**The University of Nottingham**

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

**Centre for Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine Newsletter**



Welcome to the second Newsletter from the Centre for Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine (CEVM), www.nottingham.ac.uk/cevm, which updates you on the CEVM's current activities. We are producing regular newsletters to keep you informed of the work of the CEVM.

Please forward this e-mail on to any colleagues who you think may be interested—they can sign up for future Newsletters using our mailing list (http://lists.nottingham.ac.uk/mailman/listinfo/cevm-mailing-list).

**New CEVM publications**

A survey of the awareness, knowledge, policies and views of veterinary journal Editors-in-Chief on reporting guidelines for publication of research

Grindlay DJC, Dean RS, Christopher MM, Brennan ML.

Reporting guidelines are statements that provide advice on how to report research methods and findings, and generally list items that should be included when reporting a specific study type.

We carried out a survey in conjunction with Dr Mary Christopher of the International Association of Veterinary Editors (IAVE), to assess the knowledge and views of veterinary Editors-in-Chief on reporting guidelines, identify the policies of their journals, and determine their information needs. A paper about this research has now been published in the open access journal BMC Veterinary Research.

Key findings were that 52.9% of respondents knew what a reporting guideline was before receiving the questionnaire, but 47.1% had no previous knowledge. Just over a third of respondents said their journal referred to reporting guidelines in its instructions to authors, and around two-thirds of respondents said they believed that reporting guidelines should be adopted by all refereed veterinary journals.

A retrospective study of pyometra at five RSPCA hospitals in the UK: 1728 cases from 2006 to 2011

Gibson A, Dean RS, Yates D, Stavisky J.

The aim of this study was to document the changes in the incidence of canine pyometra at five RSPCA hospitals over the economic downturn, and compare them with concurrent trends in uptake of elective neutering. The results have now been published in an open-access paper. The incidence of pyometra rose from 1.8% in 2006 to 2.9% in 2011, whilst simultaneously the uptake of prophylactic neutering decreased.

Veterinary vaccination advice and perceived farmer compliance on UK dairy farms

Cresswell E, Richens I, Archer S, Breen J, Huxley J, Randall L, Remnant J, Wapenaar W, Biggs A, Kerby M, Statham J.

This study compared veterinarians', veterinary students' and farmers' perceptions and approaches to vaccination strategies on dairy farms through the use of survey questions, discussion groups and a posed case scenario. The results suggest that although veterinarians are aware of suboptimal farmer compliance and recognise the motivators and barriers of farmers to comply with vaccination, actions to improve farmer compliance could be improved.

Animal-assisted therapy for people with serious mental illness (Protocol)

Downes MJ, Dean R, Bath-Hextall FJ.
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2013, Issue 12. Art. No.: CD010818.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD010818/abstract

A protocol for a Cochrane Review with the Cochrane Schizophrenia Group has now been published. The systematic review is currently underway assessing the effectiveness of animal-assisted therapy (AAT) as a treatment for patients with mental health illness.

## Best BETs for Vets

Two new BETs have been added to our online database **BestBETs for Vets** (http://bestbetsforvets.org):

- Tulathromycin versus tilmicosin in beef cattle with pneumonia: https://bestbetsforvets.org/bet/142

- Cyclophosphamide in dogs with IMHA: http://bestbetsforvets.org/bet/178

BETs (best evidence topics) are simple reviews of the current best evidence available to answer simple, common and specific clinical questions. They are designed to be a quick and achievable method of enabling the incorporation of evidence into clinical practice. BETs start with a very specific clinical question. A systematic literature search is then done to find available evidence. The relevant literature is critically appraised for quality and a "bottom line" (the answer to the question) is reached based on this evidence. BETs do not tell you what to do, they tell you about the evidence on a certain topic—the aim is to give an unbiased view of the evidence found.

## PhD successes

The first PhDs through the CEVM have now been awarded.

