigned to the identical job that was labeled as masculine. People rate the monetary worth of the same job more highly if it is performed by men and less when it is performed by women.

Women may gravitate toward "helping" careers. Altruistic reasons for choosing a major were expressed by both women and students of color in 1 survey, suggesting a subordinate status, not gender alone, as 1 contribution to this desire.

Personality and Environment

Most people rationally know that external and internal factors affect problems of men and women, but they may focus on women's innate qualities as the root of their problems. One must not ignore the effect of life experiences on abilities and outcomes. Men and women do differ in basic ways, but similarities of character traits between men and women far outweigh differences. Cross-cultural differences are often much greater than gender differences. In all the behavioral characteristics considered, variability within each sex is greater than the average difference between the sexes. The purpose of this article is not to make a case for an androgynous society, but to de-emphasize trivial differences.

Men and women do not differ in their attachment or connection with others, their nurturing ability, the likelihood of feeling emotions, the need for achievement or power, or their verbal, mathematical, or reading abilities. They do differ in their communication styles; the way they express emotion; their employment and work opportunities; their income, power, and status at work; and the amount of housework and care taking they do.

People often mistakenly connect biological with social causation. One knows that women bear children and from that may make erroneous conclusions about their innate abilities. When women are seen working in jobs requiring nurturance, it is sometimes erroneously concluded that because they are nurturing, they have filled those jobs. However, the reverse is true: people develop the characteristics they need to perform the job they are in. Women develop care giving skills because they use them.

Because many women marry men who are older and make more money than they do, when children are born, it is often the partner with the lower income that stops working to stay at home. This is an economic decision as much as it is an emotional one. Single fathers are more like mothers than like married fathers; they are nurturing and have similar childcare skills. Men who were caring for ailing parents spent just as much time nurturing as women. When men are the primary caregivers, they become more empathetic (able, for example, to interpret their babies' facial expressions as well as most mothers). When women rise to positions of power in the workplace, they become more task-oriented. It is not possible to use nature to uphold stereotypes; in many species of primates (humans' closest relatives), males care directly for offspring.

Often brain-sidedness is considered to be the basis
of gender personality or ability differences, but the side of the brain thought to be male has changed repeatedly over time. Biology is affected by many factors and cannot be held up as the single reason for certain actions.\textsuperscript{26}

**Prescriptions for Behavior**

"The entry of women into our profession is a good thing, because their nurturing and empathetic nature enhances their work with clients and pets." Statements such as this are often heard and usually receive a favorable response from men and women. However, is this type of statement true or false, and what assumptions lie behind it that might be harmful to men and women?

Discussing the pressures that are created by conventional views of femininity is not intended to denigrate women who are proud of their traditionally feminine attributes. Yet if those attributes are overglorified, the voice of women who are not like that is ignored, making them appear to be sell-outs who want to be like men (and viewed as bad). It is important to recognize that both men and women have a variety of modes of expression and behavior.\textsuperscript{9,26}

Judgement based on gender prescriptions is not limited to each gender judging the other; women often judge other women as well as themselves.\textsuperscript{19} People are influenced about their gender personality from an early age. For example, in a study, people who were shown movies of the same baby described it as vigorous and assertive if told it was a boy but gentle and cute if told it was a girl.\textsuperscript{4} Results of several other studies revealed that even parents who thought they treated their sons and daughters equally often stimulated boys' motor behavior more, encouraged dependency in girls, and unconsciously influenced their children's choice of toys by their reactions.\textsuperscript{4,19}

Many popular texts describe men and women's behavior in ways that "seem right" to the reader.\textsuperscript{35,36} These descriptions of women's traits are not simply descriptive but are prescriptive (suggesting what women ought to be like). Women with supposedly masculine traits are violating social prescriptions of feminine niceness (eg, a man may be viewed as a good leader, but a woman with the same behavior may be seen as autocratic).\textsuperscript{17}

Making women's qualities sound superior might raise women's self-esteem, but it also keeps the focus on personality instead of improving women's economic status or the balance of work in the home.\textsuperscript{26} It reduces men's ability to recognize their own competence in this area and legitimizes women's double burden of home and paid work. One may assume that if women are nurturing, then men are not. Yet male and female gender prescriptions are not incompatible; individuals do possess both male and female characteristics.\textsuperscript{26}

