

Attitudes to and opinions of neutering in dogs: a survey of veterinary surgeons and nurses

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Most of the literature pertains to the advantages, disadvantages and prevalence of surgical neutering in dogs with little research or emphasis on other options. A survey on canine reproduction was commissioned by Virbac Animal Health UK in December 2009 in order to obtain information from veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and the general public. The aim was to gather information on perceptions about canine neutering by questioning respondents about their attitudes to and opinions of neutering options and alternatives to surgery. An on-line survey was conducted over an 8-week period from March-May 2010 using SurveyMonkey. An invitation to participate was placed on AnimalOracle.com, and was sent via e-mail to all members of vetsurgeon.org and press releases were also sent out. Questionnaire items were attitude statements with a 5-point Likert scale of agreement: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree and No opinion. Examples include: 'I believe that surgical castration reduces the likelihood of occurrence of certain medical conditions later in life' and 'Temporary medical castration is an option when an owner cannot decide whether to have their dog permanently castrated with surgery'. Cross-tabulations and Fishers exact tests were used for categorical variables including type of respondent (gender, dog owner or not). Non-parametric Wilcoxon rank sum tests for 2 independent samples or Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance (AOV) for more than 2 independent samples was used to examine differences in the distribution of responses by type of respondent. There were 681 respondents, 60% (411) of which were veterinary surgeons (VS). The results of analysis of the 411 responses from VS will be presented. The results of this survey suggest that there is some awareness of the various alternatives to surgical neutering, although perhaps not as wide as desired. This survey has produced some interesting and useful results that can be used to educate veterinary professionals and the public.