Annual Report for the WSAVA Professional Wellness Group

Name of the Committee
Name of the Committee (Co-)Chair(s)  Professional Wellness Group
Name of the Committee Members  Nienke Endenburg and Derick Chibeu
                                    Martin Soberano, Vicki Lim, Michael Paton, Janet
                                    Donlin, Marie Holowaychuk, Patricia Dowling and
                                    Shane Ryan

Mission/Tagline of the Committee
A focused, united effort to maintain and advance the health and well-being of all veterinary professionals.

Committee Activities of 2018

Introduction:
WSAVA has as its mission, the advancement of the health and welfare of companion animals worldwide. It achieves this mission through an educated, committed and collaborative global community of veterinary peers. It is imperative that the health, welfare & wellness of the veterinary team is maintained & advanced to ensure - equally - the health, welfare & wellness of companion animals under this global veterinary community’s care. The personal & professional wellness of veterinarians & veterinary staff has been receiving increased attention in veterinary publications & conferences (FAVA, 2014; AVMA, 2017), social media and the non-veterinary press.

This increased recognition that stress & compassion fatigue coupled with a demanding workplace environment are adversely affecting the mental well-being and physical health of veterinarians. As such, the WSAVA Professional Wellness Group (PWG) was started in March 2018.

The overall goal of the PWG is to improve the health and well-being of veterinarians, para-veterinarians & all members of the veterinary team.

Activities 2018:
Being a nascent committee, the activities of the PWG in 2018 include the following:

a) Meetings:
i. 9th May 2018 – TC
ii. 20th July 2018 – TC
iii. 27th September 2018 – Face – to – face Meeting in Singapore
iv. The PWG held a half a day’s workshop and lectures during the WSAVA Congress in Singapore.

b) Creation of Resources:

The committee, during its face-to-face meeting during the WSAVA Congress in Singapore, was able to come up with OGSMS Action Plan (attached) as well as took part in the committee’s forum to meet various sponsors and partners of the WSAVA.

c) Publicity:
1. The importance and work of the committee has also been highlighted in the WSAVA Bulletins subsequent to the WSAVA Congress in Singapore with the Co-Chairs, Drs. Nienke Endenburg and Derick Chibeu giving interviews about the work of the group.

2. Dr. Endenburg managed to give an interview for a publication magazine from India http://www.dogsandpupsmagazine.com/industry-views/#top

3. Members of the group have also been vigorously involved in publicizing the PWG’s work in different regions during CE activities / conferences / congresses in their respective regions eg.
   i. Dr. Chibeu gave a presentation at the launch of the Tanzania Small Animal Veterinary Association on 3rd December 2018 and shared the work of the PWG with AFSCAN Ambassadors.
   ii. There has also been collaborations with other regional associations to promote and publicize the work of the PWG https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/news/rcvs-and-avma-join-forces-to-tackle-veterinary-mental-health/
   iii. Vetstream has been an invaluable partner in disseminating the work of PWG.

d) Survey:

The PWG launched a global Mental Wellness Survey during the WSAVA Congress in Singapore. The survey ended on 31st December 2018 and its outcomes will be published in 2019 with a presentation to be done at the WSAVA Congress in Toronto, 2019 https://www.wsava.org/Committees/Committees/Professional-Wellness-Group

Conclusion:
The Professional Wellness Group (PWG) will pursue a scientifically rigorous, evidence-based approach, envisaged as a three-year project. The expected outcome is that the PWG will design guidelines and toolkits for veterinary practitioners to improve professional wellness; review state-of-the-art thinking and provide a WSAVA perspective that recognises regional, economic and cultural needs.

Dr. Martin Soberano, Dr. Vicki Lim and Dr. Nienke Endenburg at the Wellness Workshop

Priorities for 2019
1. Publish the results of the 2018 PWG Survey on wellness in a peer-reviewed journal
2. Identify wellness needs, challenges and risks in all cultures
3. Literature Review on wellness
4. To disseminate relevant information on veterinary mental health and well-being to a global audience