

SMALL ANIMAL EPIDEMIOLOGY – WHERE NEXT?



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The issue

Small animal epidemiology is a growing area of veterinary research that has gained significant momentum in the last 10 years. Clinicians are increasingly aware that the animal in their consulting room is representative of a larger pet population. The profession is demanding more relevant scientific research to aid clinical decision making and ultimately improve the health and welfare of animals under their care. The need for research in this area is great as there are huge knowledge gaps in our understanding of the commonly occurring diseases in the UK pet population.

Why?

- Currently there is limited contact between researchers and clinical practitioners.
- There is little research undertaken in first opinion small animal practice.
- The research performed is not often effectively fed back into practices and applied to the management of patients on a daily basis.
- Much of the veterinary literature involves studies with very few animals or focus on rare diseases; subsequently, it is often difficult to generalise such studies to the pet population as a whole.

What needs to be done?

1. Systematic reviews of the current literature

What evidence do we already have?
 How reliable is this evidence?



2. Define the pet population in the UK

How many pets are there in the United Kingdom?
 Where are they located?
 How many of them visit veterinary practices?

3. Access practice databases

Can we obtain data from practices relating to the whole vet visiting population versus the individual patient?
 How accurate are the data?

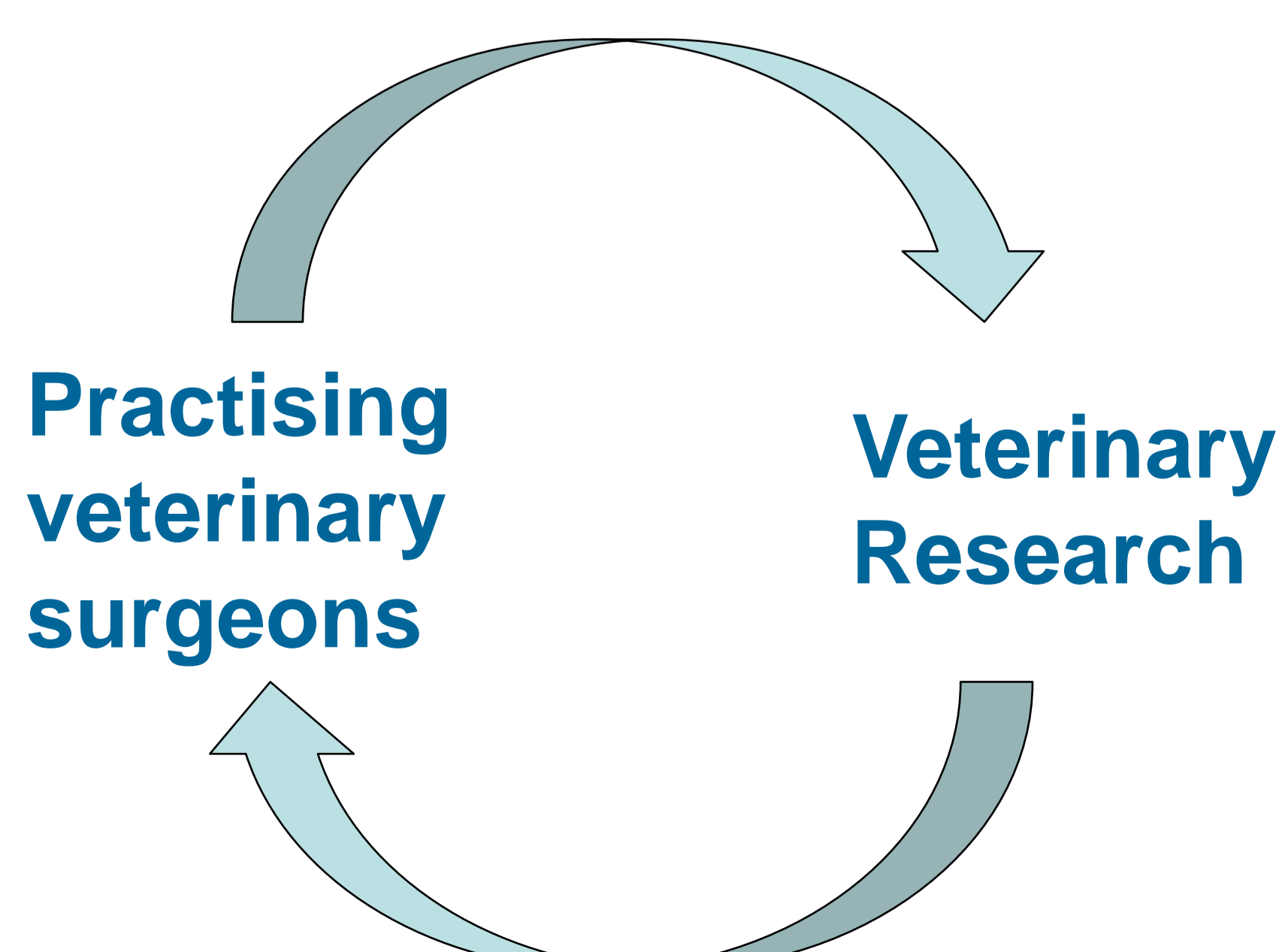


4. Identify the diseases that commonly affect the UK pet population

Are common things really common?
 How common is common?

How can we achieve these goals?

- At the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, University of Nottingham, a **Centre for Evidence Based Veterinary Medicine** has been established.
- Our aims are:
 - To facilitate a network of systematic reviews in key areas of small animal medicine using Cochrane-based methods.
 - To conduct robust research in first opinion small animal veterinary practice and generate evidence on common diseases.
 - To collate and make accessible accurate data about the UK pet population.
 - To disseminate the results to the veterinary profession.
 - To aid the implementation of evidence based veterinary medicine in everyday clinical practice to improve the health and welfare of small animals.



Evidence Based Veterinary Medicine

- ✓ Practising vets and their patients drive research areas
- ✓ Research feeds back into clinical practice

The future is **BRIGHT**