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**WHO ARE THE VETERINARY STUDENTS
OF NEW ZEALAND?
&
DO THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
AND ATTITUDES
OF VETERINARY STUDENTS
INFLUENCE THE BEHAVIOUR OF DOGS?**

**THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE**

MASTER OF VETERINARY STUDIES

IN

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REBECCA HEAN COOMBES

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ABSTRACT

Internationally the veterinary profession has been enduring a period of change. There has been an increase in women, an increase in small animal practices and a diversification of skills required to be a successful veterinary professional.

This research attempts to answer several key questions raised by these changes: What is the demography, attitude, and experience of New Zealand veterinary students? Will any of these characteristics influence the behaviour of their canine patients?

The research was divided into two studies. Study one investigated the veterinary students attending Massey University in 1999. The questionnaire administered to 261 veterinary students found 66% of students were female, 75% had owned a dog, 86% are from New Zealand, 67% lived in suburban or urban areas and 31% had attended tertiary education prior to commencing the veterinary degree. Students in the later years of the degree were less likely to have had prior tertiary education. These figures demonstrate a clear shift in demographics of veterinary students that reflects international trends. In addition, the Pet Attitude Scale was modified to specifically measure veterinary students' attitudes to dogs. The average attitude towards dogs was positive, the range and distribution were normal. Females and dog owners had significantly more positive attitudes to dogs. No other variable had significant differences in attitudes towards dogs.

Study two looked at the influence of the demographic characteristics and attitudes of the veterinary students on the behaviour of dogs. The study consisted of a questionnaire and observation of a practical exercise. A golden retriever and a German shepherd were used for the practical exercise, all participants completed manoeuvres with both dogs. Aspects of the dogs' behaviour were used to calculate a submission result. The German shepherd had a significantly lower submission result than the golden retriever. The study found no significant differences in gender, attitude towards dogs, the participants' confidence in handling dogs, fear of unknown dogs, previous medical treatment for a dog bite, experience working with dogs or dog ownership when compared with the submission result. However, females did take significantly longer to complete the practical exercise.

There are implications to the veterinary profession given the greater percentage of females entering veterinary science in New Zealand. Females were found to have significantly more positive attitudes to dogs than males, but there were no significant differences in the dogs' behaviour either by gender or by attitude.

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I would like to acknowledge and personally thank the perseverance of my supervisor, Professor Kevin Stafford, for challenging my thinking, starting some interesting debates and for not losing sight of me.

To my parents, who have always encouraged me, who have read many a late night draft during my varsity years, and who ignited the flame of both my eagerness to learn and my love of the animal world inside of me – thank you.

Thank you also for giving me the genetic boost of stubbornness and the unwavering inability to quit anything before it's finished.

Mike: You came into my life at its darkest hour, a time when I was neither healthy nor capable of completing this. Thank you for giving me strength, for helping me see that no one has the power to control my life except for me. Without your support I could never have got remotivated after the traumatic events that occurred.

To all my family, two and four legged, and my friends, thank you for your support. I acknowledge with heart-felt thanks, that it is only through the support of many people that I have taken the hard road and returned to finish this piece of work.

DON'T QUIT WHEN THE TIDE IS LOWEST,
FOR IT'S JUST ABOUT TO TURN;
DON'T QUIT OVER DOUBTS AND QUESTIONS,
FOR THERE'S SOMETHING YOU MAY LEARN.

