

Knowledge and Attitude about Veterinary Physiotherapy among Sri Lankan Veterinary Undergraduates

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Veterinary physiotherapy is an established profession and mainly focuses on the physiotherapy assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of animals. It is regulated globally but is not widely practiced in Sri Lanka. Expanding the knowledge and attitude about veterinary physiotherapy in Sri Lanka could play a crucial role in advancing the practice in the country. Veterinary physiotherapists receive referrals from veterinary surgeons to facilitate the proper rehabilitation. Hence, this study focused on evaluating the knowledge and attitudes about veterinary physiotherapy among all veterinary medicine undergraduates reading in Sri Lankan government universities in 2022. A cross-sectional study was conducted using a self-constructed and pretested electronic-based questionnaire, which was analysed using the statistical software SPSS (V26). The knowledge was assessed with five Likert scale questions. The attitude was assessed with seven questions, including yes-or-no questions and multiple-choice questions. The response rate was 71.24%. Of the 218 participants, the majority of undergraduates (88.99%) possessed adequate knowledge of veterinary physiotherapists' responsibilities and adequate knowledge in specialised areas (40.83%), manipulative (40.83%), electrotherapy (46.33%), and mobilisation (47.25%). Among them, final-year and third-year undergraduates displayed the highest knowledge about specialised areas (>50.0%), physiotherapist's responsibilities (>84.0%), and treatment methods (>52.0%). Participants believed that veterinary physiotherapy is beneficial for animal health (94.96%) and were interested in adding more about veterinary physiotherapy to their curriculum (96.79%). The majority of participants would like to continue the same as their postgraduate studies (82.11%). There was no significant linear relationship observed among academic years in terms of knowledge levels, while attitudes were consistent across batches. The study indicated that adequate knowledge exists among students on veterinary physiotherapy, while students exhibited a positive inclination towards the benefits, prescription, study preference, and effectiveness of veterinary physiotherapy. This study paves a pathway to adding more knowledge to veterinary undergraduates regarding veterinary physiotherapy.

Keywords: Attitude, Knowledge, Sri Lanka, Veterinary Physiotherapy, Veterinary Undergraduate