Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) in veterinary clinical training: an increasing role in the Edinburgh Veterinary Undergraduate Curriculum

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Introduction
Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) is increasingly being used in healthcare professional training, including veterinarians.1,2 At the R(D)SVS, PAL has been used informally in clinical training for a number of years, but more recently has been formalised into the curriculum. Initial evaluation has shown that PAL is a rewarding teaching methodology, positively received both by tutors and tutees alike.3 This poster summarises the clinical PAL activities in place within the R(D)SVS curriculum.

PAL at the R(D)SVS
At the R(D)SVS, PAL is used to consolidate the clinical skills required for performing canine, equine and farm animal clinical examinations.

Small Animal: In the first year at vet school, students are taught the basic clinical examination using healthy dogs. PAL is used to consolidate these skills. Trained 4th year ‘PAL tutors’ deliver a PAL clinical examination teaching session for a small group of 1st year/Graduate Entry (GEP) students. In addition, Final Year tutors are involved in small group clinical examination teaching to 3rd year students. Participation as a PAL tutor in these parts of the curriculum is mandatory.

Large Animal: A similar process is repeated on a voluntary basis for 4th year tutors, during which they teach 2nd year/GEP students clinical examination of healthy horses. Also, Final Year tutors on clinical rotations (farm animal & equine) facilitate clinical training sessions to 3rd and 4th year tutees, based on their hospitalised clinical cases.

Therefore, PAL is increasingly being used within the Edinburgh veterinary curriculum in a variety of formats. Initial evaluation has shown the methodology to be well received and of considerable benefit both to PAL tutors and tutees.

References