Merck Animal Health
Veterinarian Wellbeing Study 2020

January 2020

Brakke Consulting

MERCK
Animal Health
Agenda

• Objectives and methodology
• Key findings
• Wellbeing of Veterinarians
• Mental Health of Veterinarians
• New! Issues examined in depth:
  • Burnout
  • Substance use disorder
  • Suicide ideation, planning and attempts
  • Role of compensation/pay systems
  • Cyberbullying
  • Dimensions of job satisfaction
• Recommending a career in veterinary medicine
• How to improve wellbeing, mental health and job satisfaction
Objectives

• Monitor wellbeing and mental health of US veterinarians
• Benchmark key findings against physicians and US general population where appropriate
• Examine several important issues in depth
• Evaluate potential solutions
Methodology

▪ AVMA:
  ▪ 20,000 randomly selected email addresses
  ▪ Email letter alerting sample to upcoming study
▪ Email invitation + 3 reminders
▪ Incentive: Drawing for 25 $100 gift cards + $1,000 grand prize
▪ Survey open Sep 30-Oct 23, 2019

▪ Average survey length 20.6 minutes.
▪ 2,871 usable, completed responses (14.5%)
▪ Data weighted based on age, gender and region of the US
▪ Margin of error +/- 1.80% at 95% confidence level
▪ Research plan, questionnaire received IRB review
Key Findings

• Veterinarian wellbeing is on average unchanged since 2017
• Veterinarians’ use of alcohol is similar to general population
  • Cannabis use lower
• ↑ in serious psychological distress among women veterinarians
• Higher levels of burnout than physicians
  • Despite working fewer hours
• Veterinarians are much more likely to think about suicide than non-veterinarians
  • 2.7X more likely to attempt suicide
  • Female veterinarians have higher rates of suicide ideation than their male counterparts
  • Male veterinarians are more likely to attempt suicide
• Positive change in attitude towards those with mental illness
  • Treatment gap remains
Key Findings

• Of 14 dimensions of job satisfaction tested, veterinarians rated highest:
  • I’m invested in my work and take pride in doing a good job
  • My work makes a positive contribution to people’s lives

• 52% of veterinarians would not recommend a career in the profession, about the same as in 2017

• Study identified several techniques to improve mental health and wellbeing
Leading Concerns of Veterinarians: Stress, Debt and Suicide

Leading Concerns of Veterinarians In 2019 and 2017 (Top 5 Only)

- **Stress levels of veterinarians**: 92% (2019), 90% (2017)
- **High student debt levels**: 91% (2019), 92% (2017)
- **Suicide rate among veterinarians**: 89% (2019), 80% (2017)
- **Ability to retire or exit the profession**: 81% (2019), 80% (2017)
- **Declining willingness to pay for vet care**: 71% (2019), 73% (2017)
- **Cyberbullying and vicious reviews**: 70% (2019)

Note: Cyberbullying was a new topic in the 2019 survey.

Cyberbullying a serious concern, but not as common as expected.
Wellbeing of Veterinarians
Framework for Measuring Wellbeing

Wellbeing examines the way an individual feels about how satisfied they are with their lives and how it compares with the best possible/worst possible or ideal life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Question</th>
<th>Wellbeing Scale and Points System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilizes a series of three questions:</td>
<td>Responses are indexed on a 10-point scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?</td>
<td>7-10: Flourishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. On a 10-step ladder, on which step do you feel you personally stand at the present time (0 = worst; 10 = best possible) [Cantril Ladder]</td>
<td>4-6.99: Getting By</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. On a 5-point scale, Indicate agreement or disagreement with: “In most cases my life is close to ideal”</td>
<td>0-3.99: Suffering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Veterinarians with a high level of wellbeing: 56.0%
Percentage of Veterinarians with a low level of wellbeing: 9.4%

Base: All Respondents (n=2871)
Veterinarian Wellbeing Unchanged Since 2017

Wellbeing Index
Base: All Respondents

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between categories
Wellbeing is Lowest among Younger Veterinarians

Wellbeing Index
Base: All Respondents

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between categories
Wellbeing Similar Across Most Practice Types; Food Animal Higher

