



IT'S ABOUT TIME

A GLOBAL REPORT BY VETOQUINOL



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INTRODUCTION

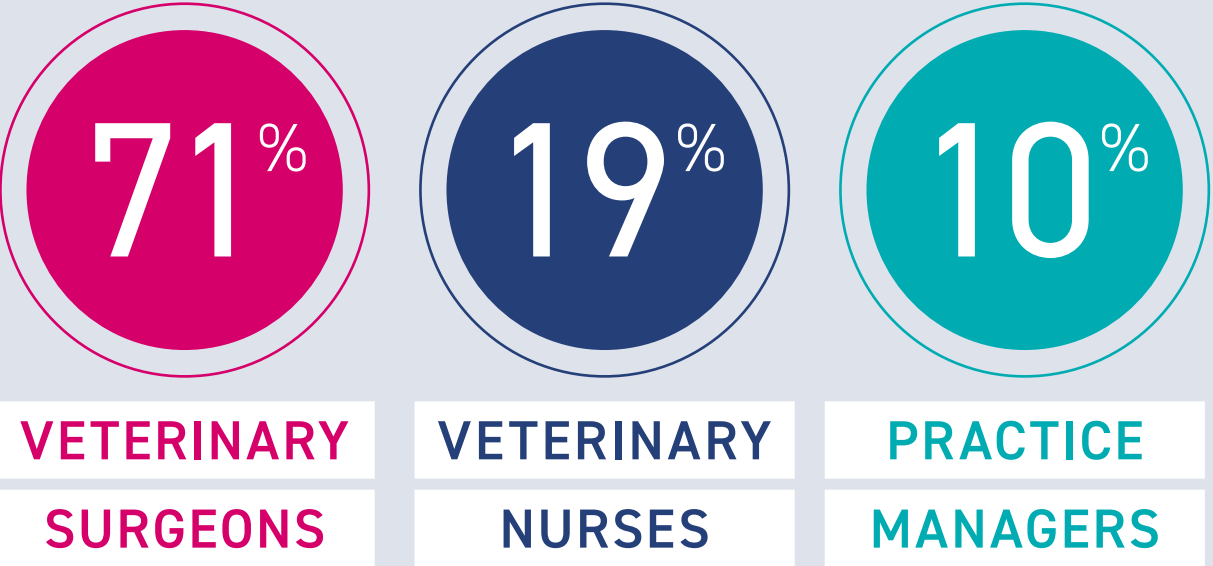
In the continually changing landscape of veterinary medicine, time has become a more precious commodity than ever. The whole world has had to flex and adapt with the challenges that COVID-19 has brought and for many, these challenges have exacerbated a long-standing problem for veterinary practices: time, or the lack of it!

This report gives unprecedented insight into the key time pressures that veterinary professionals and practices currently face and offers tips to try and help ease them, while recognising that there is no 'quick-fix' or 'one size fits all' solution.

THE DATA

Data is based on the results of an online survey, commissioned by Vetoquinol.

N = 261 veterinary professionals from UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain



THE TIPS

Dr Dave Nicol BVMS Cert Mgmt MRCVS provides guidance to help ease some of the time pressures in veterinary practice – from managing associated stress to practical advice that helps improve efficiency.

ABOUT DR NICOL

Dr Nicol MRCVS is a veterinarian with more than 20 years' experience in general practice. He has held several leadership roles within practice and industry. Dr Nicol has written three books, owns a boutique vet practice in London and is the founder of VetX International. He speaks at conferences all over the world about leadership and is an advocate for the veterinary profession.



Introduction

“I end up working on average six to seven extra hours per week. That’s almost an extra day!”

Veterinary Surgeon, France



PANDEMIC PRESSURE

Over one third of veterinary professionals have felt **more time pressured** over the last year.

An increased number of pets, staff shortages, COVID-19 restrictions, increased awareness of pet health and a backlog of animals needing treatment are all cited as reasons.

