Veterinary Science

Preparatory Training for the Veterinary Assistant

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Caring for Patients

Floron C. Faries, Jr., DVM, MS
Objectives

- Discuss the importance of patient care
- Describe techniques for caring for various types of animals
- Describe basic necessities required for patient care
- Discuss the laws regarding patient care
Introduction

- Animals entering a hospital become anxious and behave differently
- Small animals can exhibit:
  - Fear
  - Over excitement
  - Anxiety
  - Defensiveness
- Livestock can exhibit the same:
  - Confined in trailer
  - Confined in farm pens and chutes
Services

- Types
  - Clinical services
  - Clinical services support
  - Ancillary services

- Quality care
  - Directly related to services
Clinical Services

- Fundamental skills and services inherent to the treatment, support and care of patients
  - Out-patients
    - Community practice (well-patient)
      - Preventive care
    - Treatment for minor ailments or injury
  - In-patients
    - Complex procedures
    - Time-consuming procedures
    - Diagnosis and treatment
Clinical specialties
- Internal medicine
- Dermatology
- Ophthalmology
- Gastroenterology
- General surgery
- Soft tissue surgery
- Bone surgery
- Neurology
- Neurosurgery
First assessment of the patients problem
  - Physical exam
  - Blood, fecal and urinary exam
Provide the diagnosis
  - Results from exams
Prescribe the treatment
  - Medicine
  - Surgery
  - Supportive care
Clinical Services Support

- Diagnostic procedures
- Patient treatment
- Nursing care
Support specialties

- Anesthesiology
- Radiology
- Nuclear medicine
- Clinical pathology
- Intensive care unit
Ancillary Services

- Operational support for clinical services and clinical services support
- Provide operational support to the entire hospital system
- Physical facilities
- Individual equipment
- Sterile supply supports surgery
- Laundry supports all units, including surgery
Staff

- Proficiency in skills and techniques
  - Diagnosis
  - Treatment
- Animal welfare
  - Comfort
  - Physical condition
  - Behavior
- Highest quality care
Hospital staff provide
- Health care
- Enhancement in quality of life
  - Caring
  - Comfort
Quality of Life Enhancement

- Hospitalization and medical care
  - Professional diagnosis
  - Quality of life enhancements
    - Individual attention
    - Medical care received during illness
    - Comfort
- Highly variable
  - Simple
    - Temperature of hospital
    - Bedding in cage
  - Complex
    - Pain management
    - Euthanasia
    - Physical environment
Physical variables

- Microenvironment (inside the cage)
  - Provide bedding
  - Clean up messes

- Macroenvironment (outside the cage)
  - Adjustment of temperature
  - Exercise the animal
Behavioral socialization requirements

- Must be safe
  - Protection from injury and infection
- Physical interaction between staff and animals
  - Handling by care giver
  - Group exercise
  - Group housing
Preferential handling is the safe method for socializing needs

- Personalized for each patient
  - Exercise
  - Care
  - Establishes a relationship with handler

- Safety
  - Protect from injury by other animals
  - Protect from disease
Behavioral requirements

- Permitting animals to behave in natural manner
- Housing should suit animals
  - Cats have tendencies to climb
    - Provide perch in cage
- Providing toys
Handling of Patient Animals

- Risk of injury to handler and animal
  - Restraint
  - Movement of animal
    - Relocation
    - Clinical procedures
Questions to ask when handling a patient

- What are the conditions of the scenario the handler is approaching?
  - What is the intended outcome?
  - What could change?
- What hurts?
- How could the animal react?

- Be sensitive to physical condition
- Observe behavior
Know behavioral signs of all species

- Anger and aggression
- Warnings
- Submission
- Dominance
- Docile
Dog Body Language

Defensive Threat
Stressed

Dominant or Aggression/
Offensive Threat
Passive Submissive

Active Submission
Playful
## Cat Body Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More Aggressive</th>
<th>Ears Pricked Forwards</th>
<th>Ears Out Sideways, Flattened</th>
<th>Pupils Dilated, Ears Right Back</th>
<th>Pupils Dilated, Ears Half Back</th>
<th>Ears Turned Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Submissive</td>
<td>More Febrile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cat Body Language

- **Friendly, Content**
- **Non-Threatening, Unsure**
- **Derisive "*** You"**
- **Quivering, Very Pleased to See You**

- **Hooked Tail**
- **Amicable, Not Aggressive or Fearful**
- **Defensive Aggression**
- **Thrashing Tail, Excited or Angry or Irritable**

- **Friendly but Unsure**
- **Bristling with Anger**
- **Potentially Aggressive**
- **Submissive**
- **Twitching Tail - Alert, Interested**
Cat Body Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MORE SUBMISSIVE OR MORE FEARFUL</th>
<th>MORE AGGRESSIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAIL MAY BE HELD ALOFT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLATTER TO THE GROUND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;FLINCH&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY EVEN FALL OVER IN SUBMISSIVE FEAR</td>
<td>MUSTN’T CONFUSE THIS WITH STRETCHING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALLY WITHDRAWN</td>
<td>LAST DITCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAIL TUCKED UNDER</td>
<td>TAIL TUCKED UNDER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Horse Body Language

The Language of the Ears

Alert And interested

Relaxed, board or unwell

Sleepy, Unwell, or Submissive

Angry and Aggressive

The Mood Of the Horse

Startle Response

Aggressive Head Thrust

Moving to Attack

Fighting

Drawn By: Amber Mills

Drawn by: Amber
- Tolerance limits must be identified
  - Physically
  - Behaviorally
- Physical facilities must be identified
  - Avenues for escape
  - Obstruction to safe handling
Restraint must be applied ALL THE TIME
- Specific to animal species
- Limited to minimum to get job done

Voice commands
- Not accepted as method of restraint
- Can be effective when applied
Purpose of restraint
- Restrict movement
- Avoid injury to patient and handler
- Administer treatment
- Obtain samples
- Control behavior
- Provide security; not stress
Summary

- Animals coming to the hospital are subject to:
  - Stress
  - Anxiety
  - Discomfort
- Caring for patients requires:
  - Sensitivity
  - Empathy
- Patient care is to minimize stress, anxiety and discomfort
- Wide variety between animals