Wellbeing Index
Base: All Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Index</th>
<th>2019 Total (n=2871)</th>
<th>Food Animal (n=197)</th>
<th>Mixed (n=272)</th>
<th>Companion Animal (n=1746)</th>
<th>Equine (n=99)</th>
<th>Non-Practitioner (n=557)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffering</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting By</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flourishing</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of Practice

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between categories

**Veterinary Wellbeing Study 12**

Wellbeing
“Not Working Enough Hours” has Greater Negative Impact than “Working Too Many”

Wellbeing Index
Base: All Respondents

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between categories

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Predictors of Wellbeing

• Predictors of high wellbeing
  • Enjoy work
  • Work-life Balance
  • Spending time with Friends and Family
  • Invigorating Work Environment
  • Satisfaction with Pay

• Predictors of low wellbeing
  • Personality higher in Neuroticism
    • Individuals with higher levels of neuroticism tend towards more negative emotions and pessimism; they are more vulnerable to stress
  • Higher student debt
  • Younger
Mental Health of Veterinarians
## Framework for Measuring Prevalence of Serious Psychological Distress

Kessler 6 is a six-question framework scored from zero (none of the time) to four (all of the time). Scores from the 6 questions summed yielding a minimum score of 0 and a maximum of 24.

An individual scoring 13, or higher, is considered to suffer from serious psychological distress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kessler 6 Question</th>
<th>Kessler 6 Scale and Points System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the past 30 days, how much of the time did you feel each of the following…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• nervous</td>
<td>All of the time – 4 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• hopeless</td>
<td>Most of the time – 3 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• so sad nothing could cheer you up</td>
<td>Some of the time – 2 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• worthless</td>
<td>A little of the time – 1 Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• restless or fidgety</td>
<td>None of the time – 0 Points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the past 30 days, how much of the time did you feel each of the following:

- nervous
- hopeless
- so sad nothing could cheer you up
- worthless
- restless or fidgety
- that everything was an effort

### U.S. Veterinarians

- **Not Distressed**: 93.6%
- **Distressed**: 6.4%

**Base**: All Respondents (n=2866)
Prevalence of Serious Psychological Distress Consistent with 2017

Increase from 5.3% to 6.4% not statistically significant.

MH1. Results based on results of Kessler 6.
Base: All Respondents

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between categories
Women Experience Higher Levels of Serious Psychological Distress than Men

Increase from 6.3% to 8.1% in female veterinarians is statistically significant.

MH1. Results based on results of Kessler 6.
Base: All Respondents

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between categories
Younger Veterinarians Much More Likely to Suffer from Serious Psychological Distress

MH1. Results based on results of Kessler 6.
Base: All Respondents

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between categories

Veterinary Wellbeing Study 19
Mental Health

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Psychological Distress is Lower Among Veterinarians with a Partner

Marriage to another veterinarian does not affect prevalence of distress.

MH1. Results based on results of Kessler 6.
Base: All Respondents
Serious Psychological Distress Rare Among Food Animal Veterinarians

MH1. Results based on results of Kessler 6.
Base: All Respondents
Characteristics of Food Animal Veterinarians

Food Animal Veterinarians are Significantly Less Likely to Suffer from Serious Psychological Distress and Report Much Higher Levels of Wellbeing.

- 72% are male, but no gender difference
- Highest concentration of baby boomers
- Highest level of satisfaction with amount of leisure time
- Most likely to:
  - be married
  - be satisfied with number of hours worked
  - recommend being a veterinarian to friends and/or family members
- Lower than average practice revenues
- Lowest student debt
Significant Improvement in Perceived Attitude Towards Those With Mental Illness, From 24% To 57%, Perhaps Indicating Less Stigma

MH9. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements using the scale provided.

