



Hello everyone, my name is Sugimoto and I am a veterinarian. I have a clinic on the outskirts of Tokyo, just across the river near the border of Tokyo and Chiba prefectures.

Today, I would like to talk from the viewpoint of animal care, which is to say, the current status of animal care and the greater demand for veterinary nurses in the field where diversified tasks and capabilities are in need.

When I started as a practitioner, there was no such thing as a 'Veterinary Nurse'. As some of our presenters today have pointed out already, the position of Veterinary Nurse was first created with the development of Small Animal Medicine as its background. The need for veterinary nurses to assist practitioners became very apparent and demands to supply proper training for the position followed. This is what happened in Japan. Organizational structures also had to change so that, in due course, it has become common practice for us to operate with proper assistance from veterinary nurses.

After spending 12 to 13 years as a vet my vision grew much clearer. What I decided I would like my clinic to do is to provide a form of care for animals that strikes a good balance between Western medicine and alternative medicine, a balance from which therapeutic capabilities are effectively utilized. For this reason last year I changed the name of my clinic from 'Minami-Koiwa Pet Clinic' to 'Minami-Koiwa Pet Clinic Medical Support Center'. In order to cater to a wider public, we want to be able to work with pet owners to support their pet animals and provide them with better lives. That's the role I would like my clinic to play. My key objective is that animal medical treatment is provided as a collaboration of doctors, nurses, owners and other related individuals all working together towards the

same goals.

Next, I would like to talk about the current roles of veterinary nurses at animal hospitals.

Up until now, the roles pet nurses have been expected to perform have included nursing activities, reception work, cleaning and administrative tasks, all of which have been rather general functions. However, together with an increasing need for 'diversified care' as well as due to progress made in recent years, the provision of services by animal clinics has transformed dramatically. Also, the scope and responsibilities of clinics and practitioners have become more specific, some of them specializing as eye doctors, dentists, orthopedists, or neurologists. Still others have introduced acupuncture or alternative medicine services. You can even find clinics that only care for exotic animals or birds. What we can say is that, veterinary nurses now have much wider options to choose from. They can now decide the way they wish to go to match their competencies and interests.

Furthermore, a wider coordination between high-tech institutions, specialist hospitals and university hospitals is now available for small clinics, a development which is paving the way for small clinics to achieve new possibilities. I believe that these developments will push animal medicine in a new direction and that educational systems and school curricular for veterinary nurses will catch up with the new requirements. I have a feeling that these new demands will eventually become the standard for the animal care field in future.

The diversification that has taken place in the field might mean you have to decide where and how to apply your knowledge and experience. This would, depend on not only the situation that your hospital is in, but also the positioning of the hospital. I think this

dictates the roles of vet nurses. Just to name a few, I believe nurses should excel in specific technologies. I think they need to have excellent interpersonal skills for processing the animals and owners as they go through the administration procedures for a hospital stay or examination. They should have the knowledge to give owners guidance on how to care for animals at home, preparing their meals, and so on.

Other expected qualities include compassion, which enables them to show sympathy for owners, an aptitude for organization, and the skill to foresee what needs to be done next. For example, vet nurses sometimes serve as an intermediary, clarifying the condition/ symptom of the patient on behalf of the doctor or setting up tools and materials in advance of a clinical examination, for example, checking the animal's temperature. Doctors could develop mutual trust when they have such highly capable nurses and feel at ease concentrating on their primary job.

As well as those already mentioned above, there are still other tasks such as reception work, accounting, order/ procurement management, and the handling of complaints. Although complaint handling is typically done by the doctors or the principal doctor, the nurse may be asked to help out with this and other tasks.

I believe that the care options at animal hospitals became more diversified, and the relationship between humans and pet animals grew closer. As a result, companion animals have a much higher presence than before and the quality of care we provide has improved overall, alongside the higher expectations placed on us. The way animals are being treated, as based on how we operated clinics 30 or so years ago, has been changed. To adapt to these changes we need to enhance the overall level of hospitals and clinics. The responsibilities expected of one practitioner are rapidly increasing. This is why the potential role of the vet nurse is becoming increasingly vital. Supported by even a little help, veterinarians would be able to focus on facilitating high-quality care whilst still maintaining communication with their animal patients and owners.

Vets nurses are not only a necessity but they have also become an absolutely fundamental part of animal care. Having said that, I do find it particularly encouraging that the Japanese Veterinary Association is now becoming fully established. Under a unified command, the Association has already started initiatives to certify vet nurses and gain them a higher status within society. I am fully aware of the importance of granting qualifications to nurses to protect them and, meanwhile, nurses should try to maintaining that other important quality, human decency.