Historically, male attributes have been rewarded or used as criteria for advancement.\textsuperscript{19,30} Women with more feminine characteristics are perceived as less professionally competent. Those with less feminine characteristics are more likely to be hired but are viewed as less socially skilled. If one isn't masculine or feminine enough, one might not fit an employer's image of the ideal employee.\textsuperscript{19,26}

Changing job requirements to emphasize more feminine traits may increase job gender segregation or unintentionally promote discrimination against women that do not fit a typical stereotype. Also, when interpersonal skills become a job requirement, women are held to a higher standard, and those less proficient are more likely to be viewed negatively.\textsuperscript{17}

Men and women's self-esteem is based on proficiency in different areas. People maintain self-esteem by devaluing areas in which they are deficient. However, they do not tend to devalue gender-prescriptive attributes, instead making more effort to acquire those skills and abilities. Thus, women who earn less may decide that money doesn't matter, but they will not devalue their interpersonal abilities.\textsuperscript{19}

Many of the qualities associated with women's behaviors, when closely analyzed, are found to be those of people in subordinate positions.\textsuperscript{26} A recent veterinary report indicated that women with high empathy scores earned less and then made the erroneous assumption that their empathy caused lower incomes.\textsuperscript{38} Research shows the reverse: both men and women develop more empathy and intuition when they are in subordinate roles.\textsuperscript{26} Subordinates must understand and try to predict the behavior of their bosses to get along at work. When men or women were given either follower or leader roles, the followers were more sensitive to the leader's nonverbal signals than the reverse.\textsuperscript{26} High empathy is not a bad thing, but one must not assume there is a trade-off between empathy and income.

There are consequences to labeling the cause of a problem. It determines what action one sees as appropriate to fix the problem. A woman who thinks she has a personality problem may get counseling, but if she realizes she deserves higher pay, she may insist on it.\textsuperscript{26} No studies indicate that the extent to which a person outwardly exhibits feelings has any effect on his or her ability to charge a fee. It is debatable whether personality testing can predict success at work.\textsuperscript{7,31,39} Within the many fields of psychology, context repeatedly overwhelms personality in the search for meaningful differences between men and women. Men and women are different, to be sure, but not in the ways that most people assume.\textsuperscript{19,26}

One theory suggested that women base moral decisions on principles of compassion and care, whereas men base theirs on justice and fairness.\textsuperscript{40} Newer research has shown that men and women both use care-based and justice-based reasoning.\textsuperscript{26}

Gender prescriptions are maintained with terminology and with how behavior is channeled. For instance, men are described as assertive, but women with the same behavior may be described as strident or pushy. Nurturing is the act of promoting development and growth, but one hears the word mentor to describe this behavior in men (eg, Boy Scout leaders). Women's superior verbal ability is discussed in the context of relationships and feelings, not jobs. Men are also good at communicating, but it is called persuasion or leading. A woman who is insightful about people is thought to make a great mother; an insightful man is thought to make a great psychiatrist. Men who are
good at caring for their children are sometimes called “Mr. Mom” or are said to be baby-sitting, rather than allowing one to view their behavior as that of a normal father. Women who engage in unfeminine behavior are seen by some to be “trying to be men” instead of just “being themselves.”19,26

Communication Styles

Popular books say that men use conversation to preserve independence, negotiate, and maintain status; women use it to establish connections and negotiate relationships.23 Researchers agree there are different language styles, but they do not agree about their origins. Research regarding linguistic differences reveals that women's voices are artifacts of a power imbalance. Both men and women in authoritative positions demonstrate nonverbal signs of authority, such as looking at you while they speak instead of turning away. Both change the way they look at others in conversation depending on their position of power. People in power use language that is clear and concise, and they speak without fear of giving offense.19,41

