

Familiarity and Accessibility of the Report Centre  
“Professional Acting and Animal Welfare” of the Faculty of  
Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University

- Research project -

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## 1. Abstract

Veterinary professionals are often troubled by ethical and moral conflicts. Often these conflicts are caused by diverging interests between animals and other parties like animal owners, employers, farmers and the governance. The result of such conflicts may be a compromise of animal welfare. To provide support in these situations, the Faculty of Veterinary medicine, Utrecht University, started an intern report centre for “Professional acting and animal welfare” on September 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2013.

A questionnaire survey was conducted among co-workers and students from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Aim of the study was to determine to which extent the intern report centre “Professional acting and animal welfare” was familiar and accessible to co-workers and students. To determine the accessibility respondents were asked about their willingness to report in case of three fictional scenarios. These scenarios presented situations where one or more co-workers acted unprofessionally with consequences for animal welfare. Also respondents were asked about reasons that could withhold them from reporting. At last respondents were asked about their experiences with situations of unprofessional acting with consequences for animal welfare in the past year.

A total of 600 questionnaires were returned by 242 (29%) co-workers and 358 (25%) students. More than half (61%) of co-workers and half (51%) of students responded to be familiar with the report centre. Based on three fictional scenarios most co-workers (59%) and most students (66%) responded they would or probably would report to the report centre. From this research we learned about a very contradictory association: respondents were less willing to report as they were more exposed to situations that could be reported.

The majority of co-workers (77%) and students (90%) mentioned to have reasons that could withhold them from reporting. Most mentioned reasons were wanting to maintain a good relationship with others and worrying about possible personal consequences like negative effects on their career or graduation. Also don't wanting to disadvantage the person involved was often mentioned. Reasons to report to the report centre were having a possibility to improve the situation in case it was not possible to discuss it within the department and because of the confidentiality. Also some comments were made about thinking it would be helpful to involve someone from outside the department.

17% of co-workers and 25,9% of students responded they have witnessed one or more situations of unprofessional acting with consequences for animal welfare in the past year. According to the respondents, the most effective reaction to a witnessed situation was addressing the issue to the person responsible for the unprofessional acting. However only half of co-workers and a third of students reacted this way in case of their last witnessed situation. Second most effective was discussing the situation with a manager, but only one out of four respondents acted this way. Discussing the situation within the department is advisable in first instance. However, some respondents commented they would not discuss a situation within the department because they were afraid of personal consequences like losing their job. Students responded they would find it very difficult to criticize their teacher. For these cases the report centre could also be of importance because of the confidentiality.

## 2. Introduction

Veterinary professionals have to do with many different parties, including the animals, animal owners, their employers, farmers and the governance. The interests of these parties often diverge, in this case it is not possible to act in the interests of all these parties. Ethical and moral conflicts can arise when the interests of animals and one of the other parties collide. The result of such dilemmas may be a compromise of animal welfare.<sup>20</sup>

### *Animal welfare*

Animal welfare is a much discussed subject. There are different approaches to describe animal welfare. Often the five freedoms are used to define animal welfare. The five freedoms are based on a report by a commission led by Professor Roger Brambell in 1965.<sup>1</sup> Later the five freedoms have been further developed by the British Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC).<sup>3</sup> According to these five freedoms animal welfare would be preserved if the animals were kept free from:

- thirst, hunger or malnutrition,
- thermal or physical discomfort,
- pain, injury or disease,
- fear and chronic stress,
- and were free to display normal, species-specific behaviors.

However, recent insights suggests animal welfare is not always reduced in case one of the five freedoms is not met. For example, when an animal is hungry but knows from experience it will be fed within a short time period, animal welfare does not have to be reduced. In this case the animal is able to adapt to the situation. In addition it is also important if an animal perceives its welfare as positive. In this case an animal will behave naturally to their surroundings.<sup>14</sup>

The concept of animal welfare used in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University, is:

"An individual is in a state of welfare when it is able to actively adapt to its living conditions in order to achieve a situation that it experiences to be positive."<sup>14</sup>

### *Professionalism*

Within the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University, professional behavior of co-workers and students is considered very important. Students are learned about professional behavior and regularly get feedback about their professional behavior from teachers and from other students. Also students have to reflect on their own professionalism. Ethic judgments often lead to professionalism with which veterinarians take responsibility for their patients, their clients, the public, the profession and themselves.<sup>19</sup> There are many definitions for medical professionalism. Most definitions contain enumerations of appropriate conducts and core values. For example: responsibility, respect, empathy, compassion, effort, honesty, unselfishness, communication skills, personal values, autonomy, self-confidence, and knowing your own boundaries of capability.<sup>12, 13</sup>

Professional conduct can be defined as:

"observable behavior in which norms and values of the profession are made visible and expressed in words, conduct and appearance."<sup>10, 11</sup>

Some examples of unprofessional acting are: negligence in the care for patients, failing to maintain standard of practice, not being respectful, lacking empathy, not being careful, inadequate communication and not being able to reflect on your own professional conduct.<sup>7</sup>

According to the code of conduct for veterinarians (by the Royal Dutch Society for Veterinary Medicine, KNMvD) veterinarians should respect, promote, restore and guard the welfare of animals under their care.<sup>22</sup> Veterinary interventions should always be chosen with the aim to provide optimal care for animal welfare and animal health. Animal welfare should be a priority.

In case a veterinary professional acts unprofessionally with consequences for animal welfare within the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, this could be observed by a co-worker or student. When these observations occur, discussing the situation within the department is advisable in first instance. In case it is not possible to improve the situation within the department there should be a possibility to report such cases.

#### *Self-regulation of professional conduct*

Medical professions are mainly self-regulating regarding their professional conduct.<sup>2</sup> Literature that explores experiences with the reporting of professional misconduct for medical professions is limited. A common used term for reporting serious cases of misconduct in the workplace is “whistleblowing”.<sup>9</sup> There is a difference between whistleblowing internal or external to an organization. In their paper on whistleblowing Firtco (2004) concluded internal reporting such as reporting to managers or other appropriate staff is ideal professional conduct and should be encouraged. Internal reporting would be carried out to improve quality and the maintenance of professional standards in practice.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, whistleblowing is associated with stress and personal consequences.<sup>6, 8, 9</sup> Therefore whistle blowing often represents a dilemma.<sup>4</sup> Research was done under medical students to find reasons for not reporting professional misconduct. Reasons for not reporting were found, including “camaraderie, retaliation by peers, self-preservation and a belief that it is not a student’s responsibility to report the misconduct of others”.<sup>15</sup>

#### *The report centre “Professional acting and animal welfare”*

To provide support for their co-workers and students in case of ethical and/or moral dilemmas, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine started an intern report centre for “Professional acting and animal welfare”. The report centre started on September 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2013. Co-workers and students can report situations of unprofessional acting with consequences for animal welfare. Cases that could be reported are for example not following legislation and regulation, not providing sufficient medical care, but also unprofessional contacts with patient owners in case there are consequences for animal welfare. The report centre provides support in case of situations that cannot be solved by a discussion within the department.

To report a situation, a confidant of the report centre can be contacted by phone, e-mail or by a personal visit. First the confidant will check if the report matches the criteria for further treatment by the report centre. For example, the situation should have happened within the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and the reporter should already have tried to solve the situation within the department. When the report matches the inclusion criteria, it will be discussed within a team of contact persons from different departments, this is called the reflection team. Possible solution strategies are discussed. When this does not lead to a solution, also discussion within an Advisory Board is possible. Members of the Advisory Board are a dean from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, a professor in Animal Welfare, an professor in Animals and Rights, the president of the KNMvD (Royal Dutch Veterinary Organization), the confidant of the Utrecht University and the confidant of the report centre.

