

家庭動物医療の現状と今後

～家族から社会の一員となった家庭動物への対応～

The Current Situation and Future of “Family Animal” Medical Care ~ A Response to Help Pets Move from being Members of the Family to Members of Society ~

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Hello everybody, and thank you for participating in today's workshop.

I was asked to do something at this workshop on behalf of the Japan Veterinary Medical Association (JVMA) by Knots representative, Tominaga-san. She left us free to make all the decisions but the days passed and I was unable to think of how to best plan this workshop. Eventually, it was decided that I would ask some veterinarians I know who are active in various fields, to talk about the current situation of animal medical care in their own field. I was also able to obtain the support of the pharmaceutical company Dainippon Sumitomo Pharma Co., Ltd. (DSP), which has been engaged in animal medical care for many years. As a result we were finally able to realize this workshop. I am far from being a perfect chairman, so I would like to ask you all for your forbearance and cooperation.

We are planning that each speaker will talk about his or her own field for about 30 or 40 minutes. After that we will move on to discussions, which can include members of the audience. So with this in mind, I'll start my talk as the first speaker.

I think that the impression people have of the veterinarian occupation varies depending on which generation of people you ask, as well as whether they live in the big cities or small towns and rural areas. I think the roles of veterinarians have changed greatly since the time I first became one.

The occupation of the veterinarian in Japan is an old one and practiced as far back as the Edo Period. But in modern veterinary science, before and during World War II, the management of chargers - the military

horses - was an especially important role. Actually, when I was a young man, I heard that the successive presidents of the JVMA were usually individuals who had come to know each other while in the army.

Around the time I was born, which was during the period known as the era of rapid economic growth, veterinarians played a major role in the public being able to obtain animal protein due to their involvement in support of the livestock industry.

From the middle Showa era and into the Heisei era, which was about the time I became a veterinarian, I believe that veterinarians played a major role in developing drugs and chemical products through being involved in research while working at enterprises and research institutes, and particularly pharmaceutical companies and makers of other chemical products. Also, there are many veterinarians playing a direct role in people's lives and health, such as in the prevention and management of zoonotic disease outbreaks and in public health work such as hygiene control. Because this field is, rather surprisingly, virtually unknown to the general public, the work range of the veterinarian has had to be extended. So, for the past few years, we have also had to disseminate information and educate people through events such as the JVMA's "World Veterinary Day" and "Animal Appreciation Day", as held in Tokyo on the first Saturday of October. Year by year, the number of participants has been increasing and I think this had led to more effective popularization and publicity activities.

Regarding their current roles, veterinarians are prominent in helping to assure food safety and security,

and as part of their contribution to human health, they work to implement measures against emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases that are difficult to control in our increasingly complex society. Some of my colleagues are protecting human health with great enthusiasm as official veterinarians. In addition, some of them are active in various fields of research, while others play roles in education, not only in veterinary science in universities and other educational institutions, but also in animal nursing. There is a growing social need for animal nursing, as there is also for providing animal medical care for pets—a field known as “family animal medical care” in which I am personally and deeply involved—and in dealing with wild animals, which can become complicated. I would like people to understand that the work of the veterinarian is not limited to providing health care for pets in the cities, or to treating industrial animals in prefectures with active livestock industries. Our work extends to many other things.

Today’s workshop is being held under the theme of the Current Situation and Future of “Family Animal” Medical Care. Regarding the details, I would like to talk about how on-site veterinarians see the handling of so-called “family animals” that have progressed from being members of families to members of society, and the veterinary care they are providing to these animals.

After my talk, Dr. Hayama will talk about wild animal medical care for protecting the health of ecosystems. After that we will listen to a talk by Dr. Sugihara, a veterinarian working in the public hygiene field, about government topics, and then Dr. Yokoo will tell us about the role demanded of industrial animal medical care veterinarians.

