

Table 1: Veterinary clinic environment: factors believed to affect animal welfare in the veterinary clinic environment, arranged according to theme. Each factor is listed with their perceived mean relative impact score (RIS), improvability score (% agreement), and measurability score (% agreement). Factors identified through literature searches rather than by survey participants are identified with an asterisk.

Themes key: CM - clinic management; PE - physical environment; RAC- routine animal care; I - patient/staff/client interactions; MSP – medical and surgical procedures; SAE - staff attitudes and education; O - other.

Theme	Factor	Mean RIS (/4)	Improvable (% Y)	(95% CI)	Measurable (% Y)	(95% CI)
CM	Species-specific practice adaptations	3.3	71%	55-83%	66%	49-80%
CM	Clear communication amongst all staff members	3.3	97%	86-100%	68%	51-82%
CM	Established, written protocols and procedures and staff familiarity with these protocols and procedures	3.3	97%	86-100%	92%	79-98%
CM	Availability of financial payment plans	3.0	66%	49-79%	79%	63-90%
CM	Clinic focus: high volume vs. client-centered*	2.9	74%	58-86%	66%	49-79%
CM	Staff size and efficiency	2.9	84%	69-93%	95%	82-99%
CM	Time allotted for each appointment (appointment length)	2.7	82%	66-91%	87%	72-95%
PE	Provision of easily accessible necessities (e.g. food, water, litter box)*	3.7	100%	91-100%	92%	79-98%
PE	Space allowance appropriate for medical treatment, considering need for observation, injury prevention	3.5	92%	79-98%	87%	73-95%
PE	Cage furnishings appropriate for medical treatment, considering need for observation, injury prevention	3.5	92%	79-98%	82%	66-91%
PE	Thermal comfort: temperature, humidity	3.4	97%	86-100%	90%	75-96%
PE	Auditory stimulation	3.4	84%	69-93%	84%	69-93%
PE	Ventilation and air quality*	3.2	90%	75-96%	84%	69-93%
PE	Surface traction (e.g. exam table, clinic floors)	3.2	100%	91-100%	84%	69-93%
PE	Olfactory stimulation	3.1	82%	66-91%	55%	40-70%
PE	Physical, visual separation of animals	2.9	90%	75-96%	79%	63-90%
PE	General cleanliness of clinic, all surfaces	2.8	97%	86-100%	90%	75-96%
PE	Special consideration for euthanasia, special cases	2.8	90%	75-96%	81%	65-91%
PE	Lighting: level, composition	2.7	90%	75-96%	82%	66-91%
RAC	Provision and nature of positive human interactions, where appropriate	3.4	87%	73-95%	63%	47-77%
RAC	Appropriate light/dark phases	2.9	73%	57-86%	60%	43-75%
RAC	Provision of playtime/outdoor access/time outside cage, where appropriate	2.8	78%	62-90%	70%	54-83%
RAC	Change in routine from home environment	2.7	66%	49-79%	53%	37-69%
I	Staff adapts, changes behaviour and approach in response to animal's reaction	3.7	97%	86-100%	71%	55-83%
I	Physical restraint	3.6	92%	79-98%	74%	58-86%
I	Social stress: presence/sight of aggressive animals	3.5	76%	60-87%	54%	38-69%

I	'Vet fear': unfamiliar people, unfamiliar manipulations	3.4	68%	51-82%	55%	40-71%
I	Use of positive reinforcement to reduce fear	3.4	97%	86-100%	74%	58-86%
I	Vocal tones used by staff	3.3	92%	79-98%	54%	38-69%
I	Staff asks appropriate questions about animal's behaviour and welfare	3.3	92%	79-98%	71%	55-83%
I	Staff allows patient time to acclimate to environment, staff prior to attempting any interaction	3.3	71%	55-83%	65%	49-79%
I	Presence, proximity and/or interactions with other animals in clinic and clinic surroundings	3.2	81%	65-91%	60%	43-75%
I	Staff ensures that client feels comfortable asking and answering questions, presenting concerns	3.2	92%	79-98%	68%	51-82%
I	Client emotion (e.g. sad, stressed)	3.1	60%	43-75%	32%	18-49%
I	Staff encourages client to socialize patient to clinic*	3.0	92%	79-98%	79%	63-90%
I	Restraint during travel to clinic, while waiting (e.g. in carrier)	3.0	66%	49-79%	53%	37-69%
I	Explanation of actions, procedures throughout exams	2.8	100%	91-100%	79%	63-90%
MSP	Optimization of analgesic regimes	3.8	97%	86-100%	84%	69-93%
MSP	Use of anaesthetic for surgeries, minor procedures*	3.7	97%	86-100%	92%	79-98%
MSP	Use of sedatives/anxiolytics, calming agents as needed and where appropriate	3.2	92%	79-98%	68%	51-82%
MSP	Use of diverse handling and medicating techniques	3.2	97%	86-100%	82%	66-91%
MSP	Illness or other adverse effects (malaise, itch) induced by examination and medical treatment	3.0	66%	49-79%	50%	34-66%
MSP	Prior training (at home) for medical exam, treatment, any post-procedural restrictions	3.0	71%	55-83%	53%	37-69%
SAE	Ability to recognize, evaluate and interpret species-specific animal behaviours (e.g. pain, fear)	3.8	100%	91-100%	82%	66-91%
SAE	Staff experience*	3.6	82%	66-91%	74%	58-86%
SAE	Knowledge, understanding and use of positive reinforcement, species-specific handling techniques	3.5	100%	91-100%	84%	68-93%
SAE	Staff demeanour (e.g. patient, non-threatening, compassionate)	3.5	92%	79-98%	62%	46-77%
SAE	Ongoing staff training and continuing education	3.4	100%	91-100%	84%	69-93%
O	Health state of patient: nature of disease, duration of treatment, feelings of illness (nausea, malaise)	3.5	71%	54-85%	50%	34-66%
O	Past clinic experiences (either positive or negative)	3.2	63%	47-77%	37%	23-53%
O	Visitation for owners of hospitalized patients	3.0	90%	75-96%	76%	61-87%
O	(Lack of) sense of control: over self, preferred environment, escape	2.9	45%	30-61%	21%	10-37%
O	Separation from owner, other con-specifics during treatment, isolation for disease control	2.9	61%	44-75%	50%	34-66%
O	Novel spaces: unfamiliar objects, unknown escape routes, different fixtures	2.6	48%	31-63%	41%	25-57%
O	Clinic availability, proximity: affects travel time from home to clinic	2.2	29%	17-45%	47%	32-64%
O	Use of alternative medicine, alternative medical diagnosis	1.8	42%	27-58%	53%	37-69%
O	Reproduction limited (during time in clinic)	1.0	14%	6-28%	24%	13-39%

