

## CORRELATION OF WORKING CONDITION AND JOB COMMITMENT AMONG VETERINARIANS IN KERALA

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### **Abstract**

*The present study reveals the correlation between working condition and job commitment of veterinarians. The study was conducted among the veterinarians of the Department of Animal Husbandry, Kerala. Data were collected using structured questionnaire among 45 senior veterinary surgeons and 155 veterinary surgeons. Result of study indicated that there was negative and highly significant correlation between stress due to working condition and job commitment. Result also revealed that majority of the respondents had moderate level of stress due to unfavourable working condition. A better understanding of the stressors in veterinary practice may allow identification of strategies to improve the working conditions of veterinarians with resulting benefits for the quality of veterinary health care.*

**Key words :** working condition , job commitment, stressors, veterinarians

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## **Introduction**

Stress in life can originate from ones job, organization and society or from within one's self. In an organization, human behavior depends on several factors which can be physical, social and psychological. The key to understanding the integration of an individual with an organization is the role assigned to him within the overall structure of the organisation. Veterinarians of the Department of Animal Husbandry play a major role is in carrying out various developmental activities in this sector. They have been traditionally involved in treatment of animals and of late they have the additional responsibility of carrying out project work associated with implementation of schemes in the animal husbandry sector in the panchayat where they work. Consequently the responsibility and work load of an average veterinarian has increased considerably and the veterinarian is placed in a position where he has to play more than one role. Thus from the point of view of the organization it is important to study the present working condition of the veterinarians in the state and its influence on job commitment. Numerous studies have been conducted about stress and burnout in the healthcare professionals however there are few formal studies about stress among veterinarians (Hansez *et al.* 2008). Stress has a cost for individuals in terms of health wellbeing and job dissatisfaction as well as for the organization concerned in terms of absenteeism and turnover which in turns may impact upon the quality of patient care. A better understanding of the stressors in veterinary practice may allow identification of strategies to improve the working conditions of veterinarians with resulting benefits for the quality of veterinary health care.

## **Materials and Methodology**

The questionnaire technique was adopted in this study. A list of 135 senior veterinary surgeons and 460 veterinary surgeons of Department of Animal Husbandry, Kerala who perform clinical as well as extension project functions was prepared. A structured questionnaire was prepared by consulting the veterinarians of Animal Husbandry Department itself and sent to all by mail. A total of 47 senior veterinary surgeons and 170 veterinary surgeons returned the filled up questionnaire .Incomplete and carelessly filled questionnaire were discarded. The final study sample hence consisted of 155 veterinary surgeons and 45 senior veterinary surgeons .

## **Result**

Table 1 Distribution of the respondents based on levels of stress due to the dimension working condition

N=200

No	Category	Percentage
1.	<11(Low)	13.5
2.	11-18( Medium)	53.5
3.	>18 (High)	33
Total		100

Data in the table 1 indicate that majority of the respondents (53.5%) had moderate level of stress on account of the prevailing working conditions, while 33 per cent and 13.5 per cent had reported high and low level of stress respectively due to working condition (Fig.1).

Table 2 Item-wise mean scores of dimension- Working conditions

No	Statements	Mean Score
1	Many at times I am not able to diagnose diseases well since my hospital lacks basic facilities like good quality microscopes.	2.51
2	Many at time I am required to perform operation in open places since my hospital lacks the facility of a field level operation theatre/ suitable room	2.51
3	Due to lack of supporting staff in my hospital I am often overburdened with lot of clerical work	2.51
4	Lack of resources such as, gloves, water etc makes working in the hospital difficult	2.10
5	I find my job inconvenient especially when I have to attend cases at odd hours and at inaccessible places	2.00
6	I find it difficult to work in my hospital due to lack of space	1.60
7	Keeping vaccines in the hospital is difficult due to refrigerator problems	1.53

Details of the items under the dimension working conditions is given in table 2. The result shows that failure to be able to effectively diagnose disease condition due to lack of basic facilities, the necessity to have to perform operations in open places due to lack of field level operation theatres/facilities and lack of supporting clerical staff were factors that were