The report centre has been promoted in different ways. One year after the start of the report centre it is important to evaluate the extent to which co-workers and students are familiar with its existence. Also their willingness to report is of importance to evaluate the accessibility of the report centre.

*Ways to inform co-workers and students about the report centre*

To obtain familiarity the report centre had to be introduced among co-workers and students. The report centre has been introduced by an article in the magazine "Arts and Auto" and by the faculty and departmental newsletter. Co-workers can find information about the report centre on their intranet and students can read about the report centre on the students website (myvet.nl). Posters have been spread across the faculty buildings. Also the report centre has been discussed during education.

To determine if these promotional strategies are considered effective, a literature search was performed as a part of this study. In their study about organizational communication, Walden (2013) concludes intranets have become an important tool to share information within corporations in the last decade. Intranets function as a key internal communication channel. Companies are more and more adopting social media tools like blogs and discussion forums for information exchange within the corporation.<sup>18</sup> However research shows employees still favor traditional forms of communication like e-mail newsletters and the intranet.<sup>5</sup> An effective way to inform students could be by introducing a subject in a first-year college orientation course.<sup>17</sup> During the promotion of an emergency hotline in the United States, stories about the hotline were published in local newspapers. This promotion was effective because the number of calls from the specific area increased up to tenfold. However news coverage alone was not considered effective to maintain familiarity over time.<sup>16</sup>

The aims of this study were to:

- Determine to which extent the intern report centre "Professional acting and animal welfare" is familiar among co-workers and students of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.
- Determine the willingness to report. Are there reasons that could withhold from reporting?
- The final aim of this research is to obtain or maintain sufficient familiarity and accessibility of the report centre among co-workers and students. If necessary reasons for not reporting should be minimalized.

Hypotheses of this study were:

- Most co-workers and students are not familiar with the report centre.
- More co-workers than students are familiar with the report centre.
- Most co-workers and students are not willing to report to the report centre. Reasons for not reporting are mainly linked to possible personal consequences.

### 3. Materials and methods

By means of a questionnaire, co-workers and students at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in the Netherlands were asked about their familiarity with the report centre. Also attitudes towards reporting to the report centre were assessed.

#### 3.1. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire used in this study was developed after a literature search to identify reasons why people would not report to a reporting centre regarding professional conduct and animal welfare. The questionnaire was made relatively short. Respondents should be able to complete the questionnaire in around 10 minutes. An initial version of the questionnaire was checked by a panel of three former students on clearness after which no modifications were necessary. The questionnaire included 19 questions for co-workers and 18 questions for students. The questionnaire contained three fictional scenarios which were intended to be realistic but serious. Most questions were closed-ended with the option “other, namely”. In this way no possible answers would be excluded.

The complete questionnaire is provided in the appendix. The questionnaire can be divided in three sections:

1. *Social demographic questions*: questions were asked about gender, age and if the respondent is a student or co-worker. Co-workers were asked which department they work for, the number of years they were employed and their position. Students were asked about their academic year and which specialization they have chosen or intend to choose in the future.
2. *Questions related to the reporting centre*: respondents were asked if they ever heard of the reporting centre. And if so, where they heard of it. A short explanation about the reporting centre followed. After this three fictional scenarios were outlined and for every scenario respondents were asked if they would report. Then respondents were asked if they had specific reasons that could withhold them from reporting. And if so, what these reasons were.
3. *Questions related to experiences in the past*: respondents were asked if they witnessed a situation of unprofessional acting with negative consequences for animal welfare in the past year, about their reaction and the corresponding result.  
Finally respondents had an opportunity to write down comments about the questionnaire.

During the study a few changes had to be made to the original questionnaire. This because after the first 44 co-workers filled in the questionnaire it was very striking that 13 of them (30%) quitted the questionnaire after the first three questions (gender, age, coworker or student). This fact combined with comments we received from respondents about traceability, did us decide to make a few changes.

In the original version the exact age was asked, this was changed in a choice between age categories. Also a question about the exact number of years a coworker was employed was changed into categories. This change resulted in a much lower percentage of uncompleted questionnaires. From the 195 co-workers that filled in the changed questionnaire, only 3 of them (2%) did not complete the questionnaire.

### 3.2. The recruitment of respondents

The questionnaire was placed online for all co-workers and students of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine using a Survey Monkey account. The questionnaire was available during almost 4 months, from July 2<sup>nd</sup> until October 28<sup>th</sup> of 2014. During these 4 months co-workers and students were asked to complete the questionnaire.

In consultation with the different departments co-workers were approached in various ways:

- An advertisement was repeatedly placed on the co-workers website (www.intranet.nl).
- Co-workers were asked to complete the questionnaire by an repeated advertisement in the faculty newsletter.
- Two departments agreed to place a request in their departmental newsletter.
- Four departments agreed to send their co-workers an email.
- Co-workers of five departments received an hard copy version of the questionnaire in their personal mailbox, including a self-addressed envelope.
- Co-workers of seven departments were approached in person and received an hardcopy version of the questionnaire, as well as a self-addressed envelope.

In every way there was a supporting letter or short text in which the study was explained and participation was requested with a link to the online questionnaire. Table 1 summarizes the efforts made to recruit co-workers at different departments.

<i>Table 1. Ways in which co-workers of different departments were asked to complete the questionnaire</i>						
<i>* Only co-workers in possession of a personal mailbox and co-workers present in their room could be reached.</i>						
		Faculty newsletter	Departmental newsletter	E-mail	Hardcopy in personal mailbox*	Approached in person*
<b>1. Departments where co-workers work with living animals regularly</b>						
Animals in Science and Society	DASS	x			x	x
Clinical Sciences of Companion Animals	DCSCA	x			x	x
Equine Sciences	DES	x	x		x	x
Farm Animal Health	DFAH	x	x		x	
Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences	IRAS	x		x		
Pathobiology	DP	x		x		x
Central Laboratory Animals Institute	CLAI	x				
<b>2. Departments where co-workers rarely or never work with living animals</b>						
Biochemistry and Cell Biology	DBC	x		x		
Infectious Diseases and Immunology	DII	x		x		
Faculty office	FO	x				

Co-workers were divided in two groups depending on their department. The first group (n=608) consisted of co-workers from departments Animals in Science and Society (DASS), Clinical Sciences of Companion Animals (DCSCA), Equine Sciences (DES), Farm Animal Health (DFAH), Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences (IRAS), Pathobiology (DP) and Central Laboratory Animals Institute (CLAI). These co-workers regularly work with living animals. The second group (n=232) consisted of co-workers from departments Biochemistry and Cell Biology (DBC), Infectious Diseases and Immunology (DII) and Faculty office (FO), these co-workers rarely or never work with living animals. For this second group questions about willingness to report were considered less relevant. Co-workers of this group were only included in the analysis of questions about familiarity with the report centre.



Students were asked to complete the questionnaire by a repeated message on the students website ([www.myvet.nl](http://www.myvet.nl)). Later they also received an email with information about the study with a link to the online questionnaire. One reminder email was send after 11 days.

### **3.3. Statistical analysis**

SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0) was used for statistical analysis.<sup>21</sup>

To determine the significance of differences between answers of specific groups, different statistical tests were used:

- Mann-Whitney test: to determine the significance of differences in familiarity with the report centre between co-workers and students.
- Kruskal-Wallis test: to determine significance of differences between co-workers of different departments and between students of different academic years for their familiarity with the report centre and for their willingness to report.
- Chi-Square test: to determine the significance of the differences between co-workers and students for their willingness to report and for their reasons not to report. Also the Chi-Square test was used to determine significance of differences in percentage of respondents that witnessed one or more situations in the past between coworkers and students, students of different academic years, and students of different specializations.
- Two-tailed T-test: to determine if the frequency of witnessed situations is significantly different between co-workers and students.