NOT ENOUGH HOURS IN THE DAY

More than **9 out of 10** veterinary professionals feel like they **do not have enough time in their working day**

For **over half**, they feel this way **every week**



WORKING OVERTIME

Over **three-quarters** of veterinary professionals **stay late at least once a week**, on average working **3.4 hours** a week more than contracted

“The last two years have been very different and far harder than anything we’ve had to deal with before.

But let’s remember that it’s not going to last forever and things will return to a more efficient setting as we learn to live with COVID.”

Veterinary Surgeon, France

The dedication of the whole veterinary team to their profession, and the animals and people they help each and every day is admirable.

However, it is not sustainable to be working at this capacity, with the consequences impacting both their personal and professional lives.

The time challenge

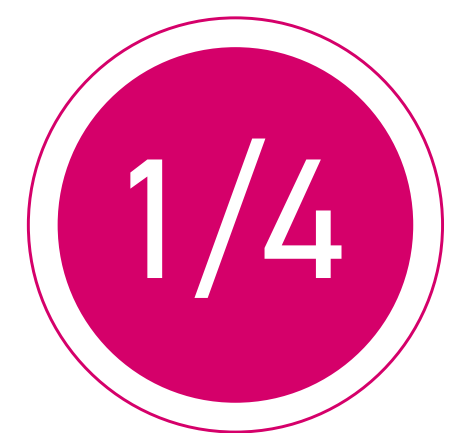
MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental wellbeing and mental health are now high on the agenda across all sectors, but especially in the veterinary industry where there is a known high prevalence of stress, burnout, anxiety and depression. While there are many factors contributing to this, the time pressures experienced in practice may intensify the issue.



"Stress from time pressures are at the core of what is causing burnout in the veterinary profession. The constant grind of never feeling like you are getting the work done, added to the fact that veterinary professionals always strive to only offer their best/are unable/reluctant to drop standards, leads to trade-offs such as not taking lunch, missing breaks and staying late to catch up."

Dr Dave Nicol BVMS Cert Mgmt MRCVS



...OF VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS SAY THAT TIME PRESSURE NEGATIVELY IMPACTS THEIR MENTAL WELLBEING AT WORK

Nearly a quarter feel stressed if they are running behind

Implications of time pressures in practice








Breaks throughout the working day are proven to promote mental wellbeing, improve work engagement and boost job performance, yet nearly a third of respondents don't have time to take a break.

And the effects of time pressures at work extend beyond their professional lives...

1/3

...SPEND LESS
TIME AT HOME OR
WITH THEIR FAMILY

And over one quarter...

-  **Are tired/burnt out**
-  **Are stressed/worried or anxious**
-  **Have less time/energy for hobbies which enrich their lives**

"My ability to fall asleep is impacted - the stress of the day means it takes longer to disconnect from work and fall asleep, so it definitely affects me a lot."

Dr Stefano Cristofaletti, Italian Vet

"I stay longer than my working hours which lengthens my time away from family and frequently work 10-12 hour days, with very few or no breaks."

Veterinary Surgeon, UK

HERE ARE DR DAVE

NICHOL'S TOP TIPS

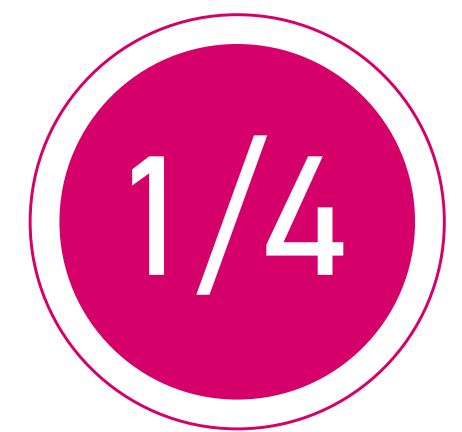
FOR MANAGING STRESS:

1. "Eat to maintain blood sugar and drink water - avoid sugary drinks as they'll cause sugar crashes and "vet-rage" later in the day.
2. Take mini stress-busting breathing sessions. Spend two minutes, 3-4 times a day, doing a circular breathing exercise (there are loads, Google to find one that suits) to help ground you, dissipate tension and reduce cortisol, blood pressure and anxiety.
3. Build a mindfulness habit - it takes very little time and it's free! Or for a very small annual investment you may find an app that works well for you.
4. Exercise - stress needs an outlet.
5. Keep a journal (on paper and written with a pen), and write it last thing at night as part of your wind down routine.
6. No screen time an hour before bed.
7. Social media sucks. There, I said it, but it's true. More than **60%** of users report feelings of anxiety after time spent on social media."



