
FACTORS INFLUENCING OWNERS' WILLING TO PAY FOR VETERINARY MEDICINE SERVICES FOR PET DOGS: A PILOT STUDY (POSTER)

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The field of veterinary medicine has been changing dramatically over recent decades, as society changes its perspective on animals. Throughout human history, people have seen animals as a resource; now we are seeing them as companions or friends. A way to measure this changing perspective is to look at the amount of money that people are willing to spend on their pets. This study looked at dogs, in particular, and utilized a survey method to analyze factors that could influence people's willingness to pay for veterinary medicine services. Factor analyzed included the severity of the condition (life-saving aspect of surgery), likelihood of normal recovery, age of the dog, income level of owner, amount of owner's dog experience, and whether the owner was a health professional of any kind. Results: People were more willing to pay when the surgery was life-saving and when there was high likelihood of recovery. People were willing to pay more for younger dogs. Not surprisingly, there was a positive correlation between income level and owners' willingness to pay for veterinary services. Amount of experience with dogs had a varied effect on willingness to spend. It appeared that the owners' connection with health care professions also had an impact, although it did not reach statistical significance: those that were connected to the healthcare fields seemed more likely to pay. This study has implications for the practice of veterinary medicine today.