

INFORMATION: INTEGRAL TO EVIDENCE

Evidence-based veterinary medicine (EBVM) is the practice of systematically and consciously integrating the best evidence with your clinical expertise and your client's desires and needs to determine the most appropriate recommendation and action for each individual clinical situation.

Around the time this issue is published, the EBVM Network's biennial event, Veterinary Evidence Today, will be meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Beginning in the late 1980s, evidence-based medicine (EBM) practice and education was being discussed in the broad medical literature. It was a time when electronic databases were being seen in a support role in medicine and science and keeping up with the literature using a personal computer was a novel concept. From the start, literature searching and appraising the literature were integral components of EBM.

Curricula for medical students and residents evolved to deemphasize "intuition, unsystematic clinical experience and pathophysiologic rationale" and stress "the examination of evidence from clinical research." During this time, McMaster University coined the term "evidence-based medicine."^{1, 2}

By the mid-1990s, two often-cited articles about EBM were published. One emphasized that the goal of EBM in clinical practice is "closing the gap between clinical research and actual patient care" through a process of "conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients."^{2, 3}

EBM is predicated on the premise that the most appropriate response will be based on factors that change. Change can be a good thing; research continues and evolves. Additionally, every clinical situation is different. Your experience as a clinician is not static; you are informed by your prior experiences.

Approaching a clinical need from an EBM perspective follows a cycle to define the need in a situation and then acquire, appraise and apply evidence to that need. In general, the cycle is described as:



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- **Asking:** Describes the specific clinical situation you want to explore as a question
- **Acquiring:** Searches for and acquires evidence to answer that question
- **Appraising:** Critically appraises that evidence in light of the situation
- **Applying:** Applies the evidence to the clinical situation
- **Assessing:** Assesses the process to inform future situations

Using evidence makes it possible to both make and deliver informed recommendations about the situation and to communicate the recommendations to your client. In the mid-2000s, discussions about EBM in veterinary medicine gave broader voice to EBVM.

Interested in learning more about EBVM?

EBVM Learning (<http://ebvmlearning.org>). This tutorial was created through a collaboration of veterinary educators and practitioners and funded by RCVS Knowledge. Freely available and interactive, this resource provides great coverage of the EBVM process in context by using clinical scenarios in each chapter. After an introductory chapter, each of the EBVM steps is covered. The interactive design allows you to move between and within chapters to choose what you want to review or learn and skip what you've already mastered.

EBVM Toolkit (<http://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/evidence-based-veterinary-medicine/ebvm-toolkit/>). This toolkit focuses on the first three steps of EBVM: asking, acquiring and appraising information. Each step is described on

a document or series of documents that can be downloaded as a PDF. Steps one and two are relatively straightforward. Step three, appraising the information, is covered in the remaining documents. The first document addresses levels of evidence, determining study design and deciding if a paper is worth your time to read. The last six documents each present a checklist to assist with appraising a different study type: controlled trials, cross-sectional studies, case control studies, cohort studies, systematic reviews and qualitative studies.

Great. Where's some evidence I can use in practice?

The Evidence Synthesis section at the Center for Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cevm/evidence-synthesis>) site outlines EBVM steps including the role of Best Evidence Topics (BETs) and the BestBets for Vets resource (<http://bestbetsforvets.org>). BestBets for Vets are "simple reviews of current best evidence to answer specific clinical questions." The About portion of the site explains the process and shows how answers are derived, and each BestBet provides the detailed process for the answer to that specific question.

Curious about what happened at the conference?

Watch the Veterinary Evidence Today site (<http://veterinaryevidencetoday.org>) for post-conference details including news and release of the videos after the conference. Presentations from the first conference (2014) and the first EBVM Skills Day (2015) are available and linked from the Events section of the RCVS Knowledge website (<http://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/events>). [TV](#)

1. Guyatt G, Cairns J, Churchill M, et al. Evidence-based medicine a new approach to teaching the practice of medicine. *JAMA* 1992;268:2420
2. Rosenberg WMC and Donald A. Evidence-based medicine: an approach to clinical problem-solving. *British Med J* 1995;310:1122
3. Sackett DL, Rosenberg WMC, Muir Gray JA, et al. Evidence based medicine: what it is and what it isn't. *British Med J* 1996;312:7