Reviewing Process on WikiVet for the OVAL Project

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Aims

WikiVet aims to have all articles reviewed by an expert in the appropriate field. For the OVAL project, disease datasheets from CABI and self-assessment books from Manson were used. The role of expert reviewers was to check the information but most importantly to provide updates for any newly discovered strains, new diagnostic methods or treatments. This would ensure that the most up-to-date information was available to the online veterinary community.

Reviewer recruitment

Reviewers were recruited by the WikiVet team and by CABI. The WikiVet team asked staff members from the RVC, experts in farm animal virology, bacteriology and large animal clinical medicine.

CABI were able to contact experts from a wider range of backgrounds, including scientists from Brazil, Egypt, Denmark, Germany, the USA and the UK.

An introductory email was sent to any prospective reviewers explaining the OVAL project and the role of reviewing. It was explained that the articles were aimed at the undergraduate veterinary student body and that they did not have to be comprehensive reviews of the pathogens or diseases. A financial incentive of £30 per article reviewed was offered.

The reviewing process

Reviewers that accepted the task were sent Word documents of the articles from WikiVet. One reviewer was already experienced in editing WikiVet and thus did not require the word document and could make any necessary changes.

The response time from reviewers found by CABI was usually in the range of 2-3 weeks. RVC reviewers tended to take a little more time and needed several reminders.

Reviewers were generally responsible for reviewing several articles from the OVAL list, as many as 19 for one expert.

Reviewers generally tracked any changes made using Word. Some people preferred making annotations on a printed document, and one reviewer preferred to discuss changes in person.

Alterations generally concerned minor details and formatting. Diagnostic methods and treatments were often supplemented. Reviewers also offered more up-to-date references for certain articles.

A considerable number of articles required no alterations at all.

Their recommendations were collected by a member of the WikiVet team and transcribed onto WikiVet.

The flashcards, which are question-and-answer pages associated with each article, were also altered accordingly if any changes had been made.

Reviewer acknowledgment

The reviewer's involvement with the article was acknowledged at the bottom of each article with a box giving details of the reviewer's name, qualifications, and the date the article was reviewed. A follow-up email sent by the WikiVet team gave the reviewers the opportunity to provide a link to an external page they may have about themselves, or offered to set up a page on WikiVet about their work.

Most reviewers already had external links or university staff pages, and a few WikiVet reviewer pages were created.

Reviewers were sent a link to the finished article on WikiVet and encouraged to contact the team with any comments.

Several reviewers provided positive feedback on the concept of the site and recommended other diseases of importance that should be added to the database.

Reviewers were also sent an invoice form to claim for their work. Overall, they were quite efficient at sending back the forms which were then forwarded on to the payroll team at the Royal Veterinary College.