Base: All Respondents [2019 (n=2871), 2017 (n=3540)]

- Mental health treatment helps veterinarians lead normal lives
- Veterinarians are caring toward those with mental illness
- Mental health treatment is accessible
- I feel comfortable discussing mental health topics with other veterinarians
- If needed, I would be comfortable taking time off to seek mental health treatment

Indicates a statistically significant difference between 2019 and 2017
Half of Those Distressed in Last Year Did Not Receive Treatment

MH2-8A. Have you ever…?
Base: All Respondents [Not-distressed Veterinarians (n=2657), Distressed Veterinarians (n=199)]

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between distressed and not distressed veterinarians

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## Few Accessing Organizational Resources

Only 16% of those suffering from serious psychological distress have accessed; Usefulness scores relatively low

### Accessed MH or WB Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2019 (n=2657)

### Which Ones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Found Useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVMA - American Vet. Medical Association</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIN - Veterinary Information Network</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVM360</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Veterinary Medical Association or VMA</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAHA - American Animal Hospital Association</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2019 (n=371)

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MH11. Some national and state veterinary organizations have literature, websites and other resources available regarding well-being and mental health. Have you ever accessed any of those resources?

MH11B. Which ones?

MH12. How useful to you personally were the resources you used from each organization listed below?

**Base:** 2019 Responses (n=2868)
Predictors of Serious Psychological Distress

- Predictors of serious psychological distress
  - Personality high in Neuroticism
  - Higher Debt

- Predictors of positive mental health
  - Work Enjoyment
  - Work-life Balance
  - Spending time with friends and family
  - Older
  - Having a family
  - Satisfaction with pay
Measuring Burnout
Benchmark: Mayo Clinic Physician Burnout and Wellbeing Scale

Research conducted by Mayo Clinic evaluated burnout and satisfaction with work-life integration among physicians and other US workers.

Results representative of non-retired physicians and employed general population Americans between the ages of 29 to 65.

Merck Animal Health Veterinarian Wellbeing Study benchmarked:
• Hours worked
• Satisfaction with work-life balance
• Suicidal ideation and burnout among veterinarians
• Physicians and employed US adults
Measuring Burnout

Burnout is calculated based on the average number of statements where a respondent selected “Yes”.

Thinking back over the past month . . .

- Have you felt burned out from your work?
- Have you worried that your work is hardening you emotionally?
- Have you often been bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?
- Have you fallen asleep while stopped in traffic or driving?
- Have you felt that all things you had to do were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?
- Have you been bothered by emotional problems (such as feeling anxious, depressed, or irritable)?
- Has your physical health interfered with your ability to do your daily work at home and/or away from home

Base: All Respondents
Veterinarians Score Higher in Burnout Than Physicians

Veterinarians and physicians report similar satisfaction with work-life balance and levels of suicidal ideation.

Veterinarians experience higher levels of burnout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied with Work-Life Balance</th>
<th>Veterinarians</th>
<th>Physicians</th>
<th>US Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree / Agree</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suicidal Ideation in past 12 months</th>
<th>Veterinarians</th>
<th>Physicians</th>
<th>US Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout (0-7 scale)</th>
<th>Veterinarians</th>
<th>Physicians</th>
<th>US Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Respondents
## Not a Function of Hours Worked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Weekly Workload</th>
<th>Veterinarians</th>
<th>Physicians</th>
<th>US Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 40 Hours</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 Hours</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 Hours</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69 Hours</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79 Hours</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+ Hours</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: All Respondents*
Attributes Associated with High Burnout

Demographics associated with veterinarians scoring 6 or 7 out for 7, representing statistically significant differences are:

- Female
- Single
- Married, not to a veterinarian
- No children
- Consistently work >46 hours a week
- Work more evenings, weekends, and holidays
- On call more hours than they would like
- Millennials
- Have debt
- Paid by Salary
- Personality scoring higher in Neuroticism
- Food Animal veterinarians are less likely to feel burned out than any other category
Substance Use Disorder
Benchmark Study: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

- Conducted annually since 1971
- Provides information on tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, mental health and other health-related issues in the United States.
- 70,000 people interviewed
- Information from NSDUH supports prevention and treatment programs, monitors substance use trends, and informs public health policy
- NSDUH allows for meaningful comparisons between veterinarians and the general public.
- Comparison cohort: Employed Adults, 25+
### Alcohol Use Similar to Other US Adults; Cannabis Use Slightly Lower

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Veterans</th>
<th>National Survey on Drug Use and Health Benchmark (Employed Adults)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana or Hashish</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs, such as Cocaine, Heroin or Crack</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as LSD, Ecstasy or Magic Mushrooms</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other pain relievers, without a prescription</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other illicit drug or substance</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA3. In the last 30 days have you used...
Base: All Respondents (n=2871)