The term “veterinary care” is familiar to all of us here, and the people in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) also use the term widely. But I wonder whether members of the general public or children, when they hear the term, can grasp the roles and work involved. Because I think veterinarians have a role to play in all kinds of animal medical care, I will use the term “animal medical care” today. But I am bearing

in mind that within the institutions I’ve mentioned, “veterinary care” is commonly used.

The term “family animal medical care” is not used very often, or so I gather. Historically, taking the subject animal’s size as the standard, cows and horses were considered large animals, pigs were medium-sized animals, and dogs and cats were small animals. The expressions “small animal veterinary care” and “small animals” that are still in use today are remnants of this history. However, when I ask my friends or children about what they think the term “small animals” refers to, almost everyone says they imagine a hamster or a bird. In our own veterinary field, we have a fixed image of small animals as dogs, cats, etc., but for these animals I try to use the term “family animal” when speaking to people outside of our field. The term “companion” could equally well refer to one’s own wife or husband, but the JVMA has tried to define it as another person or animal with which one lives together. Even so, this word might be misunderstood because many people are much too emotionally dependent on their pets. So under circumstance in which relationships between people and animals are becoming deeper, I feel that the time has come for the term “family animal” to be established. I’m sure all of you feel a little awkward about this term, but I hope you will understand my reason for using it.

When I first became a veterinarian, I thought it would be good if the number of people considering their pets as members of the family, or as “family animals”, increased. In those days, family animals were called pets and were treated like toys. There were many people who kept large animals in order to show off or flaunt an air of authority or assumed status by keeping a rare animal as a pet. Quite often I came across people with pets who did not bother to take care of them properly.

To help improve this situation the Japanese Animal Hospital Association (JAHA) - which is taking part in this workshop - has been steadily developing its Companion Animal Partnership Program (CAPP). Under the program, which has been running for almost three decades now, people and animals have been taking

part in activities together on a nationwide basis. The effect has been that an idea has taken root in society that keeping pets as a member of one's family entails a considerable responsibility.

At that time, I still thought there were some obstacles to pets being accepted as members of society. However, as talked about in a previous workshop, we were hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake last year, and in 1995 there was the Kobe (Great Hanshin-Awaji) Earthquake, a disaster that led to Knots being established. It was from this time that the idea began to emerge that living with animals involves more than just an immediate family and the animal itself, but also includes an association between animal and society. With the Great East Japan Earthquake, animal-related training and education and a sense of the responsibility of living with animals has begun to spread gradually throughout society.

Following the Great East Japan Earthquake I had an experience which made a big impression on me. This was at a dog evacuation center called Somakai in Soma City which is located in the north of Fukushima Prefecture. Soma City sustained a huge amount of damage from the tsunami brought by the earthquake.

The person who established this dog evacuation center is a man in his late thirties who had been working in Soma's construction industry. His house, workplace and other possessions were all swept away by the tsunami. His family members were now living separately in evacuation centers established at temples and schools. At various evacuation centers, he saw that some people with dogs were sleeping in their cars or that such people had a very distant attitude. So, together with a friend, he decided to establish a dog evacuation center even though he had lost his own house and company. Together they set up the center on a slight elevation by levelling the area and using leftover scrap wood. At first, the local veterinarians practicing nearby were cautious about the venture. They wondered if it had been set up merely in order to gather donations or for some other unscrupulous reason. Despite this suspicion, and even though they were not dog experts, the people running the center - who were themselves staying in

evacuation shelters - diligently cared for the animals out of sympathy for their plight.

Over a period of eight months, I quietly visited them, showing up about once a month. I was anxious to find out how they were coping but I saw the people taking good care of the dogs from 10 am until 4 pm. There wasn't any running water available at the center yet there was somebody who brought in three 20-liter tanks of water every day. Surprisingly, the people caring for the dogs hadn't even met the person making the deliveries. It was by seeing people cooperating in this way to care for dogs that I realized how dogs and cats have now been accepted as members of society. This evacuation center was an example of that acceptance.

