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Alannah graduated from the University of Queensland 2015. She then went on to complete a rotating specialist internship at VSS Carrara in 2016.

Alannah is currently working in small animal general practice on the Gold Coast. Her professional interests include small animal medicine and ultrasonography.

Abstract

Attitudes and opinions of veterinary teaching staff in Australia and New Zealand towards early-age gonadectomy

This study aimed to identify attitudes and opinions of veterinary teaching staff in Australian and New Zealand universities towards early age gonadectomy (EAG) in shelter and client-owned animals, and to determine if these attitudes and opinions changed from 2008 to 2015. It also aimed to identify what veterinary students across Australia and New Zealand are being taught regarding EAG.

A survey was conducted with relevant veterinary teaching staff from the Universities of Queensland, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, and Murdoch, Charles Sturt, James Cook (all in Australia) and Massey (New Zealand). Universities were approached and a questionnaire completed via phone and/or email.

Concerns related to EAG cited by staff included anaesthetic risk, orthopaedic problems, hypoglycaemia, and in female dogs, urinary incontinence. Those who advocated EAG cited benefits of population control, ease of surgery and behavioural benefits. Only 3 of the 8 universities provided a majority of students an opportunity to gain exposure to EAG procedures before graduation, and in 2 of these universities, most students had opportunity to perform EAG.

In conclusion, most veterinary students in Australian and New Zealand are not graduating with the knowledge or skills to perform EAG, and have little opportunity while at university to gain exposure to it. Welfare agencies could partner with universities to enable students to experience EAG.