

Communication skills in veterinary industry – a qualitative approach

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Background

Communication skills are very important in companion animal and food animal practice (Shaw, Adams et al. 2004). In Germany nearly 68 % of the graduates are working as a veterinarian in private practice. More than 31 % of German vets are working in other fields, whereas almost 16 % working in industry. So far, limited information is available about communications skills in veterinary industry.

Aim of this study was to figure out what veterinarians in the industry think about communication skills. Above all, the focus was on the expectations of new colleagues in the industrial sector. Moreover predicted challenges in communication skills in the future should be evaluated.

Material and methods



<https://www.flickr.com/56594044@N06/30108637761/>

Semi-structured interviews

(n=3)

Structured content analysis

(Mayring, 2010)

Comparison with learning outcomes catalogues

Results

Several required communication skills overlap with the learning outcome catalogues

- Communicate with patient owner in an adequate way
- Communication via telephone
- Leadership skills

Aspects which should be improved by graduates

- Presentation skills
- Imparting information
- Basic knowledge in economics

„ Such things- crisis situation [...] something like this that is a kind of king discipline where no one wants to be really wanted and where also many people simply - where they themselves say I am missing somehow the know how or the training”
(industry 1)

„We also do a lot of trainings for veterinarians and we also notice that we have to stretch a bit and become more modern in the methodology; that we have to go away from the frontal lecture to a seminar-style, the participants interactively involve and there is, of course, communication the be-all and end-all”
(industry 1)

“On the other hand, we also have very different conversation partners [...] so with marketing agencies so advertising agencies somehow work together”
(industry 2)

Conclusion and future goals

In the future more qualitative research will be necessary to derive more concrete learning outcomes. Moreover, the integration of specific learning and communication skills for veterinary industry into the curriculum could also prepare the students for better accomplishments in the formation of private practices.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to all participants for taking part for the interviews.

References

Shaw, J. R., C. L. Adams and B. N. Bonnett (2004). "What can veterinarians learn from studies of physician-patient communication about veterinarian-client-patient communication?" *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 224(5): 676-684

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