

Applying Clinical Audit in UK Veterinary Practice



Quality improvement using a case study for canine dystocia

in emergency-care practice

Clinical audit is a fundamental element for standards of care in both human and veterinary medicine. However, compared to the human medicine literature, there are few published veterinary clinical audits, suggesting that clinical audit is an under-utilised tool for quality improvement (QI) in the veterinary profession.

This study describes the planning, implementation, outcomes and evaluation of a clinical audit process for the management of canine dystocia in UK small animal emergencycare practice. Other veterinary practices can use these methods to support their clinical audits and the results as benchmarks to evaluate their management of canine dystocia.



A case study of clinical audit: canine dystocia

2. Topic selection

Dystocia identified as an area of interest

where increased staff confidence in managing cases should have a significant impact on dog welfare

Start

1. People

- 21 staff volunteered across all Vets Now clinics
- Auditing team led internally by 4 vets and nurses

Cycle Again

- Feedback from clinical auditors and staff attending
- Staff requested further audit
- several clinical management

Clinical Audit: Canine Dystocia



Nine variables relating to clinical management of canine dystocia cases were selected for assessment



- 40 dystocia cases trialled to develop standard operating procedure
- Training materials created to support volunteer auditors

6. Data collection and analysis

- Three cycles of audit conducted: 2012, 2019 and 2021
- Breed risk, mortality, diagnostic methods, and drug usage assessed across audits





This study demonstrates the feasibility of veterinary clinical audit. The application of the clinical audit process promotes learning within the veterinary team and improved clinical outcomes.

Conclusions

The results can serve as a benchmarking tool to evaluate management of canine dystocia within veterinary clinical practice.

The methods and template can serve as a helpful tool for others wishing to plan, implement, analyse and review their own clinical audits.



- **Creation of dystocia** checklist
- **Creation of infographics for** knowledge sharing
- Webinar and discussion panel
- **Guidelines updated for** analgesia in caesarean section
- **Publication of paper**





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Leicester et al. (2023) "Applying clinical audit for quality improvement in canine dystocia cases seen at a UK primary-care emergency practice" RVC VetCompass https://www.rvc.ac.uk/vetcompass_carries out welfare research based on anonymised clinical information shared from over 30% of UK veterinary practices. We are very grateful to the owners and veterinary professionals who contribute to VetCompass research.







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