P values < 0.05 were considered significant.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Participation rates and sample characteristics

A total of 602 students and co-workers of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University, filled in the questionnaire. 2 questionnaires had to be excluded from this research because of invalid answers. The remaining 600 questionnaires were returned by 242 (29%) co-workers and 358 (25%) students. Of these respondents 86,6% of co-workers and 90,8% of students did not completely fill in the questionnaire. This resulted in 213 (25%) fully completed questionnaires by co-workers and 325 (23%) fully completed questionnaires by students. Partially completed questionnaires were included in this research whenever possible. There were no significant differences between those who completely filled in the questionnaire and those that did not in terms of age, gender, years of employment, department, academic year or student specialization. Master students have to choose a specialization, there are 3 major student specializations: “Companion animals”, “Farm animals” and “Horse”. Demographic characteristics of respondents are summarized in table 2 and 3.

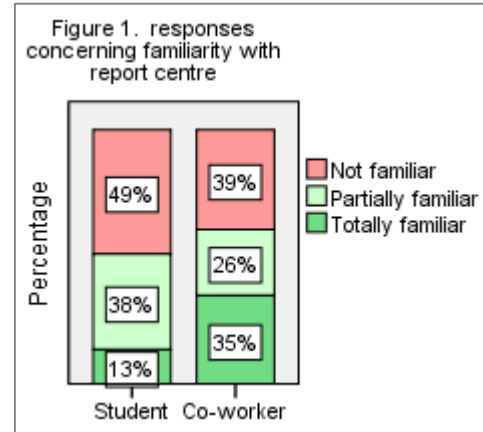
Co-workers				
		Number of co-workers	Number of respondents	Response rate
<b>1. Departments where co-workers work with living animals regularly</b>				
Animals in Science and Society	DASS	28	14	50%
Clinical Sciences of Companion Animals	DCSCA	190	61	32%
Equine Sciences	DES	72	23	32%
Farm Animal Health	DFAH	81	34	42%
Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences	IRAS	128	44	34%
Pathobiology	DP	59	15	25%
Central Laboratory Animals Institute	CLAI	50	2	4%
<b>2. Departments where co-workers rarely or never work with living animals</b>				
Biochemistry and Cell Biology	DBC	34	7	21%
Infectious Diseases and Immunology	DII	120	19	16%
Faculty office	FO	78	7	9%
-Unknown-		-	16	-
<b>Total</b>		840	242	<b>29%</b>
Gender		Male	37%	
		Female	63%	
Many co-workers responded to have more than one function. The following functions were mentioned:				
- Clinician: 52x				
- Paraveterinarian/animal caretaker: 26x				
- researchers or research assistant: 92x				
- executive position: 29x				
- administrators or receptionist: 11x				
- Professors or teacher: 65x				
- Co-worker Education and student services: 7x				
- Other such as pathologist, anesthesiologist, analyst, pharmacist: 30x				

Students			
	Number of students	Number of respondents	Response rate
Bachelor	793	153	19%
Master and former curriculum	639	203	32%
- Unknown -	-	2	-
<b>Total</b>	1432	358	<b>25%</b>
Gender		Male	16%
		Female	84%

#### 4.2. Familiarity with the report centre

##### *Differences between co-workers and students concerning their familiarity with the report centre*

Figure 1 presents results concerning familiarity with the report centre. More co-workers (61%) compared with students (51%) responded to be familiar with the report centre. The respondents that were partially familiar have heard of the report centre but are not sure about its exact purpose. The report centre is significantly more familiar among co-workers (mean range 313,24) compared with students (mean range 254,93) (Mann-Whitney test,  $Z = -5,571$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ).



##### *Differences between co-workers working at different departments regarding their familiarity with the report centre*

There was a significant difference in familiarity with the report centre between respondents of different departments (Kruskal-Wallis test;  $\chi^2 = 41,246$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). The report centre is most familiar among respondents of FO, DASS, and DFAH (Tab. 4). The FO has a supporting role, co-workers of this department do not work with living animals but it is important that they know about its existence so they can refer students or co-workers whenever necessary. The department with the lowest responded familiarity was IRAS, followed by DBC and DII. It is not surprising that the familiarity is lowest for these departments because co-workers of these departments rarely work with living animals. Respondents of departments DCSCA, DES, DP and CLAI were moderately familiar compared with the other departments.

Table 4. Responses concerning familiarity with report centre, differences among departments

				Familiarity with report centre		
Departement		Response rate	n	Not familiar	Partially familiar	Totally familiar
Animals in Science and Society	DASS	100%	14	14,3%	14,3%	71,4%
Clinical Sciences of Companion Animals	DCSCA	98%	60	27,9%	37,7%	32,8%
Equine Sciences	DES	100%	23	30,4%	43,5%	26,1%
Farm Animal Health	DFAH	100%	34	26,5%	20,6%	52,9%
Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences	IRAS	100%	44	68,2%	22,7%	9,1%
Pathobiology	DP	100%	15	40,0%	13,3%	46,7%
Central Laboratory Animals Institute	CLAI	100%	2	50,0%	0%	50,0%
Biochemistry and Cell biology	DBC	100%	7	71,4%	14,3%	14,3%
Infectious Diseases and Immunology	DII	100%	19	63,2%	10,5%	26,3%
Faculty Office	FO	100%	7	0%	28,6%	71,4%

*Differences between students of different academic years regarding their familiarity with the report centre*

Between students of different academic years there was also a difference of significance for their familiarity with the report centre. (Kruskal-Wallis test;  $\chi^2 = 12,998$ ;  $df=5$ ;  $p = 0,023$ ) In general respondents of higher academic years mentioned to be more familiar with the report centre (Tab. 5). There was one exception: respondents of the third academic year mentioned to be less familiar with the report centre compared with students of the first two academic years. This can be caused by the fact that some students know about the report centre from the first year students introduction.

*Table 5. Responses concerning familiarity with report centre, differences among academic years*

			Familiarity with report centre			
	Response rate	n	Academic year	Not familiar	Partially familiar	Totally familiar
Bachelor	100%	153	1	49,1%	40,4%	10,5%
			2	47,2%	41,7%	11,1%
			3	68,3%	23,3%	8,3%
Master	100%	203	4	46,3%	43,9%	9,8%
			5	41,7%	41,7%	16,7%
			6	41,1%	35,6%	23,3%

**4.3. How do respondents know the report centre?**

Table 6 summarizes how respondents got to know about the report centre. Most co-workers know about the report centre from posters within the faculty, from the faculty newsletter and from a colleague or student. Most students have read about the report centre on the students website.

*Table 6. Responses concerning how respondents know the report centre. More than one answer could be given.*

	Co-workers	
	n	%
1. Posters within faculty	45	37%
2. Faculty newsletter	41	34%
3. Colleague or student	41	34%
4. Co-workers website (intranet.nl)	22	18%
5. Departmental newsletter	9	7%
6. Students website (myvet.nl)	7	6%
7. Other	25	20%
Students		
	n	%
1. Students website (myvet.nl)	91	51%
2. Colleague or student	58	32%
3. Posters within faculty	46	26%
4. Faculty newsletter	26	15%
5. Discussed in education	17	9%
6. Article in magazine “Arts en Auto”	16	9%
7. Other	16	9%

#### 4.4. Willingness to report to the report centre: three fictional scenarios

Three fictional scenarios have been outlined and for every scenario respondents were asked if they would report this situation to the reporting centre. The results are presented in Table 7.

##### *Fictional scenario 1*

The first scenario described a situation where arguments between veterinarians and inadequate communication resulted in a patient not surviving surgery. More than half of co-workers responded they would or probably would report this situation to the reporting centre. 9,4% of co-workers would do something else. From this group 15 out of 18 respondents would try to discuss the situation within the department (this despite of the scenario described they would already have tried to discuss the situation within the department without any results).

