

Poster: alternatives & education

Training the animal doctor: caring as a clinical skill

Siri Martinsen

InterNICHE Norway (Oslo) (NO)

e-mail: siri.martinsen@bredband.net

The veterinary profession requires that students are well trained in clinical skills and have a solid basis of theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, the guardians of patients – especially in small animal practice – and society as a whole, expect the veterinarian to treat patients with care and compassion. The concept of care as a central skill is not always emphasised in veterinary education, but a caring approach may better enable the veterinarian to diagnose and treat his or her patients. This presentation discusses the reasons to look upon care and compassion as essential clinical skills to be developed and prioritised within veterinary education. The different teaching tools and approaches that are, in the author's opinion, best suited to develop such skills are discussed, as well as teaching methods that may be counter-productive to these objectives. In particular, the role of animal experiments within education is challenged, and their role in potentially limiting the number of motivated students wanting to enter veterinary education and the profession is discussed.

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