



The Animal Welfare Assessment Contest® as a Tool to Promote Animal Welfare Education

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Introduction

- The Animal Welfare Assessment Contest (AWJAC) is an extracurricular event for international undergraduate, graduate, and veterinary students to supplement animal welfare classroom curricula.
- Students assess realistic live and virtual scenarios and present their findings to expert judges.
- Students use physiologic and behavioral indicators to assess welfare, in addition to animal management and facilities.

Objective

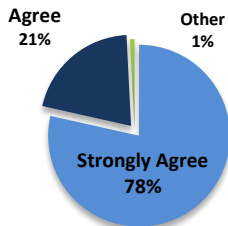
- To determine if the AWJAC achieves its aim to be an innovative educational tool for enhancing understanding and awareness of welfare issues affecting animals used for human purposes.

Materials & Methods

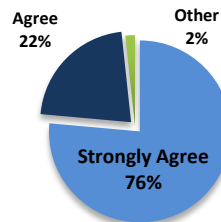
- From 2014-2019 students, coaches, and non-placing participant veterinarians, were invited to complete a written survey at the completion of the contest.
- Surveys consisted of objective questions utilizing a Likert scale and subjective open-ended written questions.
- Descriptive statistics were run on objective data.
- Responses to subjective survey questions were collated and assessed for common themes.

Results

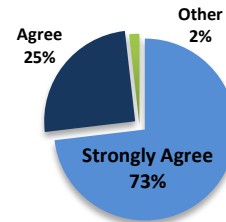
Overall, I feel the AWJAC was a valuable exercise (n=656)



Being involved with the AWJAC has increased my knowledge of animal welfare science (n=659)



I would recommend the AWJAC to my peers (n=660)



Conclusions

- Positive feedback from survey respondents over the course of six contests suggests the AWJAC is achieving its aim to promote animal welfare education utilizing an innovative competition.
- Respondents report variety of species featured in contest, realistic scenarios, networking opportunities, and educational lectures among the reasons the AWJAC is valuable and increases animal welfare knowledge.

Further Investigation

- Perceived positive development of critical thinking skills reported by respondents warrants further investigation for the AWJAC as an educational tool.
- Future surveys to be tailored to students, coaches, and non-placing participant veterinarians for more in-depth analysis of each group's perception of contest.



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