As well as the strain that time pressures put on the mental wellbeing of veterinary professionals, it can also put a strain on their day-to-day work, taking time away from the aspects of the job that they enjoy most.

Nearly one third of respondents have to make **compromises**, between tasks.



- Have **less time** to take on the cases they are **passionate** about
- Say it **negatively impacts** their **job satisfaction**

The tasks that veterinary professionals **most often struggle to achieve** to their full potential when under time pressure include:

- 27% RESEARCHING A CASE**
- 26% DOING CPD**
- 26% WRITING ACCURATE NOTES**

*“Many vets write notes that are too long – **write enough that you accurately describe what’s going on, what’s been done and what the plan is, not more** – this saves time for you and colleagues who may have to read them.*

***Use templates** – many practice management systems have these built in. Ideally have one for each situation you commonly encounter e.g. vaccinations, unwell pets, and procedures such as neuters etc. These save me about a minute per exam – that’s between 2–6 minutes per hour or **20-60 minutes per day reclaimed!**”*

Dr Dave Nicol BVMS Cert Mgmt MRCVS

“Podcasts and audio-books are brilliant for changing deadtime into learning time if you are struggling to keep up to date.”

Dr Dave Nicol
BVMS Cert Mgmt MRCVS

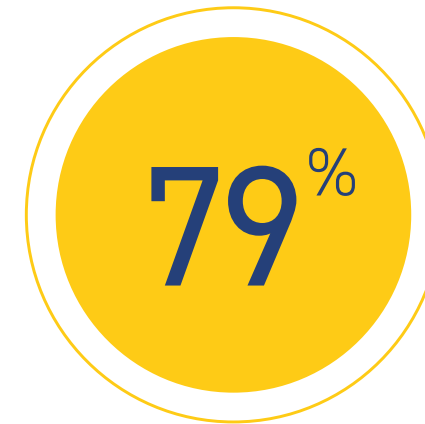
Professional
impact



TIME IS PRECIOUS

While the majority of veterinary professionals feel that their time could be used more effectively or efficiently, **a third don't see any of their daily tasks as a burden** – they would just like more time to complete them.

This highlights the pride and passion that veterinary professionals have for their work, recognising that there is value in all the responsibilities they undertake. The tasks cited as **least popular were non-clinical**. **Over one quarter** stated admin and paperwork to be a job that could be done more efficiently by someone else in the team.



FEEL THEIR TIME COULD
BE USED MORE EFFECTIVELY
OR EFFICIENTLY

Time
is precious

HERE ARE DR DAVE'S FOUR TIPS FOR MANAGING TIME PRESSURES AND EFFICIENCY:

- 1. Multi-tasking, while sometimes necessary, is not an effective strategy for handling important work** due to the mental dissonance (fancy term for distraction). Put simply, it takes time we don't have to tune-in and tune-out of complicated work. Practically speaking, this means sticking to one task at a time until that task is done.
- 2. Batch smaller tasks together** - phone calls, writing notes, billing and insurance forms are all things best done as a group task. All members of the veterinary team need to schedule one hour of their day for this activity.
- 3. Make a to-do list.** Firstly, this allows your subconscious to chill a little as it knows you've got the work for the day logged somewhere. Secondly, you can think about the best order to do things in for maximal efficiency. Thirdly, you can see the work is done by the day's end, and that feels gooooooood!
- 4. Know that it's not all on you!** While building our own skills to improve efficiency is one aspect, we also need to get better at having conversations as teams, where we consider and adapt our systems, so the default is being able to work safely and sustainably. We all want to do good work, so let's think about how we can create the circumstances where this can be done sustainably for all.