Almost three out of four students responded they would or probably would report to the report centre. 3% of students responded they would do something else. Most of them gave the same alternative answer as co-workers with 7 out of 10 students responding they would try to discuss the situation within the department.

Respondents were able to explain their decisions. Many respondents commented that if it was not possible to improve the situation by discussions within the department there would be no other option than reporting to the report centre. Many respondents commented about them thinking animal welfare is very important and animals should not suffer because of inadequate communication. Others mentioned reporting would not be necessary because they think it would have to be possible to improve the situation within the department. Some respondents were afraid of possible personal consequences like losing their job as a possible result from reporting to the report centre.

*Table 7. Responses to questions about whether respondents would report to the report centre in case of three fictional scenarios*

<b>Scenario 1: Inadequate communication</b>								
			Answer to the question “Would you report to the report centre?”					
	Response rate	n	Yes	Probably yes	Don't know	Probably not	No	Other, namely...
Co-workers	93%	192	25,5%	37,5%	13,5%	8,9%	5,2%	9,4%
Students	94%	336	32,1%	39,0%	10,7%	13,4%	1,8%	3,0%
<b>Scenario 2: Animal experiments</b>								
			Answer to the question “Would you report to the report centre?”					
	Response rate	n	Yes	Probably yes	Don't know	Probably not	No	Other, namely...
Co-workers	93%	193	28,5%	30,1%	18,7%	6,2%	2,1%	14,5%
Students	93%	333	35,7%	30,9%	19,2%	9,0%	2,4%	2,7%
<b>Scenario 3: Farm animal welfare</b>								
			Answer to the question “Would you report to the report centre?”					
	Response rate	n	Yes	Probably yes	Don't know	Probably not	No	Other, namely...
Co-workers	93%	191	36,1%	29,3%	16,2%	9,9%	3,7%	4,7%
Students	92%	329	31,9%	28,3%	19,5%	10,3%	6,7%	3,3%

##### *Fictional scenario 2*

The second scenario described a situation where a co-worker performs animal experiments without permission of the Animal Experiments Committee (AEC). More than half of co-workers responded they would or probably would report this situation to the report centre. A relatively large group (14,5%) of co-workers responded they would do something else. Of this group 14 out of 27 co-workers responded they would try to discuss the situation within the department (again despite the scenario described

they would already have tried this without any results). 8 co-workers responded they would report the situation to a laboratory animal specialist or Animal Experiments Committee.

Two out of three students responded they would or probably would report to the report centre. Only 2,7% of students responded they would do something else, of this group 5 out of 9 students responded their reaction would depend on the character of the animal experiment. When the animal welfare is not reduced or only mildly reduced these students answer they would not report.

Many respondents commented they thought animal welfare is very important. Respondents were very divided about the AEC procedures. Many commented these procedures were of great importance. Also many respondents commented about them thinking the AEC procedures are too strict. If the animal experiments would not or only mildly reduce animal welfare and these experiments would be important for research or education, they would not report. Also respondents commented about possible consequences for the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine when AEC procedures are not lived up to, which makes it important to report the situation. Some other respondents commented they would be happy with the option of reporting to the report centre because of the confidentiality.

### *Fictional scenario 3*

The third scenario was about animal welfare being greatly reduced for farm animals and a teacher that did nothing to improve the situation despite concerns from a student. Two out of three co-workers responded they would or probably would report this situation to the report centre. 4,7% of co-workers responded they would do something else, of this group 5 out of 9 co-workers responding they would report the animal welfare problem to an external institution.

Almost two out of three students responded they would or probably would report to the report centre. 3,3% of students responded they would do something else, like co-workers 5 out of 11 students responded they would report to an external institution.

Comments were made about thinking animal welfare is of great importance. Many students commented they would not report because they would believe their teacher or they felt like it was not up to them to criticize their teacher. Other students commented they are happy with the option of reporting because otherwise they would not know what to do. Many respondents commented about thinking it would be more appropriate to report this situation to an external institution because of animal welfare problems taking place at an animal farm.

### *Differences in willingness to report between co-workers and students*

There was a significant difference between co-workers and students for their willingness to report in case of fictional scenarios 1 and 2 (scenario 1:  $\chi^2 = 19,9$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0,002$ ) (scenario 2:  $\chi^2 = 27,44$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). For these scenarios students were more willing to report compared with co-workers. For the third fictional scenario the difference was not significant (F31:  $\chi^2 = 4,0$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0,555$ ).

### Differences in willingness to report between co-workers working at different departments

Between co-workers of different departments there was a difference of significance for fictional scenarios 1 and 3 regarding their willingness to report (scenario 1: Kruskal-Wallis test;  $\chi^2 = 14,270$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = 0,027$ ) (scenario 3: Kruskal-Wallis test;  $\chi^2 = 13,168$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = 0,04$ ). The differences are presented in table 8. It is important to be aware of the fact that there were only 2 respondents from CLAI so the results of this department may not be representative.

Table 8. Differences between co-workers working at different departments concerning their responses to the question if they would report in case of scenario 1 and 3.

Scenario 1: Inadequate communication								
Department	Response rate	n	Answer to the question “Would you report to the report centre?”					
			Yes	Probably yes	Don't know	Probably not	No	Other, namely...
DASS	100%	14	42,9%	50,0%	0%	0%	7,1%	0%
DCSCA	97%	59	25,4%	30,5%	15,3%	10,2%	8,5%	10,2%
DES	100%	23	8,7%	30,4%	13,0%	17,4%	4,3%	26,1%
DFAH	97%	33	15,2%	39,4%	15,2%	12,1%	6,1%	12,1%
IRAS	100%	44	36,4%	45,5%	11,4%	4,5%	0%	2,3%
DP	100%	15	20,0%	40,0%	20,0%	6,7%	6,7%	6,7%
CLAI	100%	2	50,0%	50,0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Scenario 3: Farm animal welfare								
Department	Response rate	n	Answer to the question “Would you report to the report centre?”					
			Yes	Probably yes	Don't know	Probably not	No	Other, namely...
DASS	100%	14	42,9%	28,6%	7,1%	7,1%	0%	14,3%
DCSCA	97%	59	45,8%	27,1%	8,5%	8,5%	3,4%	6,8%
DES	100%	23	21,7%	34,8%	21,7%	13,0%	4,3%	4,3%
DFAH	94%	32	18,8%	31,3%	28,1%	9,4%	6,3%	6,3%
IRAS	100%	44	34,1%	29,5%	20,5%	13,6%	2,3%	0%
DP	100%	15	40,0%	33,3%	13,3%	6,7%	6,7%	0%
CLAI	100%	2	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

DASS	Animals in Science and Society
DCSCA	Clinical Sciences of Companion Animals
DES	Equine Sciences
DFAH	Farm Animal Health
IRAS	Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences
DP	Pathobiology
CLAI	Central Laboratory Animals Institute

Regarding the first fictional scenario co-workers working at DASS were most willing to report, second most willing to report was IRAS. Respondents of DP, DCSCA, DFAH and DES were obviously less willing to report in case of the first scenario compared with the other departments. Scenario 1 described a situation of inadequate communication between veterinarians resulting in an animal not surviving surgery. This is a situation that could possibly occur within DCSCA, DFAH and DES.

For scenario 2 the difference between co-workers from different departments was not significant (Kruskal-Wallis test;  $\chi^2 = 12,142$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = 0,059$ ).

Regarding the third fictional scenario (apart from CLAI) co-workers from DP were most willing to report, followed by DCSCA, DASS, IRAS, DES and DFAH. It is striking that as for the first scenario DES and DFAH are less willing to report compared with the other departments.

