BVA RESPONSE TO RCVS REVIEW OF DAY ONE SKILLS FOR VETERINARY NURSES

1) The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom and has over 15,000 members. Our primary aim is to represent, support and champion the interests of the veterinary profession in this country, and we therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the profession, including animal health and welfare, public health, regulatory issues and employment matters.

2) We were pleased to have been given the opportunity to respond to the RCVS consultation in relation to the Day One skills review for Veterinary Nurses. This response has been developed in liaison with our affiliate organisation the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA).

Are the day-one skills relevant to the associated day-one competences? Please suggest how they could be made more relevant.

3) We believe that the day-one skills are relevant to the associated day-one competences.

Are there any day-one skills missing from the above list? Please suggest what you would include and where you would include it.

4) We do not believe that are day-one skills are missing however we do have some minor suggestions from members for amendments to specific skills listed which could serve to make them clearer and more comprehensive:

Communication
- Cii “Prepare and maintain clear and accurate accounts for different purposes” could include nursing care plans.
- Cv “Conduct effective nursing consultations” could include a patient assessment form.
- Cvi “Provide discharge information and guidance to owners” some mention could be made of advising clients of any health and safety concerns or risks that the medication may pose to them as owners with responsibility for administering such medications to their animal. This section could also include home care plans.

Socio-economics
- Di “Respond accordingly to economic status of clients” mention of arrangements to pay by instalment or other deferred payment agreements (appropriate to individual practices/clients) could be made

Reflective Practice
- Ei “Promote evidence-based nursing” could include clinical audits, an important area for nurse involvement.

Handling and Restraint
- Gvii “Safely use a range of restraining devices” could include ear twitch used for restraining foals in equines. Handling of equines during trotting and lunging could also be included.
Nursing Care
- Hii “Carry out a nursing assessment ascertaining information about the patient's normal routine in the following areas [...]” could include the review and evaluation of the nursing care plans used. This evaluation could be used to improve care plans for similar patients in the future, which then contributes to evidence-based nursing care.
- Hiv “Apply dressings appropriate to type of wound” there should be reference to the nurse being aware that excretions may be a health and safety risk if the animal is on certain medications (specifically chemotherapy drugs or radioactive iodine for example) and also the zoonotic potential of certain infections.

Emergency First Aid
- Iii “Administer first aid within the limits of law and the expertise of the student” Hypothermia is missing from the list of situations requiring first aid. There could be mention that the nurse should ensure that any injured animal is moved carefully/appropriately to ensure that no injuries are exacerbated or pain made worse.

Laboratory Techniques
- Ji “Formulate and implement an appropriate sampling strategy” there should be mention of the nurse being aware of the potential risks of zoonotic infections from certain samples.

Theatre
- Nii “Position patients…” could include specific reference to positioning of equines for different surgeries

Anaesthesia
- Pi “Prepare for anaesthesia” a capnograph could be included in the equipment list along with any blood pressure or temperature monitoring equipment. Invasive blood pressure monitoring is very important in equine anaesthesia, as is blood gas analysis, and could be added to the list.

Euthanasia
- Qi “Convey appropriate sympathy and empathy in verbal and non-verbal communications” there should be mention of an understanding of the fact that different individuals show grief in different ways and how to recognise and deal with these.
- Qii “Handle animals and equipment safely for euthanasia” could include a reference to health and safety in using firearms in equines.

Do any of the day-one skills need amending? Please suggest your amendments.
5) We are not of the opinion that the list of skills requires amendment but that as outlined above the existing skills could be elaborated and expanded in some cases.

Conclusion
6) We are of the opinion that the list of Day One Skills is comprehensive and an accurate reflection of the skills necessary for nurses to provide practical support and assistance to the veterinary surgeon, an extremely high level of care to the animal and compassion and understanding towards animal owners. We believe that Veterinary Nurse with these skills on day one will be a highly valuable asset to any veterinary practice.

July 2015