



PRESS INFORMATION

WSAVA Webinar: Pets and Domestic Violence – is your team prepared?

14.00 UTC, Wednesday, June 23 2021

The [World Small Animal Veterinary Association](#) (WSAVA) is to host a free webinar to highlight the impact of domestic violence on veterinary practice - patients, clients and employees.

Researchers have documented that violence towards animals can be both a component and a symptom of child, spousal and elder abuse. This means that veterinarians are increasingly being called upon to be responsive to suspected animal abuse as a sentinel indicator of other violence against human and non-human family members. This has enhanced the veterinarian's role in One Health and public health responses to family and community violence.

The webinar will be led by Dr Melinda Merck, former co-chair of the WSAVA's Animal Wellness and past president of the NAVC. Dr Merck is a forensic veterinarian consulting on legal cases involving animals and chair of the NAVC VMX Veterinary Forensics: Animal CSI track. She provides training for veterinary, attorney, and law enforcement professionals globally on the use of veterinary forensic science and medicine in the investigation and prosecution of animal cruelty cases.

During the webinar, she will give advice on how to spot the signs of potential domestic violence-related issues in the patient and suggest approaches to handling discussions

with clients. She will also explore the role of the wider veterinary community in the development and implementation of response programs for pets of domestic violence.

This webinar and subsequent live Q&A will be moderated by WSAVA One Health Committee Chair Dr Michael Lappin. Dr Lappin is the Kenneth W. Smith Professor of Small Animal Clinical Veterinary Medicine at Colorado State University, USA, and Director of the Center for Companion Animal Studies.

Find out more about the webinar: <https://wsava.org/news/events/wsava-webinar-domestic-violence/>

Join the webinar: <https://youtu.be/qv4pMWVK3SI>

Notes to editors:

The WSAVA's Animal Wellness and Welfare Committee promotes advances in animal welfare and wellness around the world through the provision of enhanced veterinary care. Its work is generously supported by the [Purina Institute](#), a Diamond Partner of the WSAVA.

The WSAVA's One Health Committee aims to ensure the prominence of the companion animal-human interface in the global One Health agenda. Its members include veterinarians and human doctors, together with representation from the OIE and CDC. The work of the One Health Committee is kindly supported by WSAVA Gold Partner [MSD Animal Health](#), Diamond Partner the [Purina Institute](#) and Platinum Partner, [Zoetis](#).

The WSAVA represents more than 200,000 veterinarians worldwide through its 115 member associations and works to enhance standards of clinical care for companion animals. Its core activities include the development of WSAVA Global Guidelines in key areas of veterinary practice, including pain management, nutrition and vaccination, together with lobbying on important issues affecting companion animal care worldwide.

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