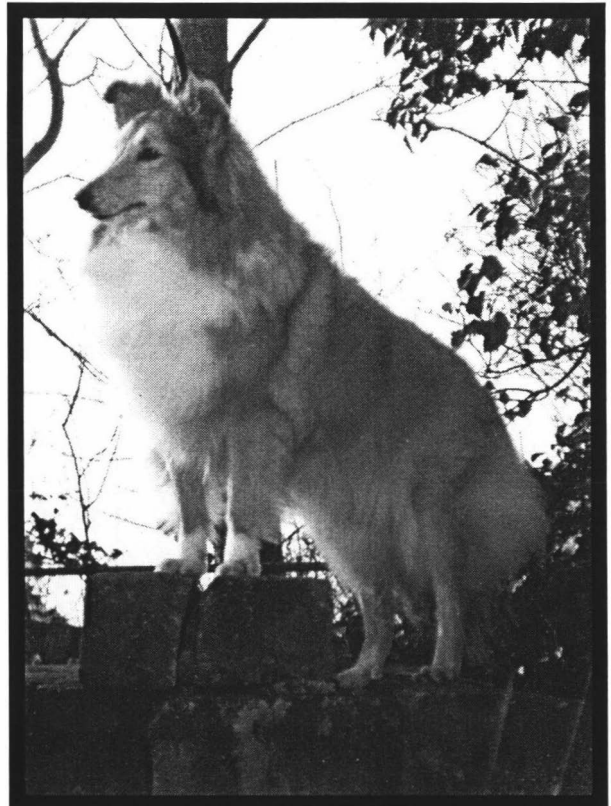
DON'T QUIT WHEN THE NIGHT IS DARKEST,
FOR IT'S JUST A WHILE 'TILL DAWN;
DON'T QUIT WHEN YOU'VE RUN THE FURTHEST,
FOR THE RACE IS ALMOST WON.

DON'T QUIT WHEN THE HILL IS STEEPEST,
FOR YOUR GOAL IS ALMOST NIGH;
DON'T QUIT, FOR YOU'RE NOT A FAILURE,
UNTIL YOU FAIL TO TRY.

JILL WOLF

DEDICATION

*I dedicate this work
To Lacey,
A much loved and missed friend,
And a symbol
Of all those that love and support me
And who remind me
What is important in this life.*



THE POWER OF THE DOG
BY RUDYARD KIPLING

THERE IS SORROW ENOUGH IN THE NATURAL WAY
FROM MEN AND WOMEN TO FILL OUR DAY;
AND WHEN WE ARE CERTAIN OF SORROW IN STORE,
WHY DO WE ALWAYS ARRANGE FOR MORE?
BROTHERS AND SISTERS, I BID YOU BEWARE
OF GIVING YOUR HEART TO A DOG TO TEAR.

BUY A PUP AND YOUR MONEY WILL BUY
LOVE UNFLINCHING THAT CANNOT LIE-
PERFECT PASSION AND WORSHIP FED
BY A KICK IN THE RIBS OR A PAT ON THE HEAD.
NEVERTHELESS IT IS HARDLY FAIR
TO RISK YOUR HEART FOR A DOG TO TEAR.

WHEN THE FOURTEEN YEARS WHICH NATURE PERMITS
ARE CLOSING IN ASTHMA, OR TUMOUR, OR FITS,
AND THE VET'S UNSPOKEN PRESCRIPTION RUNS
TO LETHAL CHAMBERS OR LOADED GUNS,
THEN YOU WILL FIND-IT'S YOUR OWN AFFAIR-
BUT...YOU'VE GIVEN YOUR HEART FOR A DOG TO TEAR.

WHEN THE BODY THAT LIVED AT YOUR SINGLE WILL,
WITH ITS WHIMPER OF WELCOME, IS STILLED (HOW STILL!);
WHEN THE SPIRIT THAT ANSWERED YOUR EVERY MOOD
IS GONE-WHEREVER IT GOES-FOR GOOD,
YOU WILL DISCOVER HOW MUCH YOU CARE,
AND WILL GIVE YOUR HEART FOR THE DOG TO TEAR.

WE'VE SORROW ENOUGH IN THE NATURAL WAY,
WHEN IT COMES TO BURYING CHRISTIAN CLAY.
OUR LOVES ARE NOT GIVEN, BUT ONLY LENT,
AT COMPOUND INTEREST OF CENT PER CENT.
THOUGH IT IS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE, I BELIEVE,
THAT THE LONGER WE'VE KEPT 'EM, THE MORE DO WE GRIEVE:
FOR, WHEN DEBTS ARE PAYABLE, RIGHT OR WRONG,
A SHORT-TIME LOAN IS AS BAD AS A LONG-
SO WHY IN HEAVEN (BEFORE WE ARE THERE)
SHOULD WE GIVE OUR HEARTS TO A DOG TO TEAR?

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