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2 errors, ok

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☐ New Version

knowledge | anaesthesia

Animal anaesthesia –

continued from page 9

distressed patients, this may still be difficult to appreciate. When pain is suspected or the cause of violent recovery is unclear, administer additional analgesia, such as opioids and/or anti-inflammatories as appropriate. Dysphoric patients are difficult or impossible to calm down with human contact – additional sedatives such as alpha-2 agonists or acepromazine may be required to manage the patient, although the patient may calm down after a few minutes without treatment¹³.

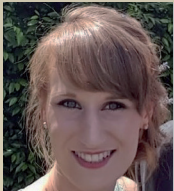
Summary

From the preanaesthetic preparation period through to recovery, veterinary nurses may encounter many questions. The correct selection of suitable breathing systems is an important part of preparation for achieving safe inhalational anaesthesia. Throughout the anaesthetic maintenance phase, recognising and understanding why abnormal monitoring parameters occur allows effective troubleshooting and rectification if necessary.

Finally, it is important to remember the recovery period is a high-risk time for patients. Although the anaesthetic period is coming to an end, complacency during recovery can have detrimental results for patient outcomes.

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CLARE DAGNALL

Clare is an intern in veterinary anaesthesia at the AHT. She qualified from the University of Bristol in 2015 with a degree in veterinary science and pharmacology. After graduation, Clare worked as a general practitioner in a first opinion practice in London for two-and-a-half years.

welfare | TOLFA

Turning the tide on animal welfare work overseas

Holly Kernot *VN Times* editor, with charity Tree of Life for Animals celebrating its 13th anniversary on 4 October (World Animal Day), speaks to founder Rachel Wright RVN, who lifts the lid on more than a decade of helping animals in need, changing the perception of pets in India – and how VNs should follow their dreams

A woman is sitting on a beach in Sri Lanka. Nothing very remarkable about that, you could say, but then again, this is no ordinary lady, and these are not ordinary circumstances.

For on that beach, there is also a dog so unwell that, the woman thinks it might die there and then. However, due to a twist of fate, this woman happens to be an RVN.

On examining the dog, she discovers a piece of wood across the bridge of its mouth, which she removes – meaning the starving creature is able to eat for the first time in a long time.

The next day, the woman goes back to the beach and the dog is there. Only this time, it has brought other dogs in need of medical attention – the dog seemingly knows kindness when it finds it.

Armed with only a first aid kit, the RVN puts them on the road to recovery.

However, this is not the end of the story. In fact, that serendipitous moment was only the beginning.

For the lady on the beach was Rachel Wright and the work she did that day laid the foundations for the charity she would go on to create – a move that would change not only her life, but those of thousands of animals and a generation of children.

New adventure

Three months after Rachel helped the dog on the beach, she had a light-bulb moment that would alter the course of her life forever.

"I was thinking about how I had managed to help those dogs on my own with just my little first aid kit, and about how much more could be achieved with a proper veterinary hospital in a developing country," she explained.

For many, this thought would have remained just that – an observation made during a busy day and discarded as life got in the way.

But not so for Rachel, who, rather than leaving the task to others, decided on that day in 2001 to set a goal – by October



Rachel received an RCVS International Award earlier this year from the college's then president, Stephen May.



2005, she would have opened such a hospital. She just didn't know where or how.

The road to TOLFA was a long and winding one that saw Rachel, a University of Bristol veterinary nursing graduate, work in various practices across the UK before being bitten by the travelling bug.

After that, she would work in six-month blocks undertaking as much locum work as humanly possible to fund her travels abroad to undertake voluntary work.

Following a particularly horrible summer in 2004 – with the self-imposed hospital opening deadline fast approaching – Rachel threw caution to the wind and booked a ticket to India.

When she landed, everything fell into place and her future became clear.

Intervention

"I went to a place called Ajmer," Rachel said. "At the time, the council's method of stray dog control was to round them up, tie them to a post in the desert and leave them to die, and I just thought 'no, that's not happening anymore'."

A forthcoming festival meant all the stray dogs would soon be dispatched ahead of the event. But that year, it didn't happen – because of Rachel.

"I approached the council and asked if 'we' could catch, sterilise and vaccinate the

continued on page 12



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Turning the tide on animal welfare work overseas –

continued from page 11

strays, and keep them somewhere until the festival was over, before releasing them again – and they agreed,” she explained.

The only problem was, there was no ‘we’. Rachel was on her own – but not for long.

“I got on the phone to all my RVN and vet friends asking them to come over, and they did,” she said. “The council gave us a disused fire station where we could house the dogs – all 250 of them – for the duration of the festival, and that was how it all began. I never left.”

Initially, TOLFA consisted of four members of staff – a vet, an RVN and three assistants who

were trained by Rachel on account of the fact no formal veterinary nursing exists in Rajasthan, the Indian state where Ajmer is.

Opposition

However, it was not all plain sailing, not least because the majority of animals in India live on the street and at varying levels – from the completely feral to “community dogs” that are fed by the locals, but do not cross the threshold.

Suspicion was also rife. “Lots of people couldn’t understand why a single English lady wanted to leave a First World, comfortable country and good job to work in rural India,” Rachel said.

“It just didn’t make sense to a lot of the local population and they questioned my motives. But over time, they saw the benefit of what we were trying to achieve.”

Progress was slow and resources few, with one kennel block and an operating theatre among the meagre resources. Today, TOLFA tells a very

different story, with 50 members of staff, 250 kennels, a large animal facility, a quarantine area and a dispensary.

It is also open to all – from dogs and cats to cows, pigs, donkeys and the odd tortoise.

How to help

RVNs in the UK keen to help the charity can do so by fund-raising. Rachel said: “Any amount is much appreciated and we have lots of fund-raising ideas, so please get in touch.”

While TOLFA cannot accept volunteers at the moment, Rachel urged anyone hungry for adventure to volunteer at an animal charity, be it at home or abroad.

“When I started training, volunteering wasn’t even on my radar – the role was very much about working your way up in a practice,” she said.

“Not anymore. There is so much scope for RVNs in terms of career and I think it is the volunteer nurses who are keeping most charities afloat.”

Miracles

The key lesson Rachel has learned from more than a decade in the charity sector is not to write an animal off just because its injuries look severe.

She said: “Street animals especially have this incredible sense of survival. They want to live. We just support them through the process. I’ve been shocked so many times thinking an animal will never get over a particular injury, but it has.

“I can’t tell you how many miracles I’ve seen since setting up TOLFA.”

Rachel has brought comfort and kindness to thousands of previously unloved street animals via her work, and if they could speak, I am sure those creatures would agree they did indeed experience a miracle – her name is Rachel.

• For more information about fund-raising for TOLFA, email events@tolfa.org.uk or visit <https://tolfa.org.uk>

Projects

To sufficiently deal with the various animals in need, TOLFA has a host of projects.

Rescue

An emergency telephone service the public can use to report a sick or injured street animal. TOLFA sends an ambulance to the creature. Minor ailments are treated on the spot. More serious cases are transferred to the hospital. Dogs and cats are vaccinated and sterilised on recovery, then returned to the exact spot where they came from. Puppies or kittens unlikely to survive on the street are rehomed.

Rabies eradication

This project attempts to eradicate rabies by vaccinating street dogs – and specifically catching them for sterilisation to stabilise the population.

Education

TOLFA staff visit local schools to teach children about good animal welfare and the Five Freedoms, as well as about dog bite and rabies prevention.

Rural animals

The pets and livestock of local villagers receive free or heavily subsidised treatment.



TOLFA helps treat all manner of animals and cases, such as this cat that presented with a fungal infection.