MENTAL WELLBEING

By achieving a more efficient working day, time can be freed up for veterinary professionals to spend longer doing what they enjoy or feel is important, both inside and outside of work.

At work, this can range from exciting surgical cases to simply having the time to address important routine topics such as parasite prevention, in a way that achieves personal satisfaction.

Ultimately a better work/life balance boosts job satisfaction and improves mental wellbeing, benefiting the individual and the practice.



Parasite prevention



TIME TO PRIORITISE

With more pets than ever to keep parasite free and more 'new' owners requiring extra education, giving parasite advice could be seen as a daunting task to already busy practices. However, when it comes to parasite prevention, **only a small minority saw giving advice as a burden**, showing the importance that the majority of veterinary professionals place on this. In fact, **most would like to have more time to discuss parasite control with pet owners but in reality this isn't possible.**

Only **12%** of veterinary professionals feel giving parasite protection advice is a burden

82% spend 5 minutes or less discussing parasite control in a consult, but **85%** would like more than 5 minutes to do this

Over a quarter spend more than **3 hours** a week assessing parasites risks and discussing treatment protocols with clients

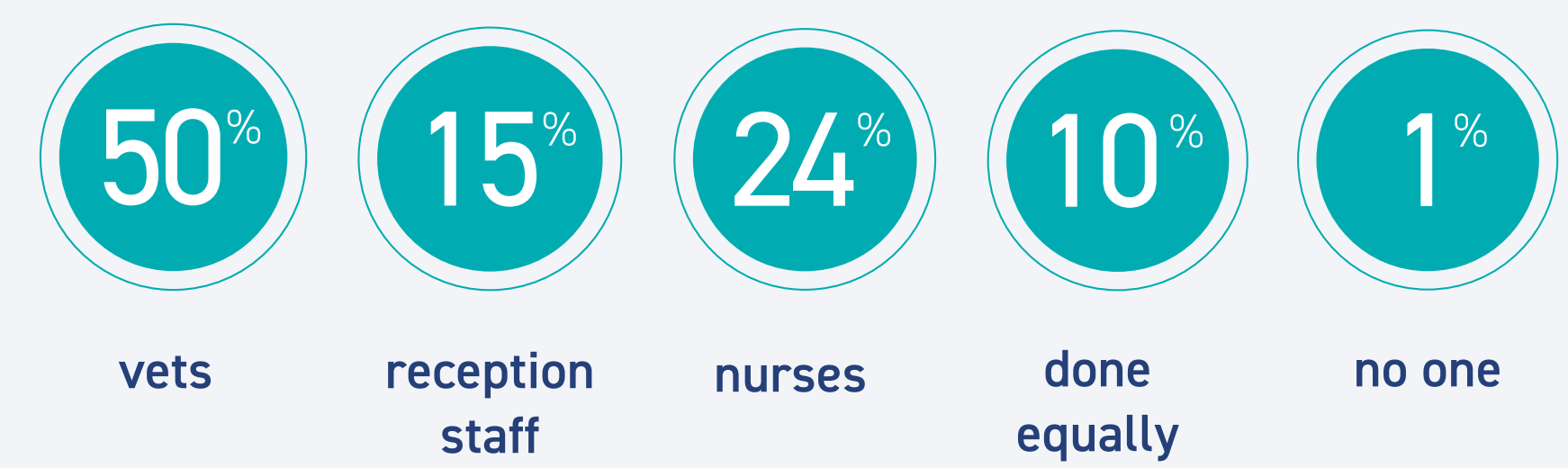
LESS THAN A THIRD

of respondents have time to discuss key parasite control issues such as treatment frequency and the importance of compliance, yet **on average they are moderately frustrated with the lack of owner compliance.**

"It's easy to have conversations about parasite protection when we see a kitten or a cat for the first time, as we book in a longer consultation. For more established customers we generally only see them once a year for the cat's annual check up when they get their vaccinations."

Dr Valerie LeCoutour, French Vet

Who spends the most time talking to owners about parasite control?