“Women's language” is the voice of people who must listen (not speak), be indirect or agree (not confront), persuade (not demand), and to learn to anticipate what others need (women's intuition). Some men in subordinate positions also interact this way (eg, it is seen when prisoners communicate with guards, etc).26 People’s ways of speaking often depend on the gender of whom they are speaking with. Research in this area is done with groups of people who are assigned a task and are then observed. Results of such studies reveal that women speak more tentatively only when they are talking with men (saying statements such as “I may be wrong” or “I’m not sure”). Women who spoke hesitantly were more influential with men (but were perceived as less intelligent) and less influential with women, who were annoyed. A single woman in a group of men will have much of what she does attributed to her gender (and vice versa). When women make up less than 10% of a group, their performance ratings are more negative than men’s. There must be at least 25% women (or men) in a group to avoid gender stereotyping of an individual's actions. The intent to evaluate people fairly does not protect one from unconsciously rating men differently than women.19,20

Self-assessment

Men and women differ in their self-assessment. When performing equally, men inflate their self-reported knowledge, exaggerate their achievements, or are overly confident, whereas women underestimate their abilities and are less confident about their performance.42,43 Women will work harder and more efficiently than men for the same amount of money.19

In studies that fix the outcomes of tasks that participants are asked to do, men often take credit for their successes but do not accept blame for their failures. Women take the blame for their failures but do not accept credit for their successes (attributing them to luck more than their abilities). In accordance with their gender prescription, women may try to appear modest or uncompetitive, and men may try to appear hardworking and self-confident, not acknowledging the role of outside help and chance.19,20

Results of 1 study revealed that employment conditions had a greater effect than gender on people's focus at work. Men with low opportunity (in a corporate setting) had the same attributes as the stereotypical woman: they limited their aspirations, sought satisfaction in activities outside work, interrupted their careers, and emphasized interpersonal relationships over other aspects of work.20

Several studies have examined the differences in ratings of men and women with identical qualifications. For example, in 1 study, 147 heads of psychology departments were sent resumes of people with a PhD, with either a male or female name. The resumes with a male name were assigned a higher rank (associate professor) than were the female resumes (assistant professor).19

Women must meet higher standards than men to gain promotion or tenure. Even when qualifications are equal, women advance more slowly than men.19,44

Because women do not get consistent rewards for their effort, they may feel hopeless and not persevere. They may see their success as lucky or an exception to the rule, rather than something they can learn from and repeat. For men, the danger is in failing to recognize that some of their successes are unearned.19

Expectations and Feelings of Deprivation

North American culture views the cause of behaviors within individuals rather than within systems. The belief in personal control leads us to believe that people who earn more money must be more deserving.45 Basic behavioral research demonstrates that people who are paid more for the same work as others who earn less may rationalize that something makes their inputs more valuable and thus over time view the situation as equal.46 Likewise, those who are disadvantaged often come to believe that they deserve their lesser outcomes. When an unjust distribution of reward persists long enough, people come to expect it and rationalize it so they think it is equitable. This is an unconscious process that has no malicious intent but does create an undesirable outcome.47

When women are paid less for their work, both men and women may infer that women’s performance must not be as good.48 However, the cause and effect relationship may be reversed; women receive less, and then the evaluation of their performance decreases to meet that level of pay, regardless of their actual performance.19

Although women recognize that other women obtain less than they deserve from their jobs, their own harsher self-judgment, lack of external comparison, and lack of performance feedback lead them to feel personally are not deprived.20 Beliefs about entitlement may become self-fulfilling prophecies: those who feel entitled to less will ask for less and, thus, receive less than those who feel entitled to more.45 People who were asked to assign a salary to a well-qualified applicant assigned higher salaries to applicants who expected more money.19
When individuals evaluate fairness and whether they are being deprived, they compare their own rewards, or those of their group, to another individual or group. For instance, a woman veterinarian could compare her situation with that of another woman or to that of all men. Likewise, veterinarians could compare their situation to all other veterinarians or to all doctors (ie, physicians or dentists). When external comparisons are not available, people compare their current situation to their own past situation, feeling entitled to what they received in the past. Women expect lower pay, because they have always received lower pay.

Individuals overwhelmingly prefer to compare themselves with similar others, making them feel less dissatisfaction (thus, feeling good is not an accurate assessment of equal pay). Those who have few or no comparisons do not feel deprived (you can't want what you don't know is there). An underpaid woman appears satisfied not because she values money less, but because she feels she is paid what she deserves.