The qualities expected of a good receptionist are; interpersonal skills, a mild-manner and pleasing demeanor - someone who is always happy to help animals and owners. Good communication skills are also vital because receptionists are expected to perform as doctor intermediates with the patients to provide crucial information about the treatment required. The kind of reception provided can potentially drive an owner into a rage or put them at ease depending on receptionist experience. Poor communication can exacerbate owner anger and possibly prolong the required treatment period unnecessarily.

The roles of a receptionist at an animal hospital are not the same as for other reception work. There is no clear model but certain skills and abilities are needed. Just to mention a few - sufficient communication, correctly setting things up, a natural work flow, being ready for emergencies and briefing doctors on the situation. All these skills can reduce patient waiting time and help keep a clinic organized.

Just having one or two nurses to help a vet on-site could make a world of difference. They can clean up the theatre when treatment is completed and have it ready for the next patient, whilst also sorting out drug-prescriptions and giving the owner instructions for home-based care and diet based on the animal's specific treatment history. Helping with any of these could take the weight off a doctor's responsibilities and thereby enhance care efficiency. Additionally, the doctor can gain some time to plan future treatments.

As I mentioned, at my clinic I have introduced alternative medicine in addition to conventional Western Medicine. What little we do know is that alternative medicines involve a lot of time-consuming procedures. In the photo I am showing a sound treatment in progress called 'Manners Therapy'. The session takes about 15-30 minutes and a nurse would be standing by the side during the entire duration. An additional half an hour would be needed if the preparation included some special arrangements. These preparation procedures would include training and having owners well-orientated for the event. Nurses are expected to be a part of the therapy treatment (under doctor supervision of course). This photo shows a nurse taking part in the training program as an instructor. The team aims to build a constructive relationship with the companion animal whilst making progress on training and enjoying games. Another service available at our clinic is counseling. Through counseling, we advise owners about communication methods we believe will help them construct a better relationship with their pet and thereby improve their day to day lives. We seek solutions with owners in terms of health management and for behaviour issues. Having instructors with nursing experience for these activities make them highly-valued, reliable assistants. The photo here shows a homeopathy session in progress, homeopathy being another form of alternative therapy. The nurses' involvement begins with facilitating the treatment through to making homeopathic remedies. It only ends when they place the pet back into the hands of the owner.

Finally, I think it is now time for us veterinarians to recognize that the vet nurse has become an indispensable part of the system, and that we have to take one step further towards the new direction so as to materialize "team-treatment". Having said that, I believe it is also important to keep abreast of world-wide affairs in terms of vet nurse roles and draw on them. Being well-versed with them will give the nurse advantages and confidence to stand on their own as responsible adults and professionals. After all, the vet nurse is going to be part of all the expected changes that will eventually bring new progress to animal medicine.

With a higher demand for diversified and specified pet-care services, the capability for each practitioner to work as a team will become more crucial because teamwork will be the fundamental backbone in our work. The ability to empathize with others, for both the animals and their owners, is our most important credential as a care provider. A big part of our job is to respect animal lives, and we often have to deal with such issues. I am certain that the relationships we foster in our working lives can be contributed back into society and so give us all a higher level of recognition. For this, I must say, building a partnership within teams is rewarding. It is my sincere hope that I will be part of the contribution. To everybody pursuing a career as a vet nurse, I wish you the very best.

Thank you for your attention.

## 動物病院における 動物看護職の重要性



【Slide 1】

## みなみこいわペットクリニック 動物看護師の仕事



【Slide 5】

## 現代における 動物病院の多様化

- オールマイティーなホームドクターの病院
- 眼科、皮膚科、整形外科、ホリスティック医療、小鳥、エキゾチック、ウサギ、猫の専門病院など、専門分野を持つ病院
- 高度医療センター、大学病院
- 往診専門の病院
- 夜間緊急病院

【Slide 2】



【Slide 6】

## 動物病院の診療業務の中での 動物看護師の役割

- 診察時の保定や助手として
- 多種に渡る検査の助手、担当者として
- 入院管理、手術時の管理、助手として
- 獣医師の行き届かない場面での飼い主様とのコミュニケーションによる食事管理、入院時の案内や報告などのサポートとして

【Slide 3】



【Slide 7】



病院内で動物看護師の存在なくして、我獣医師はより精度の高い、細やかな配慮に支えられた医療を実現することができるのであろうか！！

【Slide 4】



【Slide 8】





【Slide 9】



【Slide 13】



【Slide 10】



【Slide 14】



【Slide 11】



【Slide 15】



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【Slide 20】



【Slide 18】



【Slide 21】



【Slide 19】



動物看護師のますますの活躍と社会地位の向上を、パートナーとして応援していきます。

【Slide 22】