Many veterinarians such as Dr. Abe of Ishinomaki in Sendai Prefecture, who was introduced earlier today, or Dr. Kawamata of Fukushima, are having a tough time working in the disaster area. Apart from veterinarians, there are other people enthusiastically establishing ties between people and animals or between people and people. When I think about that, I feel that pets are getting closer to being regarded as members of society.

Furthermore, pets provide us with comfort. This dog on the left is living with a veterinary technician who works at our clinic. The mother and father of this technician both had serious illnesses, and the mother passed away the other day. But when work is hard, this animal provides the technician with energy.

The dog on the right lives with Dr. Watanabe who was victimized by the disaster in Tomioka Town, as Dr. Kawamata mentioned a little earlier. The earthquake



had struck on March 11 and the police visited Dr. Watanabe's area on March 12. They ordered people to evacuate with only the barest necessities, not to take any animals, and to put on dust respirators. Then, after being evacuated to a neighboring town, they were informed that the nuclear accident had occurred.

Dr. Watanabe had thought they had been evacuated because another tsunami was on the way. As such he thought they might be able to return home the next day. Instead, they were told that they should evacuate to somewhere further away, and so moved to the outskirts of Koriyama City where they spent a week. His daughter was upset that he had not let her bring her pet along and accused him of being some kind of monster. He had to tell her that he had many animals in his charge through his work and could not take only her pet. At the time, one of them (the French bulldog shown here) was pregnant with two pups in its womb and the delivery date was expected around March 15 or 16.

After one week, Dr. Watanabe went back to his hospital (despite a major altercation with the police who attempted to stop him). By that time, regrettably, of the 20 animals that he had been keeping at the hospital, five that had been in serious condition had died. Dr. Watanabe removed the 15 surviving animals in his car by making three separate trips. He had thought he would have to perform a caesarean section on the pregnant French bulldog, as he usually did, but fortunately the mother had already given birth naturally. Unfortunately Dr. Watanabe could only find one of the pups and had to assume that a crow had taken the other pup away. The bulldog on the right is the surviving pup. Dr. Watanabe says that this dog now playfully nips at his leg and greatly helps him cope by providing emotional support. I think pets have such an existence for people.

During yesterday's workshop, we had a detailed introduction to Animal Assisted Activity (AAA) and Animal Assisted Education (AAE). Also, Osaka City Veterinary Medical Association, the JAHA, and our colleagues in Ikuno-ku, Osaka, are carrying out visit

activities in this kind of style. I think that such activities are necessary for those of us working in family animal medical care, and I believe that contact with animal activities in various forms is important in addition to providing rearing support for school-kept animals, and activities linked to welfare center animals, etc.

When I see such activities, what makes me very happy is that the people participating in these activities and the people working on the frontlines put a smile on their faces. I think this is very important. When we take group photos, even though we remind people to smile, it is still difficult to capture a group photo in which everyone is smiling. But I'm often shown photographs taken of people just after they've completed one of these activities, and in almost all of these photos, everyone has a broad smile on their face. I believe these photos show the utility value that pets have. You have heard detailed stories about these activities (and I would like to talk about this in more detail should I ever have the opportunity). It is often said that the term "animal therapy" was coined in a precise sense in the same way that a night game in Japanese baseball came to be called a "nighter". But the very fact that "animal therapy" has been coined shows that the role of animals as society members is gaining recognition.

