



WSAVA
Global Veterinary Community



WSAVA
Oncology Working Group

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PRESS RELEASE

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WSAVA Survey Highlights Urgent Need for Global Veterinary Oncology Education

Veterinary healthcare team members rate their knowledge at just five out ten

Veterinary professionals globally rate their knowledge of oncology at just five out ten, according to survey from the newly formed [World Small Animal Veterinary Association \(WSAVA\) Oncology Working Group \(WOW\)](#). The average score varied by language, with Chinese-speaking respondents rating their knowledge at the highest level (6.6) and Ukrainian-speaking respondents the lowest at 4.2. In contrast, respondents ranked the actual importance of oncology cases for their practice at seven out of ten, with minimal variation (6.3-7.7) between languages.

Almost 2,000 veterinary professionals from around the world, 95% of them veterinarians, completed the survey in ten languages, during September and October 2021. The results will help the WOW Group prioritize its efforts to educate and support WSAVA members globally in raising standards of care for veterinary oncology patients.

Respondents were also asked to rank the most common tumor types seen in their practice. The most common answer was mammary tumor (81%); followed by skin tumor 75%; abdominal tumor 40%, malignant lymphoma 39%, and other tumors 5%.* As limited numbers of North American, African, and Oceanic veterinary professionals participated in the survey, this result may not fully reflect regional differences. For instance, in parts of the world, mammary tumor incidence is lower because of a culture of early neutering.

Surgery was the most common therapy used in private practice at 55%; followed by surgery and adjuvant therapy in 30% of cases; chemotherapy in 7% and palliative care in 4%. Immediate euthanasia was recommended in 1% of cases.

While chemotherapy is only currently used by 7% of respondents, when asked which educational resources would be most valuable to them, chemotherapy protocols were requested by 82%. In addition, 53% asked for information on tumor staging, support with cytology was requested by 51%, information on treatment side-effects by 38%; advice on surgical margins by 36%, on radiation therapy by 24% and on palliative care by 6%.

“Cancer is increasingly common in companion animals, with almost 50% of dogs over 10 years of age developing this devastating disease. To support WSAVA members effectively in treating oncology patients, we wanted to know where they needed help most urgently,” explained Dr Jolle Kirpensteijn, former WSAVA President and Member of the WOW Group. “Our survey is the largest the WSAVA has ever conducted and shows the reach of this well-respected association, which works to share best practice in companion animal veterinary care around the world.”

He added: “It is salutary to see the huge demand for veterinary oncology education all over the world. We have much to do but are excited at the opportunity to support WSAVA members and to offer new hope to oncology patients and their owners globally.”

WOW Group Secretary Dr Ann Hohenhaus, who practices oncology at the Animal Medical Center in New York City, added: “We will use social media, webinars and a range of other channels to ensure maximum reach for the educational tools and resources we are developing. Based on the results of the survey, we have already adapted the focus of our stream during the 2022 [WSAVA World Congress](#) in Lima, Peru, to focus on mammary tumors – but there is much more to come before then so stay tuned!”

* Multiple answers were possible in this section

Note to editors:

Of 1,825 participants surveyed, 95% were veterinarians and 5% other veterinary professionals. Approximately, two-thirds of the respondents were female, one third male, with 0.2% indicating that they were non-binary. All age groups were represented, with 39% between 30-40 years; 28% between 40-50 years; 18% between 20-30 years and 17% older than 50 years. Survey responses were skewed towards Western Europe (48%), followed by Eastern Europe and Russia (22%), Asia (15%), the Americas (11%). Fewer than 1% of respondents were from Africa and Oceania.

The WSAVA Oncology Working Group (WOW) was established during 2021 under chairmanship of Dr Martin Soberano, a veterinary oncologist working in Mexico City. 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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