*Differences in willingness to report between students of different academic years*

Between students of different academic years, there was a significant difference for their responses regarding whether they would report in case of fictional scenarios 1 and 2 (scenario1: Kruskal-Wallis test;  $\chi^2 = 30,638$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ) (scenario 2: Kruskal-Wallis test;  $\chi^2 = 20,007$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0,001$ ). These differences are presented in table 8. For the first fictional scenario more first-year students indicated that they would report compared with students in other years. This proportion declines over the years with an increase for last year students. For fictional scenario 2 there is also a declining willingness to report over the years but with a stabilization in academic year 6. For fictional scenario 3 there was no difference of significance between student years (Kruskal-Wallis test;  $\chi^2 = 3,199$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0,669$ ).

Table 8: Differences between students' academic year groups in responses concerning whether students would report in case of fictional scenario 1 and 2

<b>Scenario 1: Inadequate communication</b>								
			Answer to the question “Would you report to the report centre?”					
Academic year	Response rate	n	Yes	Probably yes	Don't know	Probably not	No	Other, namely...
1	93%	53	56,6%	32,1%	7,5%	3,8%	0%	0%
2	92%	33	36,4%	51,5%	0%	9,1%	0%	3,0%
3	93%	56	41,1%	37,5%	5,4%	14,3%	0%	1,8%
4	96%	79	21,5%	43,0%	13,9%	13,9%	2,5%	5,1%
5	92%	44	13,6%	45,5%	18,2%	13,6%	4,5%	4,5%
6	97%	71	28,2%	31,0%	14,1%	21,1%	2,8%	2,8%
<b>Scenario 2: Animal experiments</b>								
			Answer to the question “Would you report to the report centre?”					
Academic year	Response rate	n	Yes	Probably yes	Don't know	Probably not	No	Other, namely...
1	91%	52	48,1%	26,9%	17,3%	3,8%	1,9%	1,9%
2	92%	33	45,5%	30,3%	15,2%	6,1%	0%	3,0%
3	92%	55	43,6%	34,5%	16,4%	3,6%	0%	1,8%
4	96%	79	31,6%	38,0%	19,0%	6,3%	1,3%	3,8%
5	90%	43	23,3%	32,6%	18,6%	20,9%	2,3%	2,3%
6	97%	71	28,2%	22,5%	25,4%	14,1%	7,0%	2,8%



#### 4.5. Reasons that could withhold from reporting to the report centre

Respondents were asked if there were any reasons that could withhold them from reporting to the report centre. The majority of co-workers (77%) and students (90%) mentioned there were one or more reasons that could withhold them from reporting (Tab. 10). The differences between students and co-workers for their reasons not to report were significant ( $\chi^2 = 100,946$ ;  $df = 11$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). The most often mentioned reason was that respondents wanted to maintain a good relationship with others. Secondly and almost as important was the reason of respondents worrying about possible personal consequences when their identity would be revealed, like negative effects on their career or graduation. Also don't wanting to disadvantage the person involved was of great importance. Apart from pre described answers 3% of students and 10% of co-workers responded they would not report to the report centre when the situation could be solved within the department. 10% of students and 23% of co-workers can't think of a reason not to report to the report centre. Other reasons were about respondents preferring to report to another institution or person and respondents thinking they would have insufficient insight or knowledge to decide if reporting would be justified. Also 19 respondents commented about reasons concerning the report centre itself. Some respondents answered they did not know enough about the process of reporting or its consequences. Others thought reporting would not solve the problem.

Table 10. Responses concerning reasons that could withhold respondents from reporting to the report centre. More than one answer could be given.

	Students	Co-workers
	Response rate: 92%	Response rate: 92%
	n = 328	n = 192
1. Maintaining a good relationship	56%	34%
2. Personal consequences	49%	30%
3. Don't want to disadvantage the person involved	46%	29%
4. I understand how a situation arises and don't always disapprove	24%	13%
5. Not my responsibility	15%	9%
6. Too much effort or too time-consuming	5%	6%
7. When it can be solved within the department	3%	10%
Other reasons	10,3%	17,1%
I can't think of a reason not to report	10%	23%

#### 4.6. Reasons to report to the report centre

Respondents were not explicitly asked what would be reasons to report. However respondents could explain their decision concerning the fictional scenarios and commented about reasons to report. A reason to report to the report centre was having a possibility to improve the situation in case it was not possible to discuss it within the department. Many respondents commented about being happy with the option of reporting to the report centre, especially students felt like it could be very supportive. Respondents commented they would report because of the confidentiality. Also some comments were made about thinking it would be helpful to involve someone from outside the department.

#### 4.7. Past experiences with situations of unprofessional acting with consequences for animal welfare

##### *Witnessed situations*

Respondents were asked if they witnessed one or more situations of unprofessional acting with consequences for animal welfare in the past year. 118 out of 522 respondents (23%) mentioned they have witnessed one or more situations in the past year. Of this group three respondents mentioned that the situations occurred outside the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

17% of co-workers and 25,9% of students responded they witnessed one or more situations of unprofessional acting with consequences for animal welfare in de past year. This difference between students and co-workers was significant ( $\chi^2= 5,524$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = 0,019$ ).

The number of co-workers that witnessed a situation in the past year are presented in table 11. Significance could not be calculated because of the relatively small number of respondents. However when comparing the animal clinics it is very striking that co-workers of DFAH responded about the experience with situations almost twice as much compared with DES and DCSCA.

*Percentage of co-workers that reported to have witnessed one or more situations in the past year, differences between departments*

			Co-workers that experienced one or more situations in the past year	
Department		Response rate	n	%
Central Laboratory Animals Institute	CLAI	100%	2	100%
Animals in Science and Society	DASS	100%	5	35,7%
Farm Animal Health	DFAH	100%	10	29,4%
Equine Sciences	DES	100%	4	17,4%
Clinical Sciences of Companion Animals	DCSCA	98%	8	13,3%
Pathobiology	DP	100%	1	6,7%
Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences	IRAS	100%	2	4,5%

Between student groups of different academic years there was a highly significant difference for the percentage of students that responded they witnessed one or more situations in the past year ( $\chi^2 42,148$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). Significantly more master students witnessed one or more situations compared with bachelor students (Tab. 12). Over the years there is a very strong increase to almost half (46,5%) of final year students that experienced one or more situations in the past year. This could very well be explained with the fact that practice oriented education increases during the academic years.

*Table 12. Percentage of students that reported to have witnessed one or more situations in the past year, differences between academic years*

		Students that experienced one or more situations in the past year	
Academic year	Response rate	n	%
1	91%	3	5,8%
2	89%	4	12,5%
3	90%	6	11,1%
4	94%	21	27,3%
5	88%	18	42,9%
6	97%	33	46,5%

Within the group of students there was a significant difference between students of different specializations ( $\chi^2 = 14,865$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p = 0,002$ ). 13 (38,2%) students of specialization Horse have witnessed one or more situations in the past year. Followed by 46 (30,1%) of students of specialization Companion animals and 25 (24,5%) of students of specialization Farm animals. From the students that have not decided about their specialization yet only 1 (2,6%) student responded about one or more witnessed situations. This is not surprising because most students that have not decided about their specialization are first year students.

#### *Frequency of witnessed situations*

From the respondents that have witnessed one or more situations in the past year mean frequency of witnessed situations was calculated. Co-workers witnessed 2,36 situations on average (standard deviation 1,917). Within the group of students 2,19 situations were witnessed on average (standard deviation 1,673). This difference in mean witnessed situations is not significant. (Two tailed T-test,  $t = -0,490$ ;  $df = 116$ ;  $p = 0,625$ )

#### *Reaction to the last witnessed situation*

Respondents that witnessed one or more situations were asked about their reaction to the last witnessed situation. Reactions of co-workers and students are presented in table 13. Many respondents mentioned several reactions to a witnessed situation. Most students (77%) discussed the situation with another colleague of student. A third of students (33%) have spoken to the person responsible for the unprofessional acting. Co-workers were more used to speak to the person responsible for the unprofessional acting (50%) and less used to discuss with another colleague or student (44%). Some students responded that they find it difficult to address a situation to a co-worker because this is often their teacher.

