Risk communication: A critical building block in veterinary education

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Risk communication: A critical building block in veterinary education

1. Reasons for strengthening the inclusion of (risk) communication in veterinary education curricula

2. Resources for inclusion of (risk) communication in under-graduate and continuing education curricula
Veterinarians’ primary role

To treat
To cure
To take care of animals

To monitor
To prevent
To detect, report and stop diseases

To improve animal health & welfare and to protect public health
Vet education: a Y story

- Anatomy
- Physiology
- Microbiology
- Epidemiology
- Etcy…

Mostly based on technical knowledge and expertise
So, no change between then...
... and now?
But our world has changed
Our world has changed!

3 key factors

1. Continued Globalisation

2. Heightened awareness of biological threats

3. Changes in the economy of information
Our world has changed

1. **Globalisation** & rapid circulation of:
   - Goods
   - People
   - Animal products
   - Live animals
   - Viruses
   - Bacteria
   - Diseases....
1. Globalisation

*Engaging and communicating locally is no longer sufficient*
Our world has changed

2. Heightened awareness of **biological threats**

There is also increasing evidence to demonstrate that infectious diseases are also being spread from humans to animals (reverse zoonosis)
2. Biological threats

New audiences and interest groups keep appearing
Our world has changed

3. Changes in the **economy of information**

Today a person is subjected to more information in a day than a person in the middle ages during an entire life!
A new age?!
Our world has changed

- Changes to the economy of information
Our world has changed

Information is:

- Everywhere
- From everyone
- All the time
- At any time
- With huge consequences on public behaviour
3. New economy of information

*Information cycle is much shorter, involves more stakeholders, requires communicators that are trusted*
To be heard today, vets must communicate clearly, quickly and credibly:

• To handle a sanitary crisis
• To persuade a client to treat his pets
  • To respond to rumours
• To disseminate scientific information
  • To enact legislation
  • Etc.
OIE standards on communication
Since 2011

Terrestrial Animal Health Code
Quality of Veterinary Services
• Communication Chapter 3.3

Aquatic Animal Health Code
Quality of Aquatic Animal Health Services
• Communication Chapter 3.2.
Communication in Vet education
Since 2012

OIE Veterinary Education
Core Curriculum Guidelines

*recommend communication as a part of veterinary education*

Day-One-Competencies

*require basic knowledge on communication, and appropriate risk communication skills*

*(at least of veterinarians working in Veterinary Authorities)*
OIE-WHO Risk Communication Capacity Building Collaboration

SOURCES AND TOOLS FOR VETERINARY EDUCATION
No ready-made solutions, but a starting point for Veterinary Education

1. Communication Handbook
2. Knowledge Translation Collaboration
3. Online Courses and Curricula
4. Risk Communication Guideline
1. Communication Handbook

OIE
Intergovernmental science based standards

OIE/WHO Risk Communication common tools

WHO
International Health Regulations

Communication Handbook
Veterinary Services

Effective Communications
Participant Handbook
1. Communication Handbook

**Content**

- Framing communication
- Developing communication materials
- Working with the media
- OIE standards

communication@oie.int
1. Communication Handbook

Common trainings of animal & human sectors

During outbreaks and epidemics, the human and animal health sectors must harmonise their communication on hazards, on risks and vulnerabilities, and on actions taken to control the crisis.

Credibility of and Trust in Experts’ & Authorities’ actions
1. Communication Handbook

**OIE Communication Focal Points Regional Trainings**

- Europe: Estonia, July 2014
- Asia: Cambodia, November 2015
- Americas, March 2016
- Africa, Sept & October 2016

**WHO Capacity building trainings**

- Risk Communication training, Serbia October 2014
- Emergency Communication Network trainings:
  - Switzerland, March 2015
  - Jordan, November 2015

**REMESA Communication Seminar on Rabies**

- Tunisia, November 2015
- Dedicated to Rabies awareness
- Gathered all the stakeholders: (Health, Agriculture, Interior, Education, Laboratories)
- Five Maghreb countries
1. Communication Handbook

Current Language Versions

- English
- French
- Spanish
- Vietnamese

- Arabic
- Chinese
- English
- French

- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
2. Knowledge Translation

What is it?

- Science and animal/public health advice made accessible to key stakeholders in the human and animal health sectors
  - Knowledge packs, trainings, and learning materials
  - Adaptation and testing of knowledge transfer tools and resources in-country
2. Knowledge Translation

*What is it?*

- Streamlining of risk communication best practice into the risk management cycle
  - Readiness
  - Outbreak investigation
  - Response and recovery
2. Knowledge Translation

What is it?

- Provision of risk communication and priority disease knowledge and training packs in multiple languages
  - Key languages: e.g. English, Spanish, Arabic, French
  - In local languages
2. Knowledge Translation

*What, where, when?*

- Pilot work focusing on four diseases in four countries in 2016/17
  - Novel Influenza – Viet Nam
  - Rift Valley Fever – Kenya
  - MERS-CoV – Jordan
  - Rabies – Tunisia
3. Online Courses and Curricula

• Dissemination of knowledge packs and trainings through:
  • Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
  • Mobile device applications (Apps)
• Platform in the process of being set-up
  • www.openWHO.org
  • Joint OIE-WHO content under development
4. Risk Communication Guideline

- Peer-reviewed WHO Guideline
- Based on scientific research
  - Will establish scientific basis for integration of risk communication into public health university educational curricula
  - Next step: adaptation to animal health context in collaboration with the OIE

*Timeline: completion of WHO Guideline expected by end 2016*
4. Risk Communication Guideline

Current research topics – Systems questions

- Integration into national and international leadership planning and coordination
- Integration into response to emergencies
- Mechanisms for effective, cross-jurisdictional linkages (cross-border; national - sub-national, etc.)
- Developing and sustaining ERC staff capacity
- Sufficient and sustainable financing for ERC
4. Risk Communication Guideline

**Current research topics – Practice questions**

- ERC activities that build trust in health authorities with affected communities and other stakeholders
- Elements and steps of effective, strategic communication planning
- Best ways and tools for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting ERC data
- Best ways for feedback and integrating lessons into ERC planning, strategy development, execution and evaluation
4. Risk Communication Guideline

Current research topics – Practice questions

• Best ways to engage communities in ERC
• Best social media channels and practices to promote health protection measures and dispel rumours and misinformation
• Best ways to communicate uncertainty
• Elements and timing of messages
Thank you

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