Evidence-based veterinary medicine survey of veterinarians in the United Kingdom
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Finding relevant evidence, critically appraising it, and using it to help make decisions about patients is a key part of practising evidence-based veterinary medicine (EVM). Currently little is known about what veterinarians perceive EVM to be, or what published or online resources they use. Additionally, little is known about what conditions are commonly seen in veterinary practice, which could further assist in identifying relevant areas for researchers. Therefore the aim of this study was to conduct a survey of UK veterinarians to determine the awareness of EVM and to identify where veterinarians obtain information relating to veterinary issues. Additionally, the aim was to establish which species and conditions/diseases are commonly nominated as being seen by veterinary practitioners. All veterinarians registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (n=14,531) were invited to participate in the survey via a postal questionnaire. Participants were given the option of completing the questionnaire online or on paper. Approximately 35% of vets (n=5,053) completed the questionnaire. Most respondents (69%) were practicing veterinarians. A large proportion of respondents had heard of EVM (87%), and the majority were interested in finding out more about it (66%). Veterinarians read the Veterinary Times (15%), and accessed Google (15%) most frequently from a list of resources. Dogs were the most common species nominated (26%), and skin problems were the most commonly cited for all species (24%). An awareness of the resources used by veterinarians could assist in determining how best to inform practitioners of research findings relevant to the common species and conditions they see. This is an important step towards facilitating the further practise of EVM within the veterinary profession.