

Veterinary socio-psychological epidemiology

A new discipline for an old problem?

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Definition

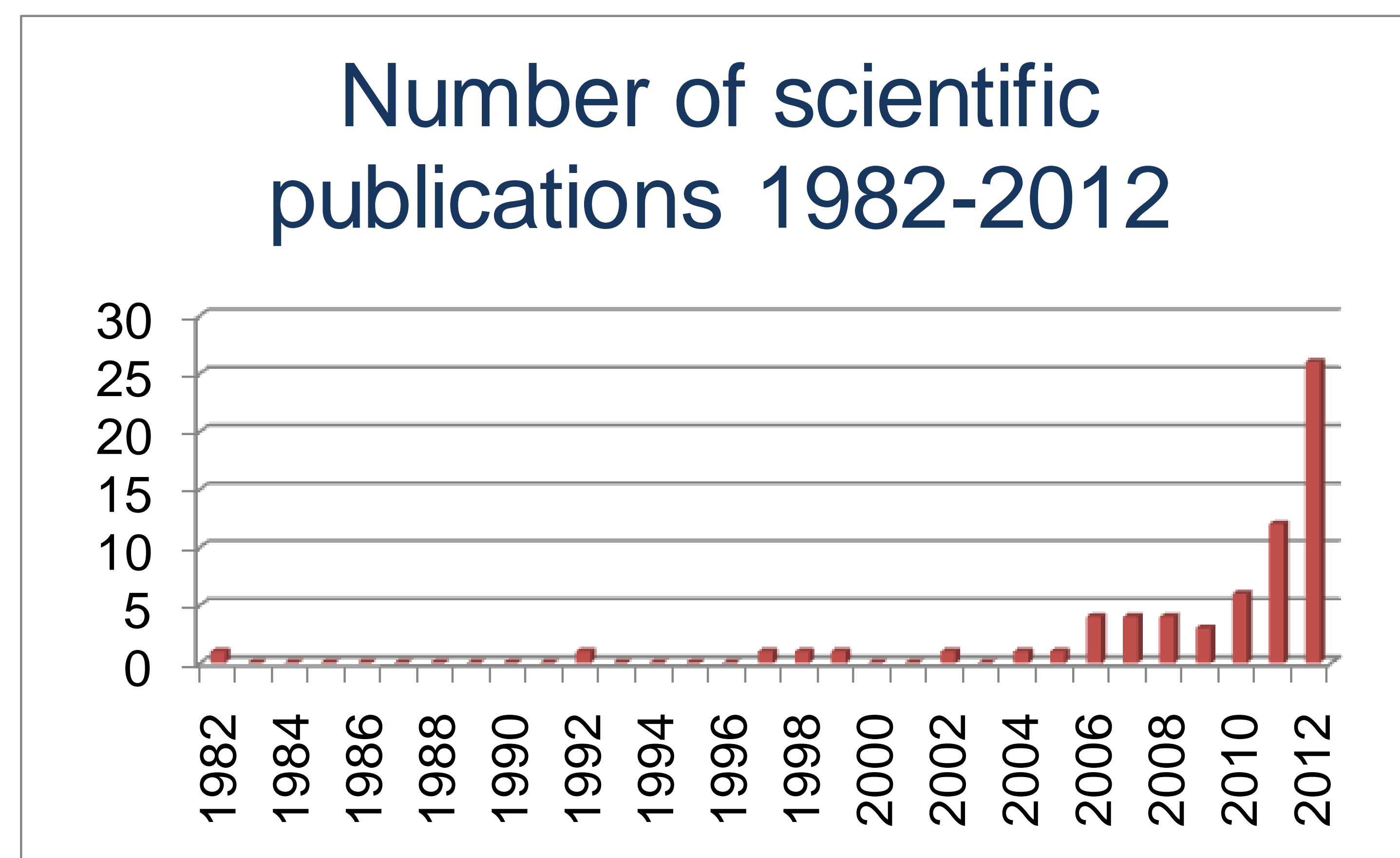
Animal health control is making choices at animal, herd, farm, regional and national level between alternative monitoring and control strategies. As choices are essentially made by humans, the study of human decisions in this domain will provide relevant insights.

Socio-psychological veterinary epidemiology is the study of the behaviour, of farmers, advisers and veterinarians and others, in order to facilitate the development and diffusion of effective monitoring and control strategies.

Aim of this study

As SPVE is growing into a popular discipline, this study meta-analyses past studies with a view to identify common results, knowledge gaps and methodological challenges that are relevant for future studies.

We reviewed and meta-analyzed 70 studies, using content analysis and vote count analysis



Preliminary results

Barriers

- Low compatibility with production system
- Not perceived as farmers' responsibility
- Perception of low efficacy
- Low problem awareness
- Control practices not suited for untrained farmers
- Previous bad experience

Motivators

- Low compatibility with production system
- Not perceived as farmers' responsibility
- Perception of low efficacy
- Low problem awareness
- Subsidy
- Disease control to prevent production loss
- Animal welfare
- Social norms

And

- Differences between type of disease e.g., endemic production disease control is regarded as farmers' responsibility, contrary to the control of food-borne diseases: *"On-farm bio-security measures are an externally imposed solution to an externally created problem"*
- Influence of social actors
- Unique and very important role of veterinarian in on-farm health control

Recommendations

- Qualitative research can identify a broad pattern of motivators and influences
- Quantitative research can test strength of relationship and monitor changes in motivations. However,
 - many papers claim to assess attitude while not using the terms and methods appropriately
 - veterinary socio-psychological epidemiology should embrace recent developments in social psychology
 - avoid becoming a pathological discipline

Three areas of progress

- Veterinary socio-psychological epidemiology should not become a pathological discipline
 - Apply the methods and tools appropriately
 - Take into consideration the right use of terms and definitions
- Integration of social and veterinarian epidemiology into combined models for the identification of risk factors
- Inter-disciplinary research between veterinary socio-psychological epidemiology with human epidemiology
 - Consider all stages of animal production-consumption chain (farmers, veterinarians, processors, transport, retailers, consumers)