*Table 13. Responses concerning how students and co-workers reacted after witnessing a situation of unprofessional acting with negative consequences for animal welfare. More than one answer could be given.*

	Co-workers		Students	
	n	%	n	%
Discussed it with an other colleague or student	14	44%	63	77%
Spoken to the person who acted unprofessionally	16	50%	27	33%
Discussed it with a manager	9	28%	20	24%
Did nothing	2	6,3%	12	15%
Reported to the report centre	1	3,1%	2	2,4%
Reported to an external institution	2	6,3%	0	0%
Other	3	9,4%	5	6,1%

Within the group of co-workers we find different reactions within different functions. Only there were too many variables in proportion to co-workers that answered this question to calculate for significance. However it is striking that 8 out of 12 (67%) clinicians responded to have spoken with the person who acted unprofessionally, compared with 0 out of 5 (0%) paraveterinarians or animal care takers. 20% of paraveterinarians or animal care takers did nothing compared with 0% for clinicians. This could be explained with the fact that other co-workers like veterinarians often are the managers of paraveterinarians resulting in paraveterinarians finding it difficult to address a situation to them.

Respondents were asked about the results of their reactions (Tab. 14). Unfortunately it was not possible to test for significance and coherence because of too many variables with a relatively low number of respondents. Speaking to the person responsible for the unprofessional acting gave best results according to the respondents. Second most effective option according to the respondents is

discussing the situation with a manager. Only 3 respondents have reported to the report centre and only 2 respondents reported the situation to an external institution. These numbers of respondents are really too low to be of any significance. However it is very striking that all three respondents that reported to the report centre respond that the situation did not change after reporting. This could be a finding of coincidence.

Table 14. Reported results for different reactions after witnessing a situation of unprofessional acting with negative consequences for animal welfare

Reaction	n	Result of reaction					
		Solved	Strong improvement	Some improvement	No change	Other	Unknown
Discussed it with another colleague or student	77	5,2%	7,8%	11,75	35,1%	6,5%	33,8%
Spoken to the person who acted unprofessionally	43	18,6%	11,6%	20,9%	27,9%	4,7%	16,3%
Discussed it with a manager	29	3,4%	17,2%	13,8%	31,0%	6,9%	27,6%
Did nothing	14	7,1%	0%	7,1%	42,9%	0%	42,9%
Reported to the reporting centre	3	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Reported to an external institution	2	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Other	8	0%	0%	25,0%	0%	37,5%	37,7%

#### *Estimated number of reported situations according to questionnaire results*

We combined questionnaire results to calculate the number of reported situations we could expect based on these results. First we calculated the number of situations that met the inclusion criteria of the report centre. Within the group of co-workers this resulted in 13 situations that could have been reported. Within the group of students 68 witnessed situations could have been reported. To estimate the number of reported situations also familiarity with the report centre and willingness to report are of importance. Given the results of 35% of co-workers and 13% of students responding to be totally familiar with the report centre, combined with the results of 30% of co-workers and 33% of students responding they would surely report in case of a fictional scenario, one could expect at least 4 reports to be made to the report centre by these respondents in the past year. When compensated for response rate, totally at least 17 reports would be made in the past year according to the questionnaire results. In reality only 9 situations were reported in the past year.

## 5. Discussion

### *Materials and methods*

Co-workers of all departments were asked to complete the questionnaire. However for DBC, DII and FO the report centre is less relevant because co-workers of these departments rarely or never work with living animals. Therefore these departments were only included in the analysis of questions about familiarity. However the low response rate of these departments influenced the overall response rate negatively. In contrast it was very important to approach co-workers of CLAI, unfortunately the response rate was very low. Therefore it was not possible to conclude anything about the co-workers of this department. Some departments were reticent to spread the questionnaire among their co-workers. To reach as many co-workers as possible co-workers were approached in several ways. However not every co-worker could be reached.

Participation with this research was voluntary. Possibly those who were interested in animal welfare were more willing to participate. This could have biased the results, possibly in favor of a more positive attitude towards reporting to the report centre.

In the original questionnaire exact age and years of employment were asked. This resulted in a high percentage of uncompleted questionnaires. We concluded that anonymity is very important for co-workers. For students only the exact age was changed into categories. This didn't result in a change in percentage of uncompleted questionnaires. This can be due to the fact that there are more students and for them less sociodemographic questions were asked, so also with the original questionnaire students didn't feel as traceable.

The fictional scenarios were very serious, co-workers and students responded they would be less willing to report in situations that are less serious or not as obvious.

### *Familiarity with the report centre*

Respondents were asked about their familiarity with the report centre. Responses to the questionnaire did not support the hypothesis that most co-workers and students would not be familiar with the report centre. Most respondents were familiar with the report centre. It is expected that the familiarity is further improved as a result of the questionnaire developed for this research.

### *Ways to inform co-workers and students about the report centre*

Literature has shown that publications in newspapers or magazines are effective to inform a population.<sup>16</sup> Intranets are considered effective for informing people within a corporation.<sup>18</sup> Introducing a subject in a first-year college was also considered effective to inform students.<sup>17</sup> The report centre has been introduced by these ways. Also co-workers and students were informed about the report centre by posters. Therefore the promotion of the report centre can be considered sufficient.

### *Willingness to report*

The hypothesis that most co-workers and students would not be willing to report to the report centre was not supported by the responses concerning the fictional scenarios. There were differences between departments for their willingness to report for scenario 1 and 3. Co-workers of DES, DFAH, DCSCA and DP were less willing to report compared with co-workers of other departments, this difference was most obvious for scenario 1. Scenario 1 described a situation of inadequate communication between veterinarians resulting in an animal not surviving surgery. This is a situation that could possibly occur within DCSCA, DFAH and DES. Possibly these co-workers were better able to empathize with this situation and therefore more aware of possible reasons that could withhold them from reporting to the report centre.

From this research we learned about a very contradictory association between willingness to report and experiences with situations that could be reported. Respondents were less willing to report as they witnessed more situations that could be reported. This was the case for students in their final years compared with students in former years. Also co-workers working at departments where they are mostly working with living animals were less willing to report compared with co-workers from departments where co-workers rarely or never work with living animals. So it seems that when a scenario becomes less fictional respondents are less willing to report. A possible explanation could be that respondents are more aware of reasons that could withhold them from reporting as a situation becomes less fictional. These results could suggest that in reality respondents could be less willing to report compared with what we would expect based on the questionnaire results.

An comment that was made often was that respondents would try to discuss the situation within the department instead of considering reporting to the report centre. We find this a positive reaction because when a problem could be solved within the department this should be preferred above all other options.

#### *Reasons for not reporting to the report centre*

Reasons for not reporting resemble the reasons mentioned in former studies.<sup>4, 15</sup> They are mostly associated with a fear of personal consequences. Many respondents indicated they could be withhold from reporting because they wanted to maintain a good relationship with others, they worried about personal consequences and because they did not want to disadvantage the person involved. It is important to respondents to be able to report anonymous. Reporting to the report centre is confidential. But it is also recommended to discuss the problem within the department in the first instance. This is contradictory because in this case the person involved is likely to know who reported the situation.

More students than co-workers have reasons that could withhold them from reporting to the report centre. Apparently these reasons are often not decisive as students were more willing to report in case of the fictional scenarios compared with co-workers.