Since I am the Vice-Chairman of the JAHA, I hope that such activities are remembered under the rubric of animal-assisted activity, therapy and education in a correct way. But more than that, I would like people to appreciate just how large an effect animal contact has on society. In western countries, research into the "human-animal bond" and "animal-assisted activities" has been going on for the past 30 to 40 years. In Japan also, such research has started up at many universities and various kinds of data have been published. In the pamphlet handed out to you earlier there is information on how living with pets prevents elderly people and children from developing certain diseases and how it, on occasion, reduces the amount of medication they require. So, those of you who are interested please read this pamphlet when you have time. The pamphlet was produced last year by the Japan Pet Food Association in order to make people more aware of the utility value of

pets. This activity has received various kinds of support from pet food-related companies as well as from DSP going back to the time of its predecessor company Dainippon Seiyaku. I believe that such corporate social contributions can be very helpful and that we should make good use of them.

I think it was in 2003 that social recognition of pets really changed. For a long time, the Pet Food Association has conducted research into pet ownership in Japan, including the number of pets kept and the keeping environment, etc., by analyzing pet food sales and through survey interviews, etc. According to the research, 2003 was the year when the number of pets kept inside first exceeded the number kept outside. From that time, we have moved from the era of keeping animals outdoors to the era of living with them indoors. Animals that live indoors with people have a much closer relationship with us, and with this the attractiveness of animals blends into everyday society.

Then, in 2009, the Law for Ensuring the Safety of Pet Food, the so-called "Pet Food Safety Law" came into force. This was an event that was very surprising even for me. Before that time, dog food and cat food had only been categorized as 'miscellaneous' products. Although livestock feedstuff was subject to very clear safety standards, dog and cat food wasn't covered by any standard at all. This was at a time when the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) people were discussing about doing various things. The Pet food Safety Law came into effect at about the time of the first Abe cabinet, when Yasuhisa Shiozaki was the Chief Cabinet Secretary. The safety of food imported from China was then a major issue and Mr. Shiozaki was asked, possibly by his wife, whether this meant that the safety of pet food was also in doubt. So he asked the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) to investigate. MAFF and MOE held a long series of committee meetings to draw up the Pet Food Safety Law for the stated reason of promoting animal welfare. But it was unreasonable from them to use government budget earmarked for pets to check food safety.

So I asked them to listen to what the public might say

on the issue. In response, they sent out questionnaires to 3,000 random households. Half of these households had experienced keeping pets or were currently keeping one or more pets, while the other half had no experience of keeping pets. The result, as is of course understandable, was that the half who were keeping or had kept pets answered that pet food safety should be ensured. But more significantly, the majority of the other half - those who had never kept pets - also said that pet food safety should be ensured. This represented a significant shift in the current. The new law was promoted because the public was requesting the establishment of a law governing the safety of pet food. The law was finally passed by the Diet in June 2009 at a time when both the LDP and the DPJ were enveloped in large-scale chaos. It was passed because Diet members beyond party political differences realized that pets were playing a big role in society.

Since the Kobe (Great Hanshin-Awaji) Earthquake, people have become conscious about what we should do in order to enable people to evacuate accompanied by their pets when a natural disaster occurs. We should therefore train our pets during normal times, teach them and work on their manners so that other people will easily accept them when they have to interact with society around them. Also, following the Chuetsu Earthquake (and later following the Great East Japan Earthquake) people were able to realize animal-accompanied evacuation smoothly in those places that had prepared in advance. In other places that had not prepared animal-accompanied evacuation was not realized. When there is a major disaster, people's true nature often comes to the surface so the attitude of paying attention to animals and protecting them is very important. When I look at the present situation, I think that pets are now sufficiently blending into society.

Under these circumstances, I suppose the demands and requests in respect of animal medical care are on the increase. In order to respond to that, animal medical care teams will need to be built up. I expect all of you here must know this already, but in the animal medical care field, only veterinarians have official qualifications. People who work as veterinary technicians or in other

capacities have no official qualifications. But when we provide medical care to animals, the roles of the veterinarian and those of the veterinary technician are different. So for a few years we have been discussing making a unified certification for veterinary technicians or creating an official qualification in the future. And today, various organizations that have been making certifications discretely are simultaneously carrying out tests using a common examination for the first time. For those students who pass this exam, the JVMA, the Japanese Society of Veterinary Science (JSVS), and the unified certification organization will issue certifications, and they are planning to make this a base for an official qualification. This is something we have to do in order to build animal medical care teams.

