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Course: Professional and Clinical Skills I (in the Critical Thinking stream of the course)

Semester: First year, first semester of a 4-year DVM program ("1VM Fall")

Context: Session called "Introduction to evidence-based veterinary medicine", in which a short lecture is presented that introduces the rationale for EBVM and the general approach. After the lecture, students are asked to complete the assignment during class time.

Assignment:

In groups of 4, read 5 pre-selected papers in order to respond to the questions in the survey in the learning management system. The questions are designed to look for the following:

- Review the selection and the description of the animals used in the study (CONFOUNDING, SELECTION BIAS)
- Look for randomization to treatment group (ALLOCATION BIAS)
- Look for blinding of people who measure or evaluate any outcomes or variables (OBSERVER BIAS)
- Look for use of objective measures of outcomes or variables (OBSERVER BIAS)

Criteria for selecting papers for the assignment

We picked papers looking at interventions, both pharmacotherapeutic and surgical, at diagnostic test evaluation, and that were retrospective and prospective.

Critical appraisal of selected studies to illustrate a core skill of EBVM

What is the primary objective of the study?

Was there a control group?

Was randomization performed?

Was the randomization procedure described?

Was everyone who made measurements in the study blinded?

Compare and contrast the control and study groups to decide whether the control group was appropriate for the study.

If there was no control group, describe what you think an ideal control group would look like, in order to reduce bias in the outcomes of the study."