#### *Witnessed situations*

When asked about witnessed situations of unprofessional acting with consequences for animal welfare in the past, this question could have been interpreted in different ways. This question was about situations where a co-worker or student acted unprofessionally within the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. However three respondents commented they had witnessed their situation outside the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Possibly more respondents mentioned a situation from outside the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Also it is possible that some mentioned a witnessed situation where an owner did not act professional instead of a co-worker or student.

Within the group of students there was a significant difference between students of different specializations for their frequency of witnessed situations. The frequency of witnessed situations was relatively low for students of specialization Farm animals compared with the other specializations, in contrast with a relatively high frequency for co-workers of Department Farm Animal Health (DFAH). This could not be explained.

Respondents were asked about their reaction to the last witnessed situation. Both co-workers and students responded they often do not address the situation to the person responsible for the unprofessional acting, although this gave the best results with an improvement in more than half of witnessed situations. Discussing the situation with a manager is responded to be second most effective with an improvement in a third of witnessed situations. But only one out of four co-workers and students responded to have discussed the witnessed situation with a manager. Discussing the situation within the department is advisable in first instance. However this can be difficult, especially when the person who acts unprofessional is your manager or teacher.

#### *Estimated number of reported situations according to questionnaire results*

According to the estimated number of reported situations one could expect at least 17 reports to be made in the past year. In reality only 9 situations were reported to the report centre in the past year. Possibly this difference could be caused by the scenarios being more serious compared with the witnessed situations in real life. Another explanation of this difference could be that reasons not to report are more important in withholding respondents from reporting than respondents would think when the situation is just fictional. Also the report centre started one year ago, it was in all probability less familiar in the beginning what could have resulted in less reports.

#### Recommendations

For future research concerning the report centre it is recommended to exclude the departments DBC, DII and FO. In contrast more effort should be made to approach co-workers of CLAI. It is important that respondents do not feel traceable, therefore it is recommended to ask about categories instead of exact sociodemographic characteristics whenever possible.

Especially the students website, posters within the faculty and the faculty newsletter have been proven to be effective in obtaining familiarity. To maintain familiarity it is important to proceed with these promotions. The percentage of students that was totally familiar with the report centre was very low (13%). This could be improved by increasing education about the report centre. The report centre should always be introduced among students in their first year. From this research we learned that the frequency of witnessed situations is much higher for master students compared with bachelor students. Therefore it is recommended to remind the students of the report centre at the beginning of the master, when students are starting their clinical rotations

It is important to decrease the influence of the most important reasons for not reporting. These reasons are primarily related to personal consequences. From past research we have learned that there often are personal consequences to reporting.<sup>6,8,9</sup> Further investigations are needed to determine if there are personal consequences associated to reporting to this report centre. In this case it is important to determine how these could be prevented. It is very important to protect reporters from possible consequences by maintaining confidentiality.

Some respondents think of reporting as very serious and would only report in very serious cases. It could be recommendable to change the image of the report centre to make it more accessible. Possibly the name "report centre" is conceived as serious, this could for instance be changed in "supporting centre". In this way the supporting role of the report centre is underlined.

All three respondents that have reported to the report centre in the past responded the situation did not change as a result. To define whether this is a finding of coincidence or not, it is recommended to investigate the effectiveness of the report centre. In any case evaluation is of great importance. If the report centre appears to be not effective the procedure should be evaluated.

## 6. Conclusion

A questionnaire survey was conducted among co-workers and students from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University. Aim of the study was to determine to which extent the intern report centre “Professional acting and animal welfare” was familiar and accessible to co-workers and students.

### *Familiarity with the report centre*

More than half (61%) of co-workers and half of students (51%) responded to be familiar with the report centre. Especially the students website, posters within the faculty and the faculty newsletter have been effective in obtaining familiarity.

### *Willingness to report to the report centre*

Based on three fictional scenarios, more than half (59%) of co-workers and almost two out of three (66%) students responded they would or would probably report to the report centre. Students were significantly more willing to report compared with co-workers for 2 fictional scenarios.

### *Reasons that could withhold from reporting to the report centre*

Most co-workers (77%) and most students (90%) responded there were reasons that could withhold them from reporting. Most often mentioned reasons were: wanting to maintain a good relationship, worrying about personal consequences and not wanting to disadvantage the person involved. Students often find it difficult to address a situation concerning a co-worker because this is often their teacher. To explain their decision concerning the fictional scenarios, some respondents commented they thought reporting would be very serious, they would only report when there is really no other option.

### *Reasons to report to the report centre*

Main reasons to report to the report centre were having a possibility to improve the situation in case it was not possible to discuss it within the department, thinking it would be helpful to involve someone from outside the department and the confidentiality.

### *Experiences with situations of unprofessional acting with consequences for animal welfare*

One out of six (17%) co-workers and one out of four (25,9%) students responded they witnessed one or more situations in the past year. So these situations happen regularly, the report centre could be of importance.



## **7. Acknowledgements**

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## 8. Appendix

### Enquête Meldpunt "Professioneel handelen en dierenwelzijn"

#### Sociaal demografische kenmerken

1. Wat is uw geslacht?  
 Man     Vrouw
  
2. Wat is uw leeftijd?  
 Jonger dan 20 jaar     40-49 jaar  
 20-24 jaar     50-59 jaar  
 25-29 jaar     Ouder dan 60 jaar  
 30-39 jaar
  
3. Bent u medewerker of student?  
 Medewerker  
 Student → ga verder naar vraag 7
  
4. Bij welk departement of bij welke afdeling bent u werkzaam?  
 Departement Biochemie en Celbiologie (DBC)  
 Departement Dier in Wetenschap en Maatschappij (DDWM)  
 Departement Geneeskunde van Gezelschapsdieren (DGG)  
 Departement Gezondheidszorg Landbouwhuisdieren (DGL)  
 Departement Gezondheidszorg Paard (DGP)  
 Departement Infectieziekten en Immunologie (DII)  
 Department Pathobiologie (DP)  
 Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences (IRAS)  
 Gemeenschappelijk Dierenlaboratorium (GDL)  
 Apotheek  
 De Tolakker  
 Faculteit algemeen  
 Faculteitsbureau
  
5. Hoeveel jaar bent u reeds werkzaam bij de faculteit Diergeneeskunde?  
 1 jaar of minder     2-3 jaar     4-9 jaar     10-19 jaar     Langer dan 20 jaar

6. Wat is uw functie binnen de faculteit Diergeneeskunde? Er zijn meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.

- Clinicus
  - Paraveterinair of dierverzorger
  - Onderzoeker/onderzoeksassistent/PhD
  - Hoogleraar/docent
  - Anesthesiemedewerker
  - Patholoog/patholoog in opleiding
  - Apotheker/apotheker assistent
  - Leidinggevende
  - Directie/management medewerker
  - Medewerker communicatie/marketing/multimedia
  - Secretarieel- of administratief medewerker/receptionist
  - Medewerker personeelszaken
  - Medewerker onderwijs en studentenzaken
  - ICT medewerker
  - Facilitair medewerker
  - Anders, namelijk .....
- Ga verder naar vraag 9

7. Wat is uw huidige studiejaar?

- Bachelor, 1<sup>e</sup> jaar
- Bachelor, 2<sup>e</sup> jaar
- Bachelor, 3<sup>e</sup> jaar
- Master, 1<sup>e</sup> jaar
- Master, 2<sup>e</sup> jaar
- Master, 3<sup>e</sup> jaar
- Curriculum 2001, functiegerichte fase

8. Welke studierichting of welk studiep pad heeft u gekozen?

*Als u bachelor student bent en dus nog geen studiep ad heeft gekozen, maar wel al heeft besloten welk studiep ad u zult gaan kiezen, dan kunt u deze keuze invullen.*

- Ik weet nog niet welk studiep ad ik ga kiezen
- Master Paard
- Master Gezelschapsdieren
- Master Landbouwhuisdieren - veterinaire volksgezondheid
- C2001 Paard
- C2001 Gezelschapsdieren
- C2001 Landbouwhuisdieren
- C2001 Veterinaire volksgezondheid
- C2001 Veterinair wetenschappelijk onderzoeker

### Specifieke onderzoeksvragen

9. Heeft u wel eens gehoord van het Meldpunt "Professioneel handelen en dierenwelzijn"?
- Nee → ga verder naar vraag 11
  - Ja, maar ik weet niet precies waar het voor dient
  - Ja, ik weet ook waarvoor het dient
10. Waar kent u het meldpunt van? Er zijn meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.
- Posters binnen de faculteit Diergeneeskunde
  - Een artikel in het tijdschrift "Arts en Auto"
  - Facultaire nieuwsbrief
  - Departementale nieuwsbrief
  - Intranet.uu.nl
  - MyVET.nl
  - Via een collega of medestudent
  - Anders, namelijk .....

