

[illegible]

One day I was at the Black Town Library in Sydney skimming through some journals. In one of the journals, the Australian Veterinary Journal published by Wiley Blackwell in 2019, I found an article which aroused my curiosity.

The study used established psychological scales to measure the levels of distress, anxiety and depression in veterinarians and compared these levels between different veterinary sub-groups and other professions.

"Anecdotally, veterinarians have a stressful job-- dealing with sick animals, up-set owners, and the challenges of managing a small business. It was found that the average levels of distress were about the same as other professional groups such as medical practitioners. However, about a third of the vets, especially new graduates, had quite high levels of stress, anxiety and depression", said a co-author Dr. Lin Fritschi from the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research.

In another study in the United Kingdom, Ms. Elinor O' Connor, Professor of Work Psychology of University of Manchester elaborated about the sources of

work stress in veterinary practice in 2019. In her qualitative interviews and thematic analysis revealed the principal stressors to be poor work-life balance, interaction with animal owners, specific aspects of euthanasia, dealing with poor animal welfare and staff management responsibilities, injury risk, supervision arrangement responsibilities for newly qualified veterinarians and lack of control overwork were the main stressor for some.

The practical implications of these findings for stress management in veterinary work are considered. Comments by several participants indicated a strong achievement focus and possible perfectionism could be stressors. It is proposed that veterinarians with perfectionist traits might experience greater psychological distress in the face of some specific stressors in veterinary practice, and further investigation of possible interactive effects of work stressors and perfectionism on veterinarians' well-being is merited.

The veterinary profession recognizes the importance of addressing work-related stress for veterinary surgeons' well-being. Identifying sources of stress is a key step and implementing appropriate stress management interventions will go a long way to improve the efficiency of veterinarians.

In a recent study (2023), it came out that many veterinarians in Canada are facing declining mental health and burn out because of overwork, pet owners and debt load.

A few of the practicing veterinarians in Singapore expressed that long working hours, financial pressures are disturbing practicing veterinarians in Singapore. It appeared that 'compassion fatigue' arose when vets feel emotionally witnessing animal suffering. Added to this, moral distress' arises when they are forced to make difficult choices with their ethical beliefs such as being unable to save an animal due to financial constraints. Many battle mental health challenges and remain largely invisible.

~Piedy Sreeramulu