Table 3: Home environment: veterinary-related factors believed to impact animal welfare in the animal's home environment, arranged according to theme. Each factor is listed with their perceived mean relative impact score (RIS), improvability score (% agreement), and measurability score (% agreement). Factors identified through literature searches rather than by survey participants are identified with an asterisk.

Theme key: MSP – medical and surgical procedures; SAE - staff attitudes and education; VCC – veterinarian-client communication; O - other.

Theme	Factor	Mean RIS (/4)	Improvable		Measurable	
			(% Y)	(95% CI)	(% Y)	(95% CI)
MSP	Post-surgical/chronic pain control	3.8	97%	86-100%	84%	69-93%
MSP	Complications and side effects of therapies	3.3	79%	63-90%	73%	57-86%
MSP	Proper follow-up	3.3	90%	75-96%	70%	54-83%
MSP	Individualized post-procedural recommendations	3.2	87%	73-95%	45%	30-61%
MSP	Pre-training at home for medical requirements, physical examination	3.0	84%	69-93%	54%	38-69%
MSP	Post-operative movement restrictions	3.0	82%	66-91%	66%	49-79%
MSP	Distress associated with medicating, invasiveness of post-procedure recommendations	2.9	90%	75-96%	63%	47-77%
SAE	Staff knowledge, understanding of animal behaviour, behavioural problems	3.6	97%	86-100%	76%	60-87%
SAE	Staff ability and willingness to answer questions and provide information	3.4	100%	91-100%	79%	63-90%
SAE	Staff assumptions concerning client's knowledge base	3.0	90%	75-96%	57%	41-72%
VCC	Communication: appropriate socialization, training, handling	3.7	95%	82-99%	68%	51-82%
VCC	Communication: animal needs	3.6	95%	82-99%	75%	58-87%
VCC	Communication: judging quality of life & signs of declining health	3.6	95%	82-99%	54%	38-69%
VCC	Communication: basic animal behaviour	3.5	95%	82-99%	81%	64-91%
VCC	Communication: veterinary preventive care	3.5	97%	86-100%	84%	69-93%
VCC	Communication: end of life issues, euthanasia	3.4	95%	82-99%	63%	47-77%
VCC	Communication: basic daily care	3.4	97%	86-100%	81%	65-91%
VCC	Communication: companionship from human and non-human sources	3.3	84%	69-93%	58%	42-73%
VCC	Communication: controversial procedures, unnecessary surgery (e.g. cosmetic procedures)	3.1	97%	86-100%	73%	57-86%
VCC	Communication: appropriate sources of information	3.1	86%	72-95%	60%	43-75%
VCC	Communication: availability of pre-purchase counselling *	3.0	76%	61-87%	49%	32-65%
VCC	Communication: impact of unhealthy owner habits, cleanliness and ventilation of home environment	2.9	63%	47-77%	32%	19-49%
VCC	Communication: transmissible, infectious, zoonotic disease	2.8	92%	79-98%	73%	57-86%
VCC	Communication: availability of pre-breeding counselling*	2.5	84%	69-93%	60%	43-75%
O	Chronic illness/medication and client reluctance to euthanize	3.6	76%	61-87%	47%	31-63%

O	Owner's acceptance of and compliance with veterinarian's advice and suggestions	3.4	76%	61-87%	51%	35-68%
O	Personification of animals	2.8	40%	25-56%	34%	21-51%
O	Reintroduction issues	2.4	61%	44-75%	43%	28-60%