*Het Meldpunt "Professioneel handelen en dierenwelzijn" is een intern meldpunt van de faculteit Diergeneeskunde waarbij u als medewerker of student terecht kunt. U kunt melding doen van situaties waarbij er sprake is van onprofessioneel handelen met negatieve gevolgen voor dierenwelzijn. Meldingen kunnen bijvoorbeeld gaan over diergeneeskundige handelingen en/of situaties die vanuit ethisch of wettelijk oogpunt onwenselijk zijn. Meldingen worden in behandeling genomen door een vertrouwenspersoon waarna er samen met contactpersonen van de verschillende departementen naar een oplossing wordt gezocht.*

*Er zullen nu 3 fictieve situaties volgen, waarvan u telkens wordt gevraagd of u hiervan melding zou maken bij het Meldpunt "Professioneel handelen en dierenwelzijn". Het is van belang dat u zich goed in de situaties inleeft en bedenkt wat u zou doen.*

#### **11. Fictieve situatie 1**

U heeft gemerkt dat enkele dierenartsen vaak ruzie hebben met elkaar. Dit komt de sfeer op de afdeling niet ten goede, maar hiernaast wordt er onderling ook niet meer voldoende gecommuniceerd. Hierdoor is er tijdens een operatie een dier overleden. U vindt dat de zorg voor de overige patiënten in gevaar is.

Onderling en binnen de afdeling lukt het kennelijk niet om de situatie bespreekbaar te maken. Zou u melding maken bij het Meldpunt "Professioneel handelen en dierenwelzijn"?

- Ja
- Waarschijnlijk wel
- Ik weet het niet
- Waarschijnlijk niet
- Nee
- Anders, namelijk .....

12. Kunt u kort toelichten waarom u deze keuze zou maken bij fictieve situatie 1?
- .....

**13. Fictieve situatie 2**

U heeft gemerkt dat een collega/docent het niet zo nauw neemt met de regels rondom proefdiergebruik. Hij noteert lang niet alle dierproeven die hij doet en verricht bij individuele dieren meer proeven dan toegestaan is volgens de Dierexperimentencommissie (DEC).

Onderling en binnen de afdeling lukt het kennelijk niet om de situatie bespreekbaar te maken. Zou u melding maken bij het Meldpunt "Professioneel handelen en dierenwelzijn"?

- Ja
- Waarschijnlijk wel
- Ik weet het niet
- Waarschijnlijk niet
- Nee
- Anders, namelijk .....

14. Kunt u kort toelichten waarom u deze keuze zou maken bij fictieve situatie 2?

.....

**15. Fictieve situatie 3**

Een student komt tijdens een coschap op een veehouderijbedrijf en ziet dat hier het dierenwelzijn ernstig wordt geschaad: de hygiëne en verzorging zijn ruim beneden de maat. Hierdoor hebben uitzonderlijk veel dieren last van ernstige gezondheidsklachten. Een dier is zo ziek dat het haar al zeker 1,5 dag niet meer lukt om op te staan, dit was de veehouder nog niet opgevallen. De zieke dieren krijgen onvoldoende diergeneeskundige zorg.

Wanneer de student dit kenbaar maakt bij de docent krijgt de student te horen dat het nu eenmaal niet anders kan in dit bedrijf. De veehouder is namelijk al 78 jaar en heeft het moeilijk om de zorg voor de dieren nog bij te houden, maar de man doet zijn best. De docent wil verder niet in discussie en onderneemt ook geen actie om de situatie te verbeteren.

Onderling en binnen de afdeling lukt het kennelijk niet om de situatie bespreekbaar te maken. Zou u melding maken bij het Meldpunt "Professioneel handelen en dierenwelzijn"?

- Ja
- Waarschijnlijk wel
- Ik weet het niet
- Waarschijnlijk niet
- Nee
- Anders, namelijk .....

16. Kunt u kort toelichten waarom u deze keuze zou maken bij fictieve situatie 3?

.....

17. Wat zouden voor u redenen zijn om een melding achterwege te laten? Er zijn meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.
- Ik maak me zorgen over persoonlijke gevolgen, als men er achter komt dat ik melding heb gemaakt (zoals mijn carrière of afstuderen).
  - Ik wil de betrokken perso(o)n(en) niet benadelen.
  - Ik wil de relatie tussen mij en de betrokken perso(o)n(en) goed houden.
  - Ik vind het niet mijn verantwoordelijkheid om in te grijpen.
  - Ik vind melding maken teveel moeite.
  - Melding maken kost me teveel tijd.
  - Ik begrijp wel hoe dergelijke situaties ontstaan, ik keur ze niet per definitie af.
  - Andere reden(en), namelijk: .....
  - Geen van bovenstaande redenen. Ik kan geen reden bedenken om een melding achterwege te laten.

*Naast eerder genoemde fictieve situaties zijn er meer voorbeelden te bedenken van situaties waarbij door onprofessioneel handelen dierenwelzijn wordt aangetast. Bijvoorbeeld door gebrek aan zorgvuldigheid, gebrek aan empathie, het niet volgen van wet- en regelgeving, het niet respecteren van andermans ethische bezwaren of niet professionele omgang met patiënt eigenaren.*

18. Heeft u in het afgelopen jaar één of meerdere situaties meegemaakt waarbij door onprofessioneel handelen dierenwelzijn werd aangetast?
- Ja
  - Nee → ga verder naar vraag 22
19. Hoe vaak heeft u in het afgelopen jaar een situatie meegemaakt waarbij door onprofessioneel handelen dierenwelzijn werd aangetast? Als u het niet precies weet kunt u een schatting maken.
- ..... keer
20. Hoe heeft u de laatste keer op deze situatie gereageerd? Er zijn meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.
- Ik heb de persoon aangesproken die verantwoordelijk was voor het onprofessioneel handelen.
  - Ik heb de situatie besproken met een andere collega of medestudent.
  - Ik heb de situatie besproken met een leidinggevende.
  - Ik heb de situatie besproken met een studieadviseur.
  - Ik heb melding gemaakt bij het Meldpunt "Professioneel handelen en dierenwelzijn".
  - Ik heb melding gemaakt bij een instantie buiten de faculteit Diergeneeskunde.
  - Ik heb niks gedaan.
  - Anders, namelijk .....
21. Wat was het resultaat van uw reactie?
- De situatie is verergerd
  - De situatie is niet veranderd

- De situatie is enigszins verbeterd
- De situatie is sterk verbeterd
- De situatie is opgelost
- Het resultaat is mij niet bekend
- Anders, namelijk ....

22. Mocht u opmerkingen hebben aan de hand van deze enquête, dan kunt u deze hier noteren:

.....  
.....

Dit is het einde van de enquête.

Hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking!

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