Comparison with others affects how men and women self-pay and self-assess their work. For example, men and women were told to work for as long as they felt was fair for a fixed payment. In the absence of social comparison, women worked longer, did more work, completed more correct work, and were more efficient than men. Yet men and women did not differ in their performance evaluations or satisfaction. In the absence of performance feedback, both men and women expected that women would ask for lower pay; women undervalued and men overvalued their work.

When men and women were told to divide a reward between themselves and a coworker, men took more for themselves and left less to the coworker than did women.

When men or women are given information about the mean amount of pay for other men and women doing the same work, they use that to set pay for themselves, and there are no gender pay differences. When told they performed well, both men and women thought they deserved significantly more money (with no gender differences in the amount) than when told they performed badly. Knowing what others earn and getting specific performance feedback erases the low self-pay of women. When women know what the typical salary should be for their jobs, they do not cheerfully accept less.

Discontent is the typical reaction when people learn what they are really entitled to receive. Women who compare their job outcomes predominantly with men's are least satisfied. This reasoning can be applied to the veterinary profession as a whole; only by comparing veterinarian's incomes and debt to other health care fields can one see how underpaid veterinarians are. The resulting anger or depression may induce people to make attempts at self-improvement, such as asking for higher incomes.

Effects of Home Work on Outside Work

Women who do domestic work are making a significant contribution. Yet having children has a strong negative effect on a woman's income. Women veterinarians were more likely than men to report that they perceived conflict between their spouse or children and their career. Far more male than female veterinary students have children. American women still do 80% of childcare and two thirds of the housework. While they are doing so, men are earning money, being involved in associations, or watching television. Because there are a limited number of hours in the day, equality at work requires equality at home.

Although spouses recognize the inequality in their work at home, they do not perceive it as unfair, because they have been raised to expect it and think it is normal. Neither men nor women see their home as a negotiation site. Because childcare is a labor of love, the woman who insists on equity may seem heartless. Women who use childcare may be seen as abandoning their children to strangers.

Highly educated women and top-ranking female executives are more likely than other women to be divorced, widowed, never married, or without children. The vast majority of their male counterparts are married with children, and many have stay-at-home wives.

A factor unique to small businesses such as veterinary hospitals is that a large number of male veterinarians' wives act as unpaid or low-pay bookkeepers, after-hours last-minute help, or receptionists. (Many practices do not formally pay spouses a salary to save the FICA and Medicare taxes that are due on these salaries, especially after practice owners have paid all the FICA tax on the first $72,000 of their salary. Bonusing out additional compensation to the primary wage earner spouse in these cases avoids this extra tax burden.) This puts male and female practice owners on an unlevel playing field when it comes to overall earnings. Evaluation of this effect is routinely performed during buy/sell agreements, as it has a definite effect on practice income and valuation. It demands quantification on a profession-wide level so that the perceived difference between male and female practice owners' income can be fairly evaluated. (The work of husbands who perform these tasks should be similarly quantified. When one evaluates all male and female practice owners, the overall effect is likely to be that, on average, male owners' incomes appear artificially higher because more of them have spouses who assist them than do female veterinarians.)

Why change a system in which many women describe their position as a choice? This choice is made on the basis of the realistic limitations that society, families, and employers (and women themselves) place on women. Their male peers are not pressured to make the same choices. Improvements in childcare and flexible working arrangements are needed, but they allow one to avoid asking why combining family and work is first a female problem then an employer problem (not a husband problem or a government problem). Placing the burden of adjustment on the woman draws the attention away from other factors that can help.

In a survey of 902 women who graduated from Harvard University's medical, law, and business schools, 70% said they had reduced their working
hours because of their children. When asked what would have made it easier to combine work and family, most said “a more supportive husband.”

To the extent that the veterinary profession wishes to increase incomes of women (and thus of all veterinarians), our profession should devote time, effort, and study toward further understanding of these issues.

**Wage Gap**

The veterinary profession has not adequately or consistently evaluated the measurable factors that may impact the male-female wage gap. (At the minimum, stratifying income results by age, years of practice ownership [not just years of experience], and hours worked, ensuring there are sufficient survey respondents to get notable results in each subset).

