

Use of Effective Feedback in Veterinary Clinical Teaching

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Feedback is essential for the development of veterinary medical learners. This review explores the theory and practical use of feedback in the modern clinical teaching environment. Our purpose is to assist veterinary teaching institutions engage in effective feedback exchange between instructors and learners. Based on literature evidence, quality feedback requires training for both learners and instructors. Effectively executed feedback should be a powerful learning and teaching tool in the development of competencies of the learner. Following the theoretical discussion, we propose a method for delivering scheduled feedback sessions to veterinary medical learners. This differs from 'on-the-go' feedback during each clinical encounter, which we have discussed in a previous article related to the use of the five microskills in clinical teaching.

Keywords: clinical activities ; clinical practice ; teaching ; traditional academic setting ; veterinary learners ; work-based learning

The aim of clinical teaching in veterinary medicine is to prepare graduands to meet required day-one competencies. Assisting veterinary learners in the development of their veterinary medical and professional attributes requires exposure to practice (work-based learning), in which they work within the clinical context of the institution ^{[1][2]}. A common misunderstanding is the term 'clinical teaching' being applied only to the exposure to practice. Indeed, clinical teaching can be used in any teaching (e.g., practicals and tutorials). Clinical teaching is essential for development and application of 'clinical reasoning' by veterinary medical learners. Methodology used in the delivery of the clinical teaching can be used in other aspects of veterinary medical education ^{[1][3][4]}. An essential element of clinical teaching, as in any other competency-based methodology, is the provision of regular feedback on the acquisition of attitudes/knowledge/performance (hereafter competencies) by the learner ^{[2][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][14]}. Indeed, some argue that the skill of providing feedback is second in importance only to clinical competence ^{[15][16]}. Further, it should be realized that bi-directional feedback is a great facilitator in the development of instructors ^[17]. Medical and veterinary education accrediting processes recognize feedback as essential to the development of the learner (e.g., in medical education, the CBME (competency-based medical education) through accrediting bodies, such as Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) ^{[10][18][19][20][21][22]}; in veterinary medical education, the CBVME (competency-based veterinary medical education) ^{[12][23]} and EAEVE (European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education) ^[24] through accrediting bodies, such as VSACC (Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee), for Australasia). To assist in learner development, the provided feedback should be effective, of high quality and standardized across instructors and time ^{[9][13]}. The only way to ensure standardization is the training of instructors and/or provision of guidance templates. Learners have to use feedback in their development. For a better receptivity and increased actionable outcomes on the feedback provided, learners should also receive appropriate training.

This review provides a description of the meaning of effective feedback and how it can be utilized in improving the veterinary medical learner's experience during exposure to practice, or any other form of clinical teaching. Unfortunately, as with many other areas of veterinary medical education, there is a dearth of evidence-based literature in this area. Hence, herein used knowledge derived mainly from the medical education and the experience of the authors in creating a review that we hope can be useful for veterinary medical education purposes. This review is not a comprehensive discussion of the literature but is mainly a summary of the literature integrated with authors' experience. The authors would like to note that in this review, when using the term feedback, we mainly address the use of feedback as a formative, and not summative, assessment. It was not our intention to lower the importance of the summative assessment in learner development, but rather address an aspect that is barely discussed in veterinary medical education. Similarly, our intentions with this review were to concentrate on the provision of feedback by the instructor. Peer feedback in the veterinary medical education sector has been previously addressed ^[25].

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