Veterinary Care in the Research Environment

Veterinary medicine has evolved into a host of specialties much like the current practice of human medicine. Altogether, twenty specialty colleges are recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association, and subspecialties exist within a number of them. Some specialty disciplines are narrowly focused on a particular organ system, such as ophthalmology, dermatology and cardiology, whereas others are broader disciplines which encompass a wide variety of animal species, such as pathology, anesthesiology, zoological medicine and laboratory animal medicine.

Like human medical specialists, veterinary specialists are required to undergo focused training in their discipline, contribute to the scientific literature and undergo the rigorous scrutiny of specialty examination boards.

The role of the veterinarian in research encompasses many facets of medicine, management and regulatory affairs.

- There are statutory obligations of research veterinarians to assure that research programs meet animal welfare requirements.
- Training, coaching and assisting research personnel constitute a significant amount of the efforts of laboratory animal veterinarians.
- A great emphasis is placed on preventive procedures in order to assure the health of animal subjects.
- Helping investigators to find and to refine animal disease models is another key responsibility of veterinarians in research.
- Veterinarian animal resource directors are responsible for planning and managing the physical facilities that enable the research to take place with animals, and guiding programs for professional accreditation.

Given the broad scope of this field of veterinary medicine, it is no surprise that research veterinarians hail from many specialized disciplines, including pathology, surgery and internal medicine. Unlike human medicine, veterinary medicine has always had to engage a multi-species approach to learning, clinical practice and research.

Veterinary services are available to all animal research subjects at the University.

Consultation with a veterinarian is also available to all UT researchers, their research staff and graduate students.
In addition to animal health and animal resource management, serving on the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and providing advice and oversight on animal welfare issues are important aspects of their responsibilities.

To consult with a veterinarian contact the Dept. of Laboratory Animal Resources at Ext. 4310.

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