*Source: 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*

*Indicates a statistically significant difference*
Suicidal Ideation, Planning and Attempts
Prevalence of Suicidal Thoughts and Attempts Similar to 2017 Study

MH6. The next few questions are about thoughts of suicide. At any time have you seriously thought about trying to kill yourself?
MH8. Have you ever tried to kill yourself?
Base: All Respondents [2019 (n=2871), 2017 (n=3527)]

- Indicates a statistically significant difference
## Suicide Ideation, Planning and Attempts Higher in Veterinarians than in the General Population

### In Last 12 months . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thought about killing yourself</th>
<th>7,455 per 100,000</th>
<th>3,600 per 100,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned to kill yourself</td>
<td>1,463 per 100,000</td>
<td>882 per 100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted to kill yourself</td>
<td>174 per 100,000</td>
<td>64 per 100,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MH6. The next few questions are about thoughts of suicide. At any time have you seriously thought about trying to kill yourself?
MH7. Have you ever made plans to kill yourself?
MH8. Have you ever tried to kill yourself?
Base: All Respondents

↑ Indicates a statistically significant difference
## Suicidal Thoughts, Veterinarians v. Non-Vets

### All

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSDUH</td>
<td>7398</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinarians</td>
<td>2614</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Past 12 Months

### By Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Yes</th>
<th>26-34</th>
<th>35-49</th>
<th>50-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSDUH</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinarians</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Past 12 Months

### By Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Yes</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSDUH</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinarians</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Past 12 Months
Important Predictors of Planning Suicide

• Key predictor of suicidal thoughts is serious psychological distress (Kessler 6 Index)
• Serious psychological distress is associated with neuroticism, high debt, and long work hours
  • More typical of younger veterinarians
  • More typical of female veterinarians
Dimensions of Job Satisfaction
Study Examined 14 Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

1. **(Invested)** I am invested in my work and take pride in doing a good job
2. **(Contribution)** My work makes a positive contribution to other people’s lives
3. **(Autonomy)** I decide how I structure my work and how the work gets done
4. **(Flexibility)** I have flexible work hours and can determine the amount of work I do
5. **(Fair Pay)** I think that I am paid fairly and adequately for my work
6. **(Enjoyment)** I am enjoying the work that I do
7. **(Position/Promotion)** I am satisfied with my position and promotion opportunities
8. **(Supervisor)** My supervisor treats me with respect and values my work
9. **(Co-worker)** I have a warm, friendly and supportive relationship with my co-workers
10. **(Work-life Balance)** I have a good balance between my work-life and my personal life
11. **(Absorption)** I am often intensely focused on my work and time goes by quickly
12. **(Learning)** I often learn something new at work
13. **(Negative Climate)** A co-worker or supervisor is creating a negative work environment
14. **(Invigorated)** I feel invigorated after working with clients
Being Invested in Their Work and Making a Contribution Valued Most

- Invested: 8.9
- Contribution: 8.3
- Learning: 7.8
- Enjoyment: 7.6
- Absorption: 7.6
- Co-worker: 7.5
- Autonomy: 6.6
- Position/Promotion: 6.6
- Fair Pay: 6.3
- Supervisor: 5.9
- Work-Life Balance: 5.9
- Invigorated: 5.8
- Flexibility: 5.1
- Negative Climate: 5.1

WB6. Please indicate the degree to which you agree, or disagree, with the statements below
Base: All Respondents (n=2871)
Drivers of Job Satisfaction

• Good work-life balance
  • Biggest differentiator between distressed/not distressed
  • Biggest differentiator of wellbeing
• Enjoying the work
• Being paid fairly
• Having a supportive relationship with co-workers
Work-Life Balance Also a Wellbeing Differentiator

I am invested in my work
My work makes a positive contribution
I am enjoying the work that I do
I often learn something new at work
I am often intensely focused on work
I get along with my co-workers
I am satisfied with my position
I decide how I structure my work
I think that I am paid fairly
I have a good work-life balance
I feel invigorated working with clients
My supervisor treats me with respect
I have flexible work hours
Co-workers create a bad environment

