

*Editorial*

## Critically Appraised Topics (CATs) in veterinary medicine: applying evidence in clinical practice

Marnie Brennan\*

Department of Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, Marmara Research Center, Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Institute, Turkey.

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### EDITORIAL NOTE

Veterinary medicine is the branch of medicine that deals with the prevention, control, diagnosis, and treatment of disease, disorder, and injury in animals. Along with this, it deals with animal rearing, husbandry, breeding, research on nutrition, and product development. The scope of veterinary medicine is wide, covering all animal species, both domesticated and wild, with a wide range of conditions that can affect different species.

### VETERINARY MEDICINE

Veterinary medicine is widely practiced, both with and without professional supervision. Professional care is most often led by a veterinary physician (also known as a veterinarian, veterinary surgeon, or “vet”), but also by paraveterinary workers, such as veterinary nurses or technicians. This can be augmented by other paraprofessionals with specific specialties, such as animal physiotherapy or dentistry, and species-relevant roles such as farriers. Veterinary science helps human health through the monitoring and control of zoonotic disease (infectious disease transmitted from nonhuman animals to humans), food safety, and indirectly through human applications from basic medical research. They also help to maintain food supply through livestock health monitoring and treatment, and mental health by keeping pets healthy and long-living. Veterinary scientists often collaborate with epidemiologists and other health or natural scientists, depending on type of work. Ethically, veterinarians are usually obliged to look after animal welfare. Veterinarians diagnose, treat, and help keep animals safe and healthy.

Veterinary care and management are usually led by a veterinary physician (usually called a veterinarian, veterinary surgeon or “vet” - doctor of veterinary medicine or veterinary medical doctor). This role is the equivalent of a physician or surgeon (medical doctor) in human medicine, and involves postgraduate study and qualification. In many countries, the local nomenclature for a vet is a protected term, meaning that people without the prerequisite qualifications and/or registration are not able to use the title, and in many cases, the activities that may be undertaken by a vet (such as animal treatment or surgery) are restricted only to those people who are registered as vet. For instance, in the United Kingdom, as in other jurisdictions, animal treatment may be performed only by registered vets (with a few designated exceptions, such as paraveterinary workers), and any persons calling themselves a vet without being registered or performing any treatment is illegal. Most vets work in clinical settings, treating animals directly. They may be involved in a general practice, treating animals of all types; may be specialized in a specific group of animals such as companion animals, livestock, laboratory animals, zoo animals, or horses; or may specialize in a narrow medical discipline such as surgery, dermatology, laboratory animal medicine, or internal medicine.

\*Corresponding author: Marnie Brennan, E-mail: [marnie.brennan@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:marnie.brennan@nottingham.ac.uk).

