

Occupational Stress in Veterinary Nurses: Roles of the Work Environment and Own Companion Animal

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Abstract:

Veterinary nursing has been identified as an occupation at risk for occupational stress and burnout, but a better understanding of job stressors and influencing factors is needed. The aim of this study was to examine occupational stress in a veterinary nursing population based on established work stress theories. This study sought to determine which environmental aspects of the work situation may be detrimental to well-being and which factors may operate to reduce job stress. A sample of South Australian veterinary nurses ($n = 127$) completed a postal questionnaire about their work environment (job demands and control, work social supports) and their psychological distress, work burnout, and job satisfaction, with a response rate of 76.5%. The potential influence of attachment to participants' own companion animals was investigated using the Owner Pet Relationship Scale. Hierarchical regressions then explored the contribution to psychological outcomes, of social support at work and attachment to own companion animal, after controlling for work load, exposure to euthanasia, contact with clients, work demands, and work control. While social support at work ameliorated occupational stress, attachment to companion animal was linked to decreased job satisfaction. Supportive interpersonal relations in the workplace have a key role in veterinary nurses' job satisfaction. Management skill training may have a role in the development of more satisfying workplaces for the veterinary nursing sector, which may have implications for the undergraduate and post-registration training of veterinary practice managers.

Keywords: [ATTACHMENT](#); [COMPANION ANIMAL](#); [HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND](#); [OCCUPATIONAL STRESS](#); [VETERINARY NURSES](#)

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