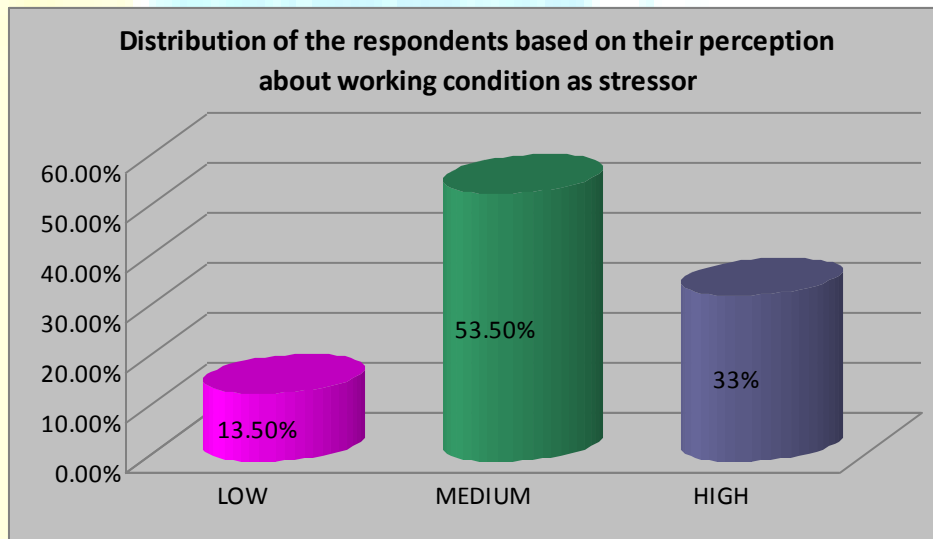
perceived to be equally stressful under working conditions and these were followed by poor physical resources such as gloves and running water, attending cases at odd hours and lack of space and lack of facilities for storing vaccines in that order.

Table 3 Relationship between stressors on the work place and job commitment

Correlation coefficient	Regression coefficient	Standard error	t-value
-0.148*	0.112	0.290	0.385

Data from table 3 indicate that work condition had negative and high significant correlation with job commitment. The data was subjected to multiple regression analysis.

Fig. 1 Distribution of the respondents based on their perception about working condition as stressor



### Discussion

The findings of the present study revealed that majority of the respondents (53.5%) felt medium level of stress due to working condition while 33 and 13.5 per cent respectively felt high and low levels of stress. Veterinary practice is relatively very different from human practice as the former requires restraining an animal and this could be a major source of stress if facilities are lacking. Lack of good microscopes, operation theatre facility and shortage of supporting staff for clerical work were felt as important stressors under the dimension working condition. Hansen *et al.* (2008) observed that in addition to routine clinical practice Belgian veterinarians

were also tied up with administrative work. The authors suggested that some extra help in administrative work could be one measure in improving well being at work in the veterinary profession. Rejula *et al.* (2003) also observed that administrative duties were important stressors among Finnish veterinarians. Kazmi *et al.* (2008) observed that lack of resources contributed significantly to job stress among medical house officers. So also Salleh *et al.* (2003) observed that resource inadequacy was a source of stress.

Lack of enough diagnostic and physical facilities are important factors influencing the outcome of clinical cases and these could significantly affect the respondent's job satisfaction. Hansen *et al.* (2008) observed that difficulties in diagnosis was a risk associated with the veterinary profession and in turn an important stressor to veterinarians. Lack of good quality microscope, operation theatre facility and shortage of supporting staff for clerical work were important stressors under the dimension working condition revealed in the present study. Kazmi *et al.* (2008) observed that lack of resources contributed significantly to job stress among medical house officers. However the results of this study are contrary to those of Kipping (2000) who reported that only two per cent of mental health nurses commented that physical environment of the work place was a source of stress. Veterinary practice is relatively very different from human practice as the former requires restraining an animal and this could be a major source of stress if facilities are lacking as mentioned elsewhere. Nevertheless, inconvenience on the job due to cases at odd hours viz-a-viz at inaccessible places as well as lack of space in the hospital was perceived by the respondents as less stressful. The findings of the present study are endorsed by those of Hansen *et al.* (2008) who observed that the unpredictable nature of veterinary working schedule lead all veterinary practitioners, especially bovine and mixed practitioners to be on a standby mode regularly. Further, the authors opined that veterinary surgeons had to be easily reachable by phone most of the time and thus they did not feel free. This study also shows that stress due to working condition and job commitment has negative correlation. It was supported by Vanaki (2009). The author revealed that there was negative correlation between job commitment and unfavourable work condition among nurses.

### **Conclusion**

Result of the study indicated that majority of the veterinarians in Animal Husbandry department in Kerala feels medium level of stress due to unfavourable working condition and it has negative effect on job commitment. There are many factors that leads to stress in work place.

Better understanding of these stressors may help to improve the working condition and thereby improve the work efficiency of veterinarians in the state.

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