

SESSION 7

MEDICINE FOR EXOTIC PETS, WILDLIFE AND ZOO ANIMALS, AND LABORATORY ANIMALS

DESCRIPTION OF SESSION

These sessions provide the participants with an introductory understanding of veterinary medicine outside the traditional perception of what a veterinarian normally does. Participants may have the opportunity to interact with numerous species of animals and unique animal health care situations.

CATEGORY

- Health
- Veterinary Medicine

ADVISOR NOTE:

This collective session should probably be broken down into three or four individual sessions in which each meeting would highlight a separate topic. Since the availability of specific subject matter experts (SMEs) for each of these areas of study might not be available in all areas of the country, a post may decide to do all or none of these topics. Additionally most of these topics would probably be best highlighted as a tour with the SME at a facility housing the topic's animal population.

As you engage your post in activities each meeting, please include comments, discussions, and feedback to the group relating to **Character, Leadership** and **Ethics**. These are important attributes that make a difference in the success of youth in the workplace and in life.

OBJECTIVES

The stated objectives for these different areas of veterinary medicine may vary depending on the group of animals being studied. Use these objectives as a guideline for what the SME feels is most practical to teach.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the different species of animals an exotic pet/wildlife and zoo/laboratory animal (EP/WZ/LA) veterinarian may work with.
- Identify the necessity for these specialized areas of veterinary medicine.
- Discuss the safety concerns one must consider when working with animals in these groups.
- Discuss the very different health care needs of these groups of animals and the services a veterinarian might provide to them.
- Understand the most common health care issues in the animal group(s) that this type of veterinarian handles.

- Identify some of the equipment and instruments used in caring for these groups of animals.
- Understand some of the social, political, and ethical concerns and conflicts of this area of veterinary medical health care.
- Identify some of the challenges and benefits of being an exotic pet/wildlife and zoo/laboratory animal veterinarian.
- Understand the educational requirements for veterinarians entering this field, including high school and college courses that would be beneficial.

SUPPLIES

- Laptop computer or equipment to view videos
- Sanitary hand wipes

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1—EXOTIC PET MEDICINE

Speaker and Tour

(Note: The speaker may be a private practitioner who provides care to individual exotic pets, or a zoo veterinarian, or someone in the research industry who works with exotic pets as laboratory animals.)

Have the speaker address these topics:

- Should exotic animals be kept as pets? Why or why not?
- Which species of exotic animals make the best pets?
- Which species of exotic pets make the worst pets and should not be kept as pets?
- How do you safely handle exotic pets?
- What are the husbandry needs/requirements of exotic pets?
- What are the restrictions on having exotic animals as pets?
- What are the ethical considerations in treating the health needs of exotic pets?
- What often happens when owners of exotic pets tire of their pets?
- What should owners of exotic pets do in case they can no longer care for their pets?
- What are the requirements to become an exotic-pet veterinarian?
- Provide a tour of a facility where exotic pets are treated.

ACTIVITY 2—WILDLIFE AND ZOO MEDICINE

Speaker and Tour

(Note: The speaker may be a private practitioner who provides care occasionally to individual zoo animals, a full-time zoo veterinarian, a government-employed wildlife veterinarian, or someone in industry or research who works with animals such as non-human primates at a research facility).

Have the speaker address these topics:

- What are the different species of wildlife or zoo animals that they work with?

- What are the safety concerns one has to consider when working with these groups of animals?
- How do you safely handle wildlife and zoo animals?
- What are the husbandry needs/requirements that must be met when working with these groups of animals?
- How does a veterinarian diagnose and then treat wildlife and zoo animals?
- Are endangered and threatened species treated differently?
- What are the ethical considerations in treating the health needs of wildlife or zoo animals?
- What are the requirements to become a wildlife or zoo veterinarian?
- Provide a tour of your animal health facility.

ACTIVITY 3—LABORATORY ANIMAL MEDICINE

Speaker and Tour

(Note: The speaker may work as a full-time researcher in industry or at a university or governmental research lab, or as a private practitioner who provides care occasionally to individual laboratory animals.)

Have the speaker address these topics:

- What are the different species of laboratory animals commonly found in research facilities?
- What types of research are the laboratory animals used for? Why is this research necessary or required?
- What are the safety concerns one must consider when working with these groups of animals?
- How do you safely handle the different types of laboratory animals?
- What are the husbandry needs/requirements that must be met when working with these groups of animals?
- Discuss the myths vs. facts about exotic animals and wildlife.
- Are endangered and threatened species ever used for research?
- What are the ethical considerations in treating the health and husbandry needs of laboratory animals?
- What are the requirements to become a laboratory animal veterinarian?
- Provide a tour of your animal research/health care facility.

ADVISOR NOTE

Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own questions that relate to your post or specific area of focus.

REFLECTION

- *What aspects of the exotic pet/wildlife and zoo/laboratory animal medicine session interested you the most?*
 - *What ethical concerns will a veterinarian encounter in this type of veterinary health care?*
 - *What did you learn during this session about the variety roles a veterinarian plays in exotic pet/wildlife and zoo/laboratory animal medicine?*
 - *What can you do now, during your time as a student, to prepare yourself for a career in veterinary medicine? Why is this topic important?*
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