



TAKING IT OUT ON THE DOG: Domestic Violence, Animal Abuse and the Veterinary Professional

The Study

A survey was distributed to 161 veterinary professionals in the UK through an online survey to assess veterinary efficacy for handling cases of domestic violence and animal abuse.

Signs of Abuse



Inconsistent History to Injuries



Repetitive Injuries



Behaviour of Patient and Client

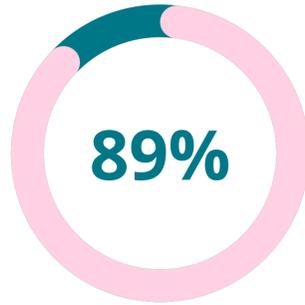


Background Information

The link between domestic violence and animal abuse is well documented universally.

Domestic violence can include coercive control, physical, sexual, mental and emotional abuse (2).

Animal abuse is recognised as the maltreatment of animals through forms of physical harm, neglect, and abandonment (2).



Up to of women who had experienced domestic violence stated that their intimate partner had harmed or threatened to harm their pets (1; 3).



of participants were aware of the links between domestic violence and animal abuse.



have treated a patient with an inconsistent history to the injuries the animal presented with.

“We are the voice for those who cannot speak.”

- online survey participant



of participants were unaware that in order to report cases of abuse, the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct permits breaching client confidentiality.



were not aware of cross-reporting cases of abuse, and the importance of doing so.

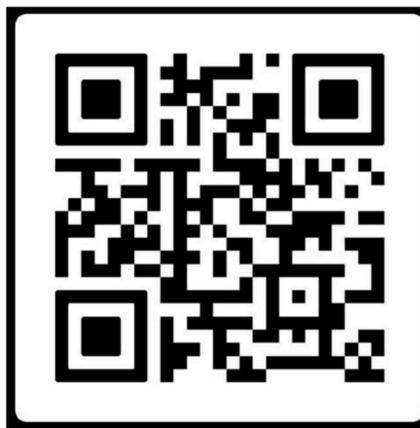


of participants do not report every case of non-accidental injury or neglect they see to the relevant authorities.

do not feel they have received adequate guidelines in order to identify and report suspected cases of abuse.



Non-Accidental Injury Support



Scan the QR Code
Created by David Martin, The Links Group & IVC Evidensia
- for the whole veterinary profession.

The five most common barriers for reporting cases of abuse:



Lack of Evidence



Lack of Training/Guidelines



Concern regarding Breaching Client Confidentiality



Lack of Knowledge of Supporting Organisations



Lack of Confidence

Key Points



The vast majority of veterinary professionals are aware of the connection between domestic violence and animal abuse.



Veterinary professionals experience barriers when handling cases of non-accidental injury such as lack of evidence, guidance and confidence.



The overwhelming majority of veterinary professionals are in favour of additional training, guidelines and protocols to be implemented.



There is now a Non-Accidental Injury Support line available to the whole veterinary profession - any member, any veterinary practice, any time. Scan the QR code!



feel that the implementation of additional protocols and guidelines would be beneficial.