Veterinarian-Client-Patient communication: Current state, relevance, and opportunities for improvement.

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Background:
Communication plays an important role in the success of a veterinary practice and the satisfaction of clients, affecting the accuracy and impact of diagnosis, evaluation and selection of therapeutic options, and delivery of and adherence to treatments (Shaw 2004). Research suggests, however that veterinarian-client-patient communication and training, while receiving increased attention in recent years, are still suboptimal (Kogan 2004; Kurz 2005). Evidence from human medicine along with a growing body of evidence from veterinary medicine, point toward optimised veterinarian-client-patient communication leading to enhanced veterinarian and client satisfaction, greater practice success, improved adherence to therapeutic regimens, and other positive results (Kurz 2005; Shaw 2004).

Themes from the literature:

Current State and Relevance
• Veterinarian-client-patient communication can impact the accuracy of diagnosis, selection of the appropriate treatment option, adherence to treatment, and client satisfaction. 
• Despite increased attention in recent years, communication skills and training for veterinarians are suboptimal
• Canine pruritis presents unique communication challenges (Favrot 2010)

Learnings from human medicine
• Effective physician-patient communication has been associated with improved treatment results, adherence, and patient satisfaction
• Studies have pointed toward patient-centred communications as being ideal for achieving these objectives
• Principles of effective communications in human health can apply to animal health

Aim:
This study aims to identify opportunities to enhance communication surrounding diagnosis and treatment of itchy skin (pruritis) in dogs.

Expected Findings:
• Comparison of physician-patient and veterinarian-client-patient communication
• Success factors that lead to optimal communication in the veterinary setting
• Opportunities to enhance communication in the diagnosis and treatment of itchy skin in dogs

Acknowledgements: Thanks to my supervisors and colleagues for their advice and support.