

Presentation overview

- **Course:** WVS ITC - ABC Surgery Course
- **Module:** Animal Welfare, Quality Of Life And Euthanasia
- **Code:** ABC-04
- **Version number:** 02

Core learning objectives:

1. Understand the concept of animal welfare and its importance.
2. Understand how to assess welfare in a clinical setting
3. Appreciate the difference between welfare and ethics
4. Understand what euthanasia is and when to consider it
5. Understand the legislation regarding euthanasia



Animal Welfare, Quality of Life and Euthanasia- treating our animals with compassion



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
The Royal (Dick) School
of Veterinary Studies

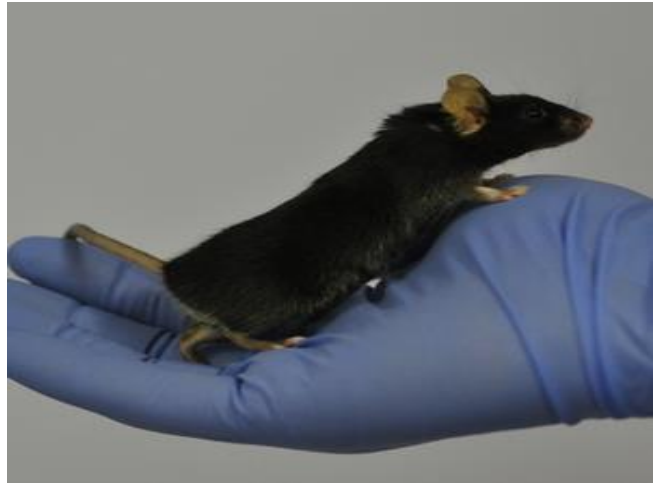
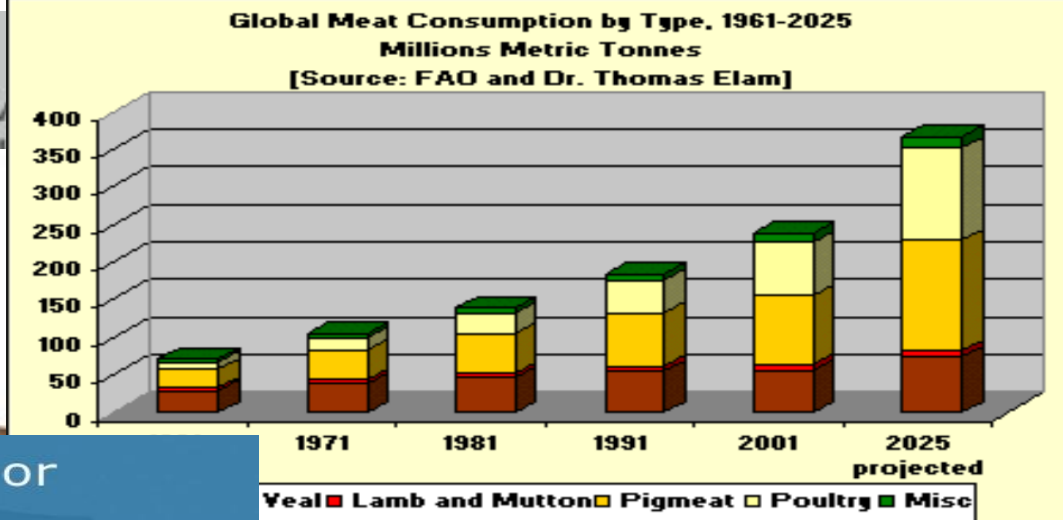
The Jeanne Marchig
International Centre for
Animal Welfare Education



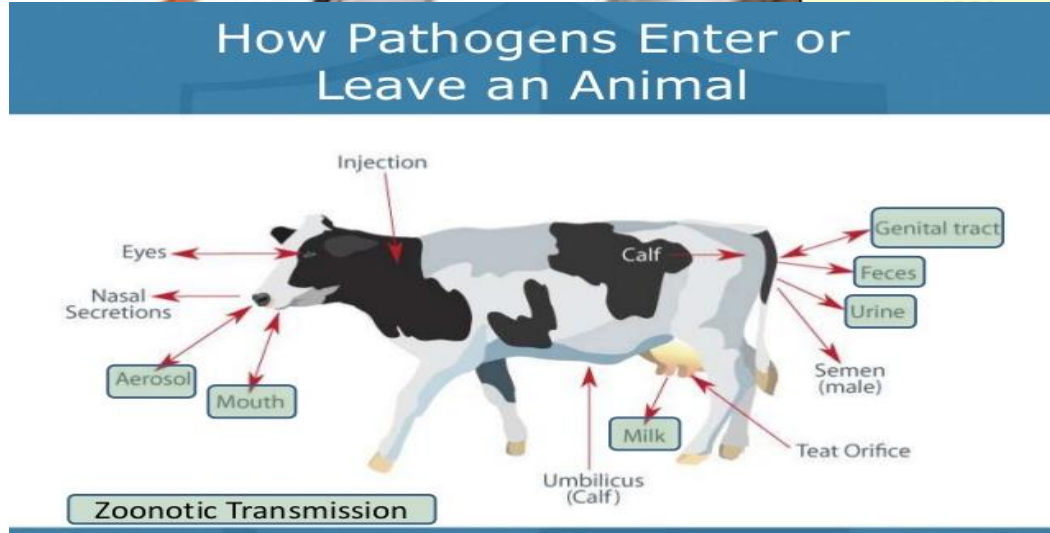
Learning objectives:

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Why does animal welfare matter



Source: NC3Rs <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/>



Sowing using draught animals © CIRAD, P. Dugué

*“If possessing a higher degree of intelligence does not entitle one human to use another for his/her own ends, how can it entitle humans to exploit non humans”
-Peter Singer*

- Contractarian theory
- Relational theory
- Utilitarian theory
- Nature preservation theory

“Can they suffer?”

What does 'animal welfare' mean in different parts of the world?

