

DIVERSITY OF VETERINARY EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN SAARC COUNTRIES

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Generally, it has been observed that veterinary education systems in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries; namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, follow a similar pedagogical principle, although there is a vast diversity and disparity. There are 75 veterinary academic institutions that are offering veterinary education in the SAARC region. A regional study was conducted to identify the disparities and gaps in the existing veterinary education system of SAARC countries. The purpose of the study was to propose a harmonized veterinary education system in the SAARC countries considering the guidelines of OIE to harness more benefits nationally as well as regionally. The veterinary education program varies from one SAARC country to another and even in the different universities within a country. This study focuses on the differences in veterinary education among the SAARC countries with special emphasis on veterinary academic institutions, degrees and curricula. It is evident that 3 veterinary academic institutions of Afghanistan, 9 of Bangladesh and 12 of Pakistan offer the DVM (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) degree, and 44 veterinary academic institutions (public & private) of India and 3 of Nepal offer the BVSc & AH (Bachelor of Veterinary Science & Animal Husbandry) degree, whereas only one faculty of Sri Lanka offers the BVSc (Bachelor of Veterinary Science) degree. In addition, two academic institutions of Bangladesh and one of Pakistan offer the BSc AH degree (Bachelor of Science in Animal Husbandry). The differences of degrees (DVM, BSc AH, BVSc, BVSc & AH), curricula and credit hours are discussed. The total credit hours of veterinary courses also varied from 177 to 221. Duration of education varied from 5 to 5.5 years and duration of internship varied from 6-12 months. Great differences were observed in numbers of academic departments within institutions; 3-19. It also appeared that the major role of the veterinary profession remains primarily related to food animals in SAARC countries rather than companion animals.

Keywords: course-curricula – degrees – diversity – education – veterinary – OIE