Flourishing (n=1529)  Getting By (n=1058)

WB6. Please indicate the degree to which you agree, or disagree, with the statements below
Base: All Respondents [Veterinarians Flourishing (n=1529), Veterinarians Getting By (n=1058)]

Indicates a statistically significant difference from flourishing veterinarians
### Compensation System Not Significant Factor in Job Satisfaction, Wellbeing or Psychological Distress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Compensation Type</th>
<th>Preferred Compensation Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(production with guaranteed base)</td>
<td>Pro-Sal or similar (production with guaranteed base)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(may or may not include nominal holiday bonus)</td>
<td>Salary only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(may with potential performance bonus)</td>
<td>Salary with potential performance bonus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production or commission only</td>
<td>Production or commission only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Pro-Sal or similar (production with guaranteed base): 42%
- Salary only (may or may not include nominal holiday bonus): 10%
- Salary with potential performance bonus: 45%
- Production or commission only: 3%
- Other: 5%

**CLINIC2.** On what type of system is your compensation based?  
**CLINIC4.** What type of compensation system would you most prefer?  
**Base:** Employed Associates or Medical Directors
**Satisfaction with Various Compensation Systems Similar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compensation System</th>
<th>Extremely satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>Extremely dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Sal (n=485)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production or commission only (n=80)</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary with potential bonus (n=221)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary only (n=390)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** *- Signifies Small Bases

**CLINIC3.** How satisfied are you with this system of compensation...

**Base:** Employed Associates or Medical Directors
Recommending a Career in Veterinary Medicine
**Likelihood to Recommend a Career in Veterinary Medicine Unchanged Since 2017**

**Would Recommend being a Veterinarian**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 (n=2871)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 (n=3540)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**When ‘Don't Know’ is Not an Option**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019 (n=2871)</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Clinic 12.** Would you recommend a career in veterinary medicine to a friend or family member?  
**Clinic 14.** You indicated you were not sure if you would recommend a career in veterinary medicine to a friend or family member. If pressed to give a yes or no answer, would you recommend a career in veterinary medicine?  
**Base:** All Respondents (n=2871)
Leading Reasons for Not Recommending: High Student Debt, Low Pay, Stress

Debt (Student Debt) 50%
Low pay/salary 45%
Stress 29%
Difficult/ungrateful clients 15%
Challenging work/life balance 15%
Emotional strain 13%
Long hours 11%
Hard Work / Overworked 11%
Constant battle to practice quality medicine 9%
Not a rewarding career 7%
Overall not worth it 6%
Spend more time with clients than treating their pets 6%
Work schedule / no vacation time 6%

* Only showing mentions >5%

CLINIC13. You indicated you would not recommend a career in veterinary medicine to a friend or family member, what are the main reasons why?
Base: Respondents who Would Not Recommend a Career in Veterinary Medicine (n=1273)
How to Improve Wellbeing, Mental Health and Job Satisfaction
Talk About It

- Every practice should discuss stress and mental health frequently and encourage people to seek help if needed.
- Facts show veterinary medicine is an emotionally distressing profession.
- Feelings of burnout are common.
- Easy to feel: “I’m the only one”
- Discussion gives people permission to acknowledge their feelings; remove stigma

MH9. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements using the scale provided.

Base: All Respondents [Not-distressed Veterinarians (n=2657), Distressed Veterinarians (n=199)]
What can you do as an individual?

- Determine insurance coverage for mental health
- Take advantage of Employee Assistance Programs if one exists
- Utilize tele-behavioral health solutions to make access to mental healthcare more flexible, inexpensive, and time efficient
  - E-counseling.com
  - 7cups.com
- Take Kessler 6 testing ([www.vetwellbeing.com](http://www.vetwellbeing.com))
- Complete the Workplace Wellbeing Certificate Program ([www.axon.avma.org](http://www.axon.avma.org))
What can employers do?
Improve Access and Awareness to Help

• Consider an Employee Assistance Program program if one doesn’t already exist
  • VHMA and Alera Veterinary offer an affordable EAP
• Engage tele-behavioral health solutions to make access to mental healthcare more flexible, inexpensive, and time efficient
  • E-counseling.com
  • 7cups.com
• Encourage Kessler 6 testing (www.vetwellbeing.com)
• Encourage/ incentivize employees to take Workplace Wellbeing Certificate Program (www.axon.avma.org)
• Invite mental health professionals and financial planners to speak at practice meetings regularly
In times of Crisis

• Dial 9-1-1 if you suspect someone may be a danger to themselves or others.

