

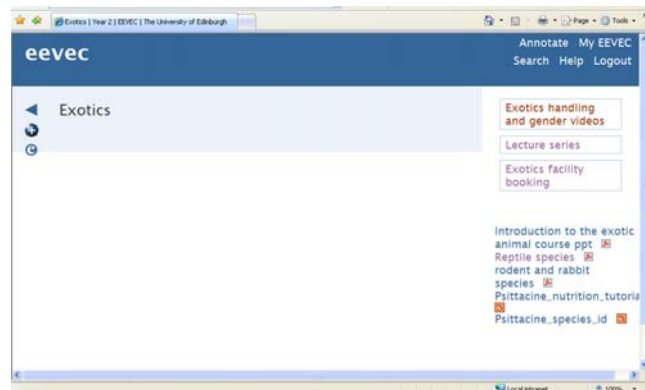
Mini-project Report

Ref No:	«650 »
Applicant:	«Gidona» «Goodman»
Institution:	«Univerisity of Edinburgh»
Title of application:	«Establishing an Exotic Animal teaching Unit for Veterinary Students»
Which key/themed areas did the project address?	«Education in practice»
Year of application and current date:	Year: 2009 Date: July 2011
Is this a final or mid-term report?	Final
Description of mini-project (<i>introduction, method, results etc.; use as many pages as required</i>)	
<p>In the autumn of 2009 the building work for the exotic animal teaching facility was completed. The next stage was populating the facility with exotic species commonly seen in veterinary practice. The animals were either sourced from owners, who no longer wanted their pets or from rescue centres. The mammal room currently houses rats, hamsters, guinea pigs, chinchilla's and rabbits. The reptile room holds snakes and lizards. A designated animal care assistant looks after the animals.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p>The use of the facility and the animals within it was managed in a staged approach, to assess the impact on the animals.</p> <p>Initially the facility was introduced to R(D)SVS second year students as part of their animal husbandry and welfare module. This included lecturer lead tutorials in handling animals and self taught tutorials (students have access to the facility through an on-line booking system). Out of term students assisted the animal care assistant as part of their EMS for a week.</p> <p>During the following phase the use of the facility was extended to final year students as part of their OSCEs. The students can clinically examine animals on their own during the week and are then assessed by a lecturer.</p> <p>Finally the facility was opened to 4th year students as part of the exotic medicine clinical module.</p>	

To ensure the health and welfare of the animal and the safety of the students animals are continually assessed if fit for handling by the animal care assistant and the veterinarians. A notice is placed on a vivarium or cage if animals are not to be handled (e.g when snakes are shedding). There is also a register recording the use of individual animals.

Guidelines on use of the facility are available on-line. Notices have also been placed within the unit. Emphasis is placed on hand washing.

To further enhance the learning experience display cabinets and self taught tutorial material are available in the unit. The correct handling of these animals (and birds) has been filmed professionally and the film clips are available on-line.



Other groups who have made use of the facility include veterinary nurses, animal staff and students who work in research with laboratory animals and high school students interested in a veterinary career (through pathways to profession).

The function of the facility is constantly being reviewed partly through the student staff liaison committees.

We hope to extend the range of animals in the future to include birds.

Students will also have the opportunity to assist in feeding and cleaning of animals during term time as of autumn 2011.

Final conclusions of mini-project (successes, challenges, conclusions, recommendations etc.)

This is a great step forward in enhancing the exotic animal husbandry and medicine curriculum. Students now have ample opportunity in gaining hands on experience in dealing with these species. There is a financial cost attached both for set up and running the facility which may be prohibitive for other institutions. It also requires knowledgeable animal care and veterinary staff to oversee the facility.

There needs to be a balance between animal welfare and the amount of handling the animals are exposed to by the students.

The positive feedback received from students and the increased confidence and competency of our veterinary graduates in dealing with these species outweigh the challenges of setting up this teaching resource.

Workshops (facilitated)

N/A

Presentations made (conferences, workshops, departmental)

N/A

Networks (meetings with constituency hosted/attended, involvement in existing or new networks as a result of this project)

N/A

Publications (reports, papers, circulation lists, quantities published, audience)

A press release was launched on the opening of the facility. It highlighted to the general public and the veterinary community the importance of such a facility. Included is a copy of the report in the veterinary record education section at the end of this report.

A series of film clips were made demonstrating the correct handling of these species using the animals in the facility. A copy of these clips will be submitted to MEDEV to allow wider access to this teaching resource.

Other outcomes (changes to curriculum, changes in practice in host institution and across the UK, further collaborative/follow up work, impact on host institution T&L committee, impact on statutory bodies such as GDC, GMC etc, contacts made, networks established)

The amount of time designated to exotic animal husbandry, medicine and surgery varies between vet schools. We hope with this facility we are setting national standards.

The facility is available for EMS for students from other vet schools out of term time.

Please note that the subject centre or their agents, from time to time, also requests feedback from mini-project holders for the purpose of evaluation.

EDUCATION

Students to get hands-on experience of exotics

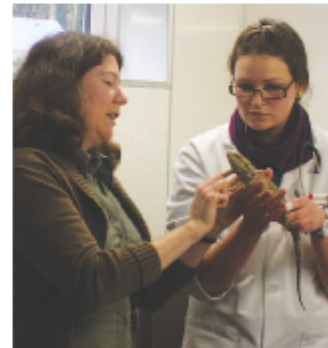
THE Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (R(D)SVS) has opened a new teaching facility where students can learn about the best ways to care for and treat exotic animals.

The species studied at the facility will include rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, chinchillas, lizards, snakes and rats, and teaching will cover topics such as the diets and temperatures the different species require. There will also be opportunities for students with phobias relating to a particular species to study them on a one-to-one basis, to help them overcome their fears.

In addition, supervised placements will be available at the unit.

Gidona Goodman, a lecturer in exotic animal and wildlife medicine at the R(D)SVS, is pictured with student Jenny Ellis (right). She feels that the new facility is invaluable in ensuring that vet students learn about exotic animals, which are becoming increasingly popular as pets in the UK.

'Students do not often get much exposure to handling exotic animals until they start treating them under supervision in clinics in their final year,' she said. 'Exotic pets are on the increase and this unit will



mean that students will be much better equipped in handling such animals.

'Giving students this experience early on is important as it provides them with the skills and confidence to treat animals with a variety of problems.'

It is estimated that there are 1.4 million pet rabbits in the UK, and that approximately 100,000 households have snakes and 80,000 homes have pet rats.

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