Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Centre for Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine (CEVM)

www.nottingham.ac.uk/cevm

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Coming up in this issue:

- News and updates

- Conference presentations

- Recent publications and outputs

- Spotlight on our research

- Latest BestBETs

News and updates:

A celebration:

We were very excited to receive our shiny new plaque and badges from RCVS Knowledge for our Quality Improvement Champion teaching award. These awards are focused on individuals and teams who have driven quality improvement (QI) into their workplaces. The teaching team at SVMS won this award for extensive integration of EVM and QI across the undergraduate curriculum and for the efforts made to encompass EVM and QI into both postgraduate training and research. It was so lovely for the teams hard work to be recognised. Further information about these awards can be found here: https://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-events/news/educators-and-practice-teams-take-home-top-prizes-in-the-2021/

A sad goodbye:

We're all very sad to see Jenny Stavisky moving on to pastures new; Jenny has been at the University since 2010 firstly as a postdoctoral researcher within the CEVM, and then as a member of staff with a shelter medicine focus. Along with Rachel Dean, Jenny

successfully built up a fantastic shelter medicine presence at Nottingham, including Jenny's award winning initiative, Vets in the Community. She will be sorely missed by the CEVM team and the wider team at SVMS, but we wish her all the best of luck in her new venture with VetPartners. We look forward to continuing to work with Jenny in some capacity in the future.

Conference presentations:

- Imogen is presenting at the VetEd conference on Thursday 8th July with a presentation entitled 'Student experiences of the integration of veterinary nursing students into an established vet student run voluntary charity clinic' – the programme can be found here - https://veted2021.org/program

Recent publications and outputs:

- **Rooke, F, Burford, J, Freeman, S, Mair, T, Suthers, J and Brennan, M (2021) Quality Improvement: origins, purpose and the future for veterinary practice. Veterinary Evidence, 6(2), https://doi.org/10.18849/ve.v6i2.358**

Providing the highest quality veterinary care can often be a delicate balancing act: the client/owner's wishes, financial parameters and emotional needs have to be considered, whilst also meeting the animal's clinical needs. But what actually defines quality care? It is a term frequently used in both the human and veterinary healthcare literature, but often has little explanation or definition attached to it. 'Quality' in relation to care delivered is not a static concept and will hold different meanings to different individuals within a healthcare service. The Victorian writer John Ruskin said, "Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilful execution". This paper analyses the origins, purpose and aims of quality improvement methods and the future use of them in veterinary practice.

- **Doit, H, Dean, RS, Duz, M, Finch, NC and Brennan, ML (2021) What outcomes should be measured in feline chronic kidney disease treatment trials? Establishing a core outcome set for research. Preventive Veterinary Medicine, 192: 105348, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.prevetmed.2021.105348**

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is an important cause of feline morbidity and mortality. In current published treatment trials, a wide range of unique outcomes are measured and reported, with little consistency between studies. This makes it difficult to source a strong evidence base when making import treatment decisions for patients. This study brought together the opinions of a range of people responsible for making treatment decisions for these patients including cat owners, veterinary professionals, industry representatives, regulatory agencies and journal editors. In this study, agreement was reached between all decision makers, on the most important outcomes which should be measured in all future treatment trials for feline CKD, called a "Core Outcome Set" (COS). These included the core themes: clinical examination, quality of life, serum biochemistry, complete blood count, urinalysis, total amount of food eaten, CKD progression, survival time and cause of death. This is the first time a COS has been created for cats and it is the second COS to be created for veterinary patients.

- **Doit, H, Dean, RS, Duz, M and Brennan, ML (2021) A systematic review of the quality of life assessment tools for cats in the published literature, The Veterinary Journal 272, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tvjl.2021.105658.**

Quality of life (QoL) assessment in cats is really important and can form a pivotal part of clinical decision making, especially around treatment and euthanasia decisions. This systematic review of the published literature looked to see whether assessment of cat QoL was carried out in manuscripts where it was mentioned, and how those assessments were done. We found that

less than half of the manuscripts identified in the review had assessments of QoL reported. Those assessment were done with one of 32 unique assessment tools. However only eight of those tools were validated. Without validation we cannot be sure whether a tool is assessing what it has been designed to measure. Some tools were specific to certain diseases, and some were more applicable to healthy cats. The details of the tools identified in this review, and how the tools assessed QoL can be found within the review. Much research remains to be done in this important area, to support cat owners, researchers and veterinary professionals in their decision-making.