It is a matter of course that animal hospitals accept animals and attempt to treat their diseases. But it is important to prevent disease and discover a chronic disease at an early stage through periodic health checks and taking steps to control emerging problems. Human medical care involves early detection and periodic health checks in which physicians and their patients discuss the latter's health situation. But animals of course cannot express their own will verbally. So when a pet reaches an advanced age, periodic health checks are necessary, and if a disease is detected, it is important for the veterinarian to provide the best treatment for the pet while acting in consultation with the owner.

At the same time, I want to repeat to pet owners the importance of training their pets, of fitting in with ordinary life, and of respecting their own manner. This is important enough that it can make the difference between saving or not saving a pet's life. When I became a veterinarian, households keeping cats or dogs were generally considered to be a nuisance and a cause of trouble in their neighborhood. But after the Kobe (Great Hanshin-Awaji) Earthquake, animal lovers and veterinarian organizations got together to tackle public education. This led to such a huge improvement in pet owner awareness that, today, households keeping pets are regarded as a source of comfort for their neighborhoods. I think this is thanks largely to

the awareness of pet owners. For those of us who are providing family animal medical care, promoting pet owner awareness is a major role.

As to the question of whether or not an animal hospital run by a single vet can monitor the health of an animal 365 days a year, including night time, the answer is obviously that this is impossible. So just as you would expect, in the same manner as people, animals need access to a nighttime emergency system. So, since about a dozen years ago, regional veterinary medical associations and local veterinarians throughout the nation have been cooperating with each other to establish nighttime emergency systems. There has been about one such system operating in each government-designated city. Thanks to these systems, sick or injured pets can receive emergency treatment even at night, and then go on to receive treatment from their primary veterinarian from the next day.

Moreover, some (though not all) pet owners wish their pets to receive advanced medical treatment if they are diagnosed with illnesses such as brain tumors or heart disease. For such pet owners, a system that links three parties, namely pet owners, home doctors, and secondary medical care facilities that can provide advanced medical treatment is gradually being built. So in our field, we are trying to respond to the pet owner requests to offer various treatment options.

By using CT or MRI imaging we can see the location of any pathological lesions and determine what they are. This allows us to make operational plans taking a proper approach. Some people travel from quite far to bring us their pets because they want to know for sure if the animal has a brain tumor or not. We provide a service that locates such brain tumors using MRI and other scanning techniques and perform operations to remove them.

Dr. Amano, who has performed surgery on the Emperor, said in a recent interview that, when conducting medical treatment and surgery, it is not enough only to perform an operation and complete it without any complication. The ultimate goal in this

case is to make it possible for the patient to return to his official duties and at his previous level of fitness. Perhaps unintentionally, we veterinarians tend to lose our enthusiasm for nursing or care once the operation has been completed successfully, although of course many of us do of course provide enthusiastic aftercare too. But on such occasions, it is the veterinary technicians who take diligent and loving care of their patients' prognosis with round-the-clock observation on a rotating shift. If the patient condition changes they report it to the veterinarians. They are working in a tough occupation but they feel a great deal of joy when they see a pet they have been caring for becoming better again - as we can see here. It is very satisfying to see an animal, previously so ill it could not stand on its legs, a few days later get up and recover. On the other hand, we have to come to terms with knowing that a pet with a brain tumor, even after surgery and some recovery, may not survive the next time it falls ill. This is very hard for us working at an animal hospital to accept. Owner reactions also differ in such cases. Some don't want us to carry out any treatment. Others want us to carry out surgery. As such, we have to be ready to respond to various requests from owners.