“Owner compliance with treatment is a big problem for us. Although many cat owners understand the need for up-to-date parasite prevention, lots of them forget to treat their cat or they find it too difficult, particularly with de-worming tablets”

Veterinary Surgeon, Germany

“In order for clients to follow your advice more readily it’s important that they understand what you are talking about, the benefits of the action you wish to take and trust that you are a good source of advice.”

Dr Dave Nicol
BVMS Cert Mgmt MRCVS

COMPLIANCE IS KEY

Veterinary professionals are frustrated with the lack of owner compliance when it comes to feline parasite prevention. This is supported by data suggesting that on average, cats are only dewormed 2.2 times per year. Identifying owner barriers to compliance and finding solutions to overcome them is vital for achieving good parasite control.

PERCEIVED KEY BARRIERS

TO COMPLIANCE IN PARASITE CONTROL:

51% LACK OF OWNER UNDERSTANDING

26% MULTIPLE TREATMENTS NEEDED FOR COMPLETE PROTECTION

35% DIFFICULT OR TIME-CONSUMING TREATMENT ADMINISTRATION

IN A RECENT SURVEY OF EUROPEAN CAT OWNERS*:

- **44%** had **negative feelings** about giving parasite protection to cats
- **Over half** felt their cat reacted negatively to parasiticide treatments, and as a result, **one in eight stopped treatment** altogether



HERE ARE FIVE TIPS FOR BETTER COMPLIANCE:

- 1. Don't overwhelm your client with too much information.**
We all have a limit on what we can process, so choose the things that matter most.
- 2. Think like a vet but speak like a normal human!** Big medical words will only confuse your client and cause them to zone out.
- 3. Use visual aids** – a picture showing the teeth of a tapeworm or a video of wriggling worm segments is going to give everyone nightmares and stands a far higher chance of the client taking your recommendation seriously.
- 4. Make a clear recommendation** – don't say *"I suggest you think about flea control"*. Instead be clear and directive *"I recommend we use Felpreva® today to ensure Cleo stays free from worms and fleas. How does that sound to you?"* The last part of that sentence is incredibly important as it allows the client to signal if they are bought into your plan.
- 5. Set up (and use) a reminder system** that automatically reminds clients to give the treatment required or return to get more from the practice."

Dr Dave Nicol
BVMS Cert Mgmt MRCVS

BREAK THROUGH TO SIMPLER PARASITE PROTECTION FOR CATS WITH FELPREVA®

When it comes to easing the pressures experienced in practice, we believe every little helps. The launch of Felpreva® enables us to support veterinary professionals overcome some common compliance frustrations and have more focussed parasitology conversations with owners - whether they have two, five or ten minutes.

Felpreva® is now available for veterinarians to prescribe in many European countries. For more information, please contact your local Vetoquinol representative.

Felpreva®

At **Vetoquinol** we believe we can achieve more together which is why we are committed to supporting you, the veterinary professional, in bettering animal health. From launching innovative products like **Felpreva**[®], to creating materials that assist practice staff – we are here to champion the important work that you do.

We hope that you'll be able to incorporate tips from this report into your daily life and utilise **Felpreva**[®] to help achieve feline parasite control more easily. At the very least, we hope that you feel less alone in the time challenges facing veterinary professionals across Europe.

References:

1. Study of 1416 cat owners in UK, Germany, France and Italy. Conducted by Sapio Research in August 2021 (Vetoquinol data on file).
2. Maintaining Mental Health: What Can You Do? Available at <https://www.fecava.org/clinicians/mental-health-and-well-being/> [Accessed 31 May 2022].
3. McNamara, J., Drake, J., Wiseman, S. and Wright, I., 2018. Survey of European pet owners quantifying endoparasitic infection risk and implications for deworming recommendations. *Parasites & Vectors*, 11

Felpreva[®] is a veterinary medicine and contains tigolaner, emodepside and praziquantel. Product information is available at <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/medicines/veterinary/EPAR/felpreva>. Agency product number: EMEA/V/C/005464. Marketing authorisation holder: Vetoquinol SA. For more details please contact your local Vetoquinol representative: www.vetoquinol.com/en