- **Waine, K, White, C, Dean, RS, Hudson, C, Huxley, J and Brennan, ML (2021) Assessing the feasibility of retrospective and prospective clinical audit in farm animal veterinary practice. Veterinary Sciences, 8(4):62. https://doi.org/10.3390/vetsci8040062**

As a quality improvement tool, clinical audit has been extensively described in the medical literature. There is scant literature on the use of clinical audit in the farm animal veterinary setting. This study describes the process and feasibility of prospective and retrospective data collection for farm animal clinical audit performed at three different farm animal practices in the United Kingdom. Retrospective clinical audit was difficult in all three practices due to barriers in establishing diagnosis and patient identity from clinical records. Prospective data collection proved feasible but depended on adequate case accrual and practitioner engagement. The decision to conduct clinical audit retrospectively or prospectively will depend on the topic to audit, the availability of data and the wishes of the team members involved. Further work is required looking at the use of clinical coding and alternatives to using practice management software to improve retrospective data availability for clinical audit.

 Spotlight on our research:

Having finished the 4th year of my veterinary medicine degree at the University of Nottingham, I decided to intercalate and complete an MRes before finishing my final year and joining the profession. I have worked with the CEVM on my undergraduate dissertation project and on various placements since then, but I am very excited to be a fully-fledged member of the team and get stuck in with a bigger project.

The aim of my project is to create a tool to aid the transfer of knowledge and to allow different veterinary stakeholders (including vets, vet nurses and animal owners) to critically assess the information that they encounter. Our tool will help facilitate the implementation of EVM into everyday decision making.

Experts in the medical field have previously set out a list of key points clinicians, and other stakeholder groups, could consider when evaluating information. They created a framework called "Key concepts for informed health choices" (Chalmers *et al*., 2018). The success of this framework led to a collaborative project, across a broad range of disciplines, including members of the CEVM, looking at important key concepts to consider when assessing claims, analysing treatment comparisons and making informed choices (Aronson *et al*., 2019).

It is our hope that our veterinary specific guidance will allow surgeons, nurses and patient owners to make informed decisions about any treatment or management options for patients. By encouraging a patient-centred care approach to the treatment and management of veterinary conditions, we can hopefully enhance clinical decision-making and ultimately animal and human health and welfare.

Chalmers, I., Oxman, A.D., Austvoll-Dahlgren, A., Ryan-Vig, S., Pannell, S., Sewankambo, N., Semakula, D., Nsangi, A., Albarqouni, L., Glasziou, P., Mahtani, K., Nunan, D., Heneghan, C. and Badenoch, D. (2018). Key Concepts for Informed Health Choices: a framework for helping people learn how to assess treatment claims and make informed choices. BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine, 23(1), 29-33, http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/ebmed-2017-110829

Aronson, J. K., Barends, E., Boruch, R., Brennan, M., Chalmers, I., Chislett, J., Cunliffe-Jones,P., Dahlgren, A., Gaarder, M., Haines, A., Heneghan, C., Matthews, R., Maynard, B., Oxman, A.D., Oxman, M., Pullin, A., Randall, N., Roddam, H., Schoonees, A., Sharples, J., Stewart, R., Stott, J., Tallis, R., Thomas, N. and Vale, L. (2019). Key concepts for making informed choices. Nature, 572(7769), 303-306, doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-02407-9

Latest BestBETs for Vets:

You can find all BETs on our free online database **here.** You can also find out more, subscribe to BET updates or submit a question. Here are our most recently published BETs:

- Oral treatment with interferon omega versus steroids in cats with chronic gingivostomatitis (new evidence added) https://bestbetsforvets.org/bet/578
- More efficient pneumonia detection in calves – thoracic ultrasound versus Wisconsin calf scoring https://www.bestbetsforvets.org/bet/575

And finally:

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