

A survey to identify factors associated with veterinarian and administrative staff turnover in rural veterinary practices

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Introduction

Employee recruitment and retention is challenging for rural veterinary practices. Employee turnover creates personnel replacement costs that hinder profits. This survey identified factors potentially associated with veterinarian and administrative personnel turnover.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional, anonymous online questionnaire focusing on demographics, management practices, and compensation packages was distributed to AABP and AVC members. Approximately 2,835 members received the questionnaire; 126 complete responses were analyzed. A multivariable generalized logistic model was developed for each outcome including covariates from the survey with a significance level of $P < 0.05$.

Results

The number of administrative staff, AABP district, product pricing update frequency, presence of an employee retirement plan, and the number of annual vacation days

were all significantly associated with veterinarian turnover (5 year). The mean and median veterinarian turnover was 0.43 and 0.33, respectively. Administrative staff turnover (5 year) was higher in practices with more veterinary technicians and in larger communities. The mean and median administrative staff turnover was 1.67 and 0.92, respectively.

Significance

Our data indicated several factors associated with veterinarian and administrative staff turnover. A larger study including additional practice profitability indicators may better identify factors associated with personnel turnover. Ideas on how to decrease veterinary turnover could come from examining administrative staffing levels, AABP district location, product pricing update frequency, presence of an employee retirement plan, or the number of annual vacation days. Administrative staff turnover may be partially explained by both the number of veterinary technicians and the community size.