



Veterinary Health Center

A T K A N S A S S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

OFFICIAL PROTOCOL

SHELTER MEDICINE

Section 1 Introduction

Humane societies and animal shelters in virtually every community, small town to large city, in the United States share in a common problem - the overpopulation of unwanted dogs and cats. Often with limited resources and all too frequently with limited access to veterinary assistance, these shelters must feed, clean, care for, attempt to find homes and, unfortunately, euthanize countless animals. At present, the estimates are that 8 million dogs and cats are admitted to animal shelters each year in the United States and that 3 million of them are euthanized each year.

The elective rotation in Shelter Medicine is designed to:

- increase veterinary students' understanding of the issues surrounding overpopulation of unwanted pets.
- provide veterinary students with first-hand experience in dealing with the medical, behavioral and surgical problems encountered in animals confined to animal shelters.
- provide veterinary students extensive experience in spaying and castrating animals that will be placed for adoption.
- prepare veterinary students to work closely with local humane societies and animal shelters to find solutions to the challenges of managing the overpopulation of unwanted pets.

Section 2 Professor Contact Information

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Section 3 Course Prerequisites

Fourth Year Veterinary Student in good standing

Section 4 Course Description

The rotation is a combination of in-class discussions and hands-on experience at several regional shelters. Topics include population medicine, infectious disease recognition and control, surgical sterilization, shelter standards, and legal issues common to shelter settings.

Course Goals

This course has three primary goals:

1. To enhance student soft tissue skills through experience with spay neuter surgeries.
2. To acquaint the student with the problems associated with overpopulation and the role that veterinarians can play in improving the care of shelter animals.
3. To provide students with an understanding of the standards of care in animal shelters and in spay neuter programs.

Availability

The elective rotation in Shelter Medicine is available as two-week rotation options the entire year except over Thanksgiving and Christmas / New Year's break.

Student responsibilities

Students participating in the Shelter Medicine rotation will work under the supervision of faculty and/or shelter medicine intern/fellow on the Mobile Surgery Unit and on site at regional shelters.

Students will:

- participate in the shelter spay neuter programs at various regional animal shelters
- be exposed to the challenges of providing care to animals in shelters that have varying missions and available resources.

Independent of these activities the students are expected to:

1. View the spay/neuter videos prior to the first trip.
2. Read the document "Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters"
3. Read the document "The Association of Shelter Veterinarians veterinary medical care guidelines for spay-neuter programs."
4. At the midpoint of the course submit a self-evaluation.
5. Present on a shelter consult recommendation or a current shelter medicine related topic.

Projected Weekly Schedule

The Mobile Surgery Unit operates Monday through Saturday. Students will be performing surgery four to five days a week on-site at regional shelters or on the Mobile Surgery Unit. Infrequently, a rotation will have the opportunity to spend two subsequent days in a single community in which case the shelter partner provides accommodation and most meals. The specific schedule for each rotation will be available at the start of each rotation.

Learning Objectives

1. Become proficient and efficient in spay neuter surgeries
2. Recognize the severity of the pet overpopulation problem, how veterinarians can play a role in solving the problem and improving the care of shelter animals
3. Understand the standards of care in animal shelters
4. Understand the veterinary medical care guidelines for spay neuter programs.

Required Materials

1. Spay Neuter videos
2. Document: Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters
3. Article: The Association of Shelter Veterinarians veterinary medical care guidelines for spay-neuter programs

All the required materials will be provided to the students prior to the start of the course

Assessment / Grading Policy

Students will be evaluated as follows:

Knowledge base 30%

Clinical skills 40%

Attitude/Participation 20%

Assignments 10%