A wage gap still exists in nearly all professions when these measurable factors are accounted for. Although men's lack of responsibilities at home contributes to their faster professional advancement, this does not account fully for the disparity: men still receive a greater reward for their work independent of all other measured factors. The Human Capital Theory says that women are paid less because they have less investment of time and experience in their careers. It is also used to explain occupational sex segregation, saying that traditional female jobs allow for more time spent out of the labor force. This theory does not explain much of the wage gap; even when human capital is equal, women advance more slowly than men. Also, women's family roles do not lead them to choose different occupations. Women lose the same amount of ground in all occupations when they take time out. Women who take time out are not more likely to be in traditionally female occupations, and women who work without interruption are not more likely to work in traditionally male occupations.

**Negotiation**

The same percentages of men and women report negotiating for their salaries. However, they may not be negotiating from the same starting point. According to one academician, “Men and women may negotiate conditions of employment in academia very differently. It has been my experience, in general, that men ask for higher salaries and more startup money or equipment, asking for the moon and negotiating down, whereas women either accept just what is offered, or even ask for less than may be available.” Without knowing what they can ask for, women remain disadvantaged. It is the responsibility of the department head or dean to assure uniformity in assignment of resources (money and equipment) in order to assure equity and a level playing field, looking to the future, where success in promotion and tenure may rely on that startup package.

With a start on unequal footing, if pay increases are based on percentages, women's salaries fall steadily behind. “Accumulation of advantage” results in large disparities in salary and prestige. For instance, a bias accounting for only 1% of variability in promotion in a company with an 8-level hierarchy and equal numbers of men and women at level 1 will result in the highest level being 65% male.

**Discrimination**

Discrimination does occur, but it is not always something men “do” to women. People all think this way to some degree; it is the way the brain sorts out information and tries to categorize it. One's intent to evaluate people fairly does not protect men or women from unconsciously rating men higher than women. Overcoming unconscious reactions is possible only if one is disturbed by the discrepancy between one's conscious and unconscious beliefs.

Women often do not report discrimination because of the realistic consequence of being black-balled by their current or potential employers. The idea that women have come a long way is likely to lead some women to attribute their difficulties to their own specific circumstances rather than to discrimination. Young women are less likely to perceive, recognize, or take action against discrimination than are women who have been in the workforce for several years.

The face of discrimination today is different and more subtle than before. It consists of a pattern of unrecognized assumptions that work against women, despite good intentions. Discrimination includes assumptions about men's and women's personalities; the limitations on women's choices that result from society's (including men's, women's, and employer's) assumptions about what is a good woman, wife, and mother; and the economic realities of marriage and work.

**Action Steps**

People must be willing to endure discontent in order to change. When thinking of gender and economics, there are alternatives to focusing on minor differences in skills or personality traits.

Both individual action (eg, women's insistence on equal pay, men's involvement in childcare) and collective action (by employers and the profession) are necessary to recognize and further define economic problems in veterinary medicine and to improve women's economic situation.

Creating surveys is part of this further evaluation. Research about behavior can help those who create surveys of veterinarians. Questions should be limited to facts that do not allow for gender bias in self-reporting. For instance, questions that ask respondents to evaluate their skills may yield inaccurate results, because research indicates that men and women who perform equally will not self-evaluate similarly. Likewise, questions that ask respondents about their job satisfaction may yield misleading results unless it is determined that respondents are operating under full disclosure and knowledge of others' situations (eg, incomes and objective performance evaluations).

Unless jobs are gender-balanced, it is difficult for men or women to assess what a job is worth. To attract both men and women to veterinary medicine, our profession could emphasize both the masculine and feminine qualities that make a good veterinarian and illustrate men and women doing a variety of veterinary work (eg, women doing surgery, men comfort-
ing an upset client). Our profession could highlight the science and technology used in veterinary medicine in addition to emphasizing the human-animal bond. Instead of talking about women’s self-esteem or empathy, one can give performance feedback and publicize salaries and benefits so that women and men can make honest comparisons. When veterinarians focus on known contributors to the differences in economic status of men and women, the veterinary profession will be the ultimate winner.

References