Last year, I visited Tohoku for almost a year in all. While I was in Tohoku, I met many people who were having great difficulties. Now I am back in Osaka where I provide advanced veterinary care, and while I am doing this I sometimes feel a strong internal conflict. But now I realize that around the world all sorts of things happen in all sorts of places. When I first returned to Osaka, I was still uptight and would habitually turn off lights while telling others that we have to conserve electricity. The people around me must have thought I was crazy. But now that I have been back in Kansai for a while I have gradually relaxed. Not forgetting that the people of Kobe experienced a huge earthquake in 1995 it may be that things are still a bit different here so I will try not to forget about saving electricity as much as possible.

In the same way as people, animals also follow all sorts of destinies. Take this animal, seen in the center of the picture on the left. When I was running an animal

hospital in Osaka's Tsurumi Ward about 15 years ago, this dog was brought to us almost at death's door due to an internal blockage. The owner insisted that the dog had not been neglected but it clearly had been. Somehow we managed to snatch this one from the jaws of death but several months later he was back with us suffering from the same condition. When that happened a young vet at the hospital became furious about the living conditions that this dog was being forced to endure. It was near death when it was brought to us and aggressive. Nevertheless our hospital took it in and our vets and the veterinary technicians nursed it enthusiastically. Eventually it recovered and became a very friendly dog. At first this dog would bite at me when I walked past but now it is enjoying a really happy life.

The photo on the right shows the evacuation shelter in Azuma Park in Fukushima City. On one side of the bike shed, the Pets Kojima group funded and set up a clean space where dogs could spend time. They even installed air conditioning but this was met with a mixed reception. Some people living at the evacuation center said that, since they themselves didn't have air conditioning in the heat, why should the dogs have it? They wanted to know what was going on? So we explained to them that the animals were kept in cages and that when the dogs suffered from the heat they could not freely leave in search of a cooler place to sleep. With this explanation people could understand.

This is a photo that I always use when I talk to people. I think of people as intruders who break into the natural world. This is a picture of my acquaintance's son when he was a child. In the photo on the left you can see how this is the dog's favorite place. When the child unwittingly intrudes into the space the dog appears to be growling and at fault. But it is, of course, the boy who has imposed himself on the dog's space so it is he who is the intruder. But now that they have been playing together for several hours or several days, they have met halfway. The boy is sucking on the dog's favorite blue pacifier and offering the dog his own yellow pacifier in exchange. This is teaching us a very important thing about living with animals and nature

which we shouldn't forget. So I always use this photo.

Ever since the time of the Kobe (Great Hanshin-Awaji) Earthquake, we have made a continuous effort to spread ideas such as "family animals" or "pets" being members of society. As a result, we obtained a tacit understanding that food for animals could be openly carried into a disaster site after 72 hours have passed following a disaster. This 72- hour delay means that human life takes priority. However, a regrettable situation arose in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake. The earthquake struck on March 11, 2011 and by March 14, a rescue HQ had been established. The Japan Pet Food Association and other concerned people gathered medical supplies and food and were able to secure a place for them. However, because of problems in the corridors of power, a vital document presented by MOE originating in the Cabinet Office was not executed and, as a result, we were unable to deliver pet food and other supplies for the first week.

Nowadays, family animals are recognized as members of society and, recently, another topic - environmental taxation - has become a talking point. In my opinion, because pets defecate, use parks and interact with the other areas of public life, they too should pay residential taxes in the place where they reside. If possible, each pet should have a residence certificate on which its name appears, and a sum of money should be paid. A few thousand yen should be enough, although I'm not a tax specialist. But it is time for us to consider implementing such a tax. I'm spreading my opinion among my acquaintances little by little and would like to emphasize that certain rights can be claimed on behalf of animals where they fulfil certain obligations.

I have talked on a little too long, but thank you very much for the opportunity to address you.

With that, I would like to hand over to our next speaker, Dr. Hayama, who is going to talk about the subject of animal medical care in order to protect the health of the ecosystem.