• Dial 9-8-8, new suicide prevention hotline (in development) or 1-800-273-TALK
  • Post NSPL poster in break room

• Type “mobile crisis” into search engine for assistance with mental health crisis in virtually every community

• Text “Hello” to 741741 for access to a trained crisis counselor
Have a Stress Management Plan

• A stress management plan is a major differentiator
  • Between those without serious psychological distress and those with
  • Between Flourishing and Getting By veterinarians

• Don’t leave school without it!
• For a list of techniques, visit vetwellbeing.com

I have a healthy method for dealing with stress in my life

- Not Distressed (n=2657): 0.8107
- Distressed (n=199): 0.2945
- Flourishing (n=1529): 0.8909
- Getting By (n=1058): 0.70
- Suffering (n=284): 0.37

0% 100% 200% 300% 400%

0.8107 0.2945 0.8909 0.70 0.37

Have a Stress Management Plan

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- Getting By (n=1058): 0.70
- Suffering (n=284): 0.37

0% 100% 200% 300% 400%

0.8107 0.2945 0.8909 0.70 0.37
Balance Work and Healthy Activities

- Reduces burnout
- Improves wellbeing
- Reduces serious psychological distress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not Distressed (%)</th>
<th>Distressed (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spend time with family</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking, Walking, Sports</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialize with Friends</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time on a hobby</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep at least 8 hours</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read for pleasure</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditate</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Veterinary Wellbeing Study 57
Balance Work and Healthy Activities

Study after study shows that good social relationships are the strongest, most consistent predictor there is of a happy life, even going so far as to call them a “necessary condition for happiness,” meaning that humans can’t actually be happy without them. This is a finding that cuts across race, age, gender, income and social class so overwhelmingly that it dwarfs any other factor.

Ruth Whippman, author of "The Pursuit of Happiness" and "America the Anxious"; in NY Times
Engage a Financial Planner

Significantly reduces the risk of serious psychological distress

MH1. Results based on results of Kessler 6.
Base: All Respondents

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between categories

Veterinary Wellbeing Study 59
Mental Health
Financial Planning Has a Positive Impact on Wellbeing

Wellbeing Index
Base: All Respondents

- Indicates a statistically significant difference between categories

Veterinary Wellbeing Study 60
Wellbeing

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Financial Planning & Counseling Resources

• Student debt help: VIN Foundation Student Debt Center
  • vinfoundation.org/resources/student-debt-center/

• Financial Planning: National Association of Personal Financial Advisors
  • NAPFA.org
  • Fee-based financial planners

• Pro bono financial counseling
  • NAPFA Foundation (napfafoundation.org)
  • Financial Planning Association (onefpa.org/advocacy/Pages/Pro_Bono_Financial_Planning.aspx)
  • National Foundation for Credit Counseling (nfcc.org)
Limit time on Social Media

- More time **negatively** associated with mental health and high wellbeing
- Social media **isn't** socializing
  - It’s spending time alone with your computer
- The more time on social media, the greater exposure to cyberbullying

### Time on Social Media

**Distressed v. Not Distressed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time on Social Media</th>
<th>All Veterinarians (n=2871)</th>
<th>Female (n=2008)</th>
<th>Male (n=855)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 minutes/day</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 30 minutes/day</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 60 minutes/day</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 hours/day</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 hours/day</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prevalence of Cyberbullying

- **Not Distressed (n=2657)**
- **Distressed (n=199)**

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 hours/day</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 hours/day</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Yes, within the past 12 months**
- **Yes, but not within the past 12 months**
- **No**
- **Prefer not to answer/NA**

**Veterinary Wellbeing Study**

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Questions
For more information:

www.vetwellbeing.com
Thank You!