RECOVER is the acronym coined by ACVECC for their recently developed small animal veterinary CPR guidelines that were introduced in the June 2012 issue of JVECC. RECOVER stands for the Reassessment Campaign on Veterinary Resuscitation. All of the RECOVER materials are available to view and download at www.acvecc-recover.org. The goal of the RECOVER campaign was to develop evidence-based consensus guidelines on how to best perform small animal CPR.

The most important recommendations of RECOVER are to begin chest compressions immediately in an apneic, unresponsive patient and perform CPR in timed 2-minute cycles. The time between cycles is used to briefly interrupt chest compressions to rotate chest compressors and to evaluate the ECG. The RECOVER Guidelines emphasize the need for preparedness of both equipment and the medical team in order to maximize the chances of a successful outcome. The website has algorithms and drug dosing charges that can be printed and laminated for use in your hospital. The lecture will review how we have used the RECOVER guidelines in our hospital to develop a training program for our in-house CPR team called the A-Team.

(see accompanying powerpoint presentation)

Conquering Your Fear of Small Animal Emergencies

Rena Allen, DVM

2015 Virginia Veterinary Conference

Feb 28th, 2015 2:20-3:10pm

I’ve noticed over the years that a lot of small animal practitioners fear being faced with small animal emergencies. I am particularly concerned by practitioners who manage this fear by avoiding small animal emergencies. Not only does this approach compromise patient care but it only feeds the fear. I contend that for the most part this fear is unfounded and any fear that is present can be readily overcome by a quick review of the facts and some preparation.
Fact #1 You know more than you think you do about how to treat acutely ill small animal patients.

Fact #2 The skills you need in the ER are not that different from the skills you need in general practice.

Physical Exam

Basic Medical Knowledge and skills

Some Surgical Skills

Client communication skill

Fact #3 A lot of the cases seen on in the ER are the same type of cases you see in GP appointments—vomiting/diarrhea, ear and skin infections, cat bite abscesses

Fact #4 You probably already perform advanced life-support procedures on several anesthetized patients a week.

Fact #5 You probably have received some CPR training to help you deal with the most severe emergency there is—cardiopulmonary arrest!

Now that we have reviewed the facts, we begin to realize that you already have quite a few skills that can be used to manage small animal emergencies. You learn to treat small animal emergencies the same way you learned to do all those other things you do in practice everyday. You merely need to take your everyday skills and adapt them to the specific demands that small animal emergencies present. As a matter of course, your fear and any lack of knowledge or skill will be overcome.

I offer a few suggestions to help you take the skills you have and adapt them to small animal emergencies:

Suggestion #1 Adopt the mindset that you are going to prepare yourself for the worst and hope for the best and don’t be embarrassed about what you don’t know—now.

Suggestion #2 Make a list of common emergencies that you really need to know how to treat.

Use your list of fears to develop your own skills list. Then use the ever increasing number of resources available to you to develop the knowledge and skills to confidently deliver the necessary patient care and communicate to clients.

Mentally walk-through scenarios by yourself or with a team member. Talking out loud and physically walking through the steps are surprisingly good confidence and competence boosters.

There are plenty of textbooks out there that will guide you through complex emergency situations step-by-step.
Other emergency hospitals are good sources for SOPs, to observe and maybe even work a few shifts with other experienced ER doctors.

There are more and more online resources like VIN, Vetfolio, Veritasdvm.com, Vetgirlontherun.com that frequently offer treatment algorithms and videos out there that will walk you through common emergencies.

Ethical use of cadavers is a great opportunity to gain experience.

Oquendo Center and Dr. Seim soft tissue surgery courses will help you become proficient with common emergency surgical procedures.

Considering joining VECCS/Visit the RECOVER Website. With your VECCS membership you receive JVECCS. Even if you don’t become a member check out the website for skills lists, information about the annual IVECCS conference, webinars and other resources.

**Suggestion #3** Commit a few basic emergency drug doses to memory, some examples include dextrose, valium and shock fluid doses.

**Suggestion #4** Make your on emergency electronic or hard copy “nerdbook”.

You don’t have to know everything off the top of your head but you will more confident and prepared your own familiar references are readily available where you can retrieve important but perhaps less commonly used info. An example that comes to mind would be various CRI calculations.

**Suggestion #5** Familiarize yourself with the available equipment and its lay-out

**Suggestion #6** Don’t avoid facing the truth or telling clients bad news.

Another fact of practicing emergency small animal medicine that we didn’t mention earlier is that you will be breaking bad news to clients more frequently than you do in general practice. Being able to confidently deliver accurate even if it is devastatingly awful news to a client about their pet’s condition is a service that clients appreciate.

Let’s face it, what you are really scared about are the true emergencies and all you need is a little preparation to face your first GDV, hemoabdomen, HBC, or DKA. In the last lecture we reviewed the step-by-step instructions for dealing with the most severe of all emergencies- a patient in cardiac arrest. Those folks who attended that lecture probably now feel prepared to much more confidently and competently carry out a complex series of interventions in a very stressful situation where seconds and minutes do truly make a difference. If you take the same methodical approach to prepare yourself for other less dire emergencies, then you will be able to successfully lead your team to competently treat small animal emergency patients while guiding clients through the complex medical care decision-making process.