Congratulations to **Julie Jones-Diette** who passed her viva just before Christmas. Julie's thesis is entitled "Establishment of methods for extracting and analysing patient data from electronic practice management software systems used in first opinion veterinary practice in the UK". Julie is leaving us to become a Senior Analyst in Medical Informatics for a new team in human clinical epidemiology at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, where she will be making good use of the skills and knowledge gained from her PhD.

Congratulations also to **Natalie Robinson**, who has just successfully defended her PhD thesis entitled "Use of sentinel practices to obtain data regarding common clinical conditions and presentations in small animal consultations". Nat is now a Post-doctoral Research Fellow in Veterinary Practice-based Research in the CEVM.

**People**

As well as Julie Jones-Diette, we are also saying a fond good-bye to our Post-doctoral Research Fellow **Martin Downes**, who is leaving for Australia, where he will be a Research Fellow in the Centre for Applied Health Economics (CAHE) at the School of Medicine, University of Griffith in Brisbane working on Health Technology Assessment. Martin will be greatly missed but we wish him well in his exciting new post.

Welcome to **Katie Waine**, who has joined us as a PhD student looking at the use and application of the evidence-based veterinary medicine cycle in large animal practice.

**Presentations by CEVM staff**

London Vet Show 2013

**Marnie Brennan** gave a talk on evidence-based veterinary medicine at the British Veterinary Association Congress that was held in conjunction with the **London Vet Show** (http://www.londonvetshow.co.uk) at Olympia on 21st and 22nd November 2013. A report of the presentation has appeared in the *Veterinary Record* ("Overcoming barriers to evidence-based veterinary medicine", *Veterinary Record* 2014;174:37-38):

http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/174/2/37.full

**Jenny Stavisky** also spoke at the London Vet Show, on two topics related to shelter medicine. The first talk, called "Herd health for cats and dogs - the challenge of shelter medicine", highlighted some of the issues arising when considering the health and welfare needs of dogs and cats when presented in dozens and hundreds, as well as ones and twos. The second, "One in a million - dealing with animals once they are rehomed", tackled veterinary issues in the period immediately before and after rehoming, when an animal goes from being part of a large "herd" to being a household pet.

BSAVA Congress 2014

**Rachel Dean** will be talking at the **BSAVA Congress** (http://www.bsava.com/Congress.aspx) on 5th April 2014 on "The practicalities and delivery of questionnaire-based research".

**Spotlight on our research**



This month **Zoe Belshaw** describes her PhD project on quality of life and decision making in dogs with arthritis...

I am now 8 months into my BBSRC/CEVM funded PhD looking at quality of life and decision making for dogs with arthritis. I am interested in how vets and owners make decisions about arthritic dogs, and what motivates them to take certain courses of action. I also want to find out what indicators are the best measures of welfare in dogs with arthritis. Originally, I planned to produce and test a quality of life tool to use in these patients. However, the more I have read in the last few months, the more I realise that we need to understand the lives of dogs with arthritis and how their owners manage them before we can start measuring anything!

I am therefore going to start my data collection by interviewing the owners of arthritic dogs to ask them broad questions. These will range from their understanding of arthritis to what impact having an arthritic dog has on their lives and what signs they look at in their dog to tell whether it is having a good day or a bad one. I am very lucky to be working with some great CEVM sentinel practices scattered around the UK, who will help me to recruit owners to interview. I aim to speak to about 40 owners over the course of the year, and will then present the data back to vets to see what they think. We hope in Phase 2 to start looking at what might be useful quality of life indicators in arthritic dogs, which owners could be monitoring at home.

If you have any questions about the research, or would be interesting in seeing how your practice could be involved as a sentinel, please email me at zoe.belshaw@nottingham.ac.uk.

**Find out more about the CEVM**

To find out more, take a look at the CEVM website.

You can also join our mailing list to keep you informed of future developments.

If you would like to get involved with any of the CEVM's projects or have any questions about our work, please e-mail us at cevm@nottingham.ac.uk.

Follow us on Twitter: @CEVetM