

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CURRICULUMS OF SCHOOLS OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Schools of veterinary medicine throughout the nation currently are conducting searching examinations of their teaching programs. Teaching and learning in these schools is being scrutinized in greater detail than at any other period in the history of veterinary medical education. Good teaching is acquiring new respectability and, in turn, faculty interest in excellence in teaching has increased a great deal.

New curriculums are being developed by most schools of veterinary medicine throughout the nation. Our School adopted a new curriculum in 1966 designed to better prepare graduates to fulfill the needs of the profession as the medical specialist who deals with diseases in all species of animals. We have concentrated on providing a fundamental education on the biology and disease of all kinds of animals to make it easier for veterinarians to adapt to the constantly changing nature of the profession. It also will better prepare them for the lifelong learning that is absolutely essential in order to keep up with developments in the profession.

Veterinary medical educational programs already firmly established at the graduate level are providing opportunities for the first time for graduates to concentrate in certain disciplines, and hence acquire greater depth of knowledge in certain aspects of veterinary medical science. More responsibility is being placed upon the student in the learning process. More time is being made available for self-learning activities, such as library study, work in instructional resources centers, more clinical study and more thorough work-up of cases, individual research projects and other similar types of self-study programs. A greater proportion of the class time is being devoted to discussions, seminars, workshops and problem-solving exercises rather than to lectures on materials that, in many instances, could be better obtained from textbooks, journals and other sources.

One of the most important changes in veterinary medical curriculums is the effort to condition the graduate for lifelong learning. The D.V.M. can hope to obtain little more than an understanding of biology and diseases of animals and an introduction to clinical veterinary medical science while in school. The rest he must learn after graduation. Hence, one of the most important aspects of his education should be the attainment of proficiency in the skills of self-learning, the methods of finding answers, the techniques of problem-solving, and the motivation to continue to grow professionally for the remainder of his life. The incorporation of more self-learning techniques in the veterinary medical curriculums should assist in developing habits that will lead to successful lifelong learning. It must be remembered that all of these innovations increase the cost of education.

Educational Resources

Many veterinary medical schools are beginning to incorporate in their teaching programs more of the important advances that have been made in the science and technology of education during the past few years. Programmed learning, new audio-visual techniques, greater use of models, computer-assisted educational programs and other innovations are being used to an ever increasing extent to improve the efficiency and quality of the veterinary medical educational process. Several schools are planning the development of medical education departments. Some are being developed in cooperation with schools of human medicine. It is the avowed intention of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges and the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association to constantly improve the educational program of the U.S. Schools of veterinary medicine. Symposia and seminars on veterinary medical education are being held throughout the country in ever increasing numbers. This intense interest in the improvement of veterinary medical education is one of the most refreshing developments in veterinary medical schools that has occurred in the last half century.

SUMMARY

In summary, veterinary medicine has made and will continue to make important contributions to the advancement of biomedical science. New knowledge about animal biology, diseases and disease processes is being obtained as a result of research being carried out in veterinary medical institutions. Studies on animal diseases that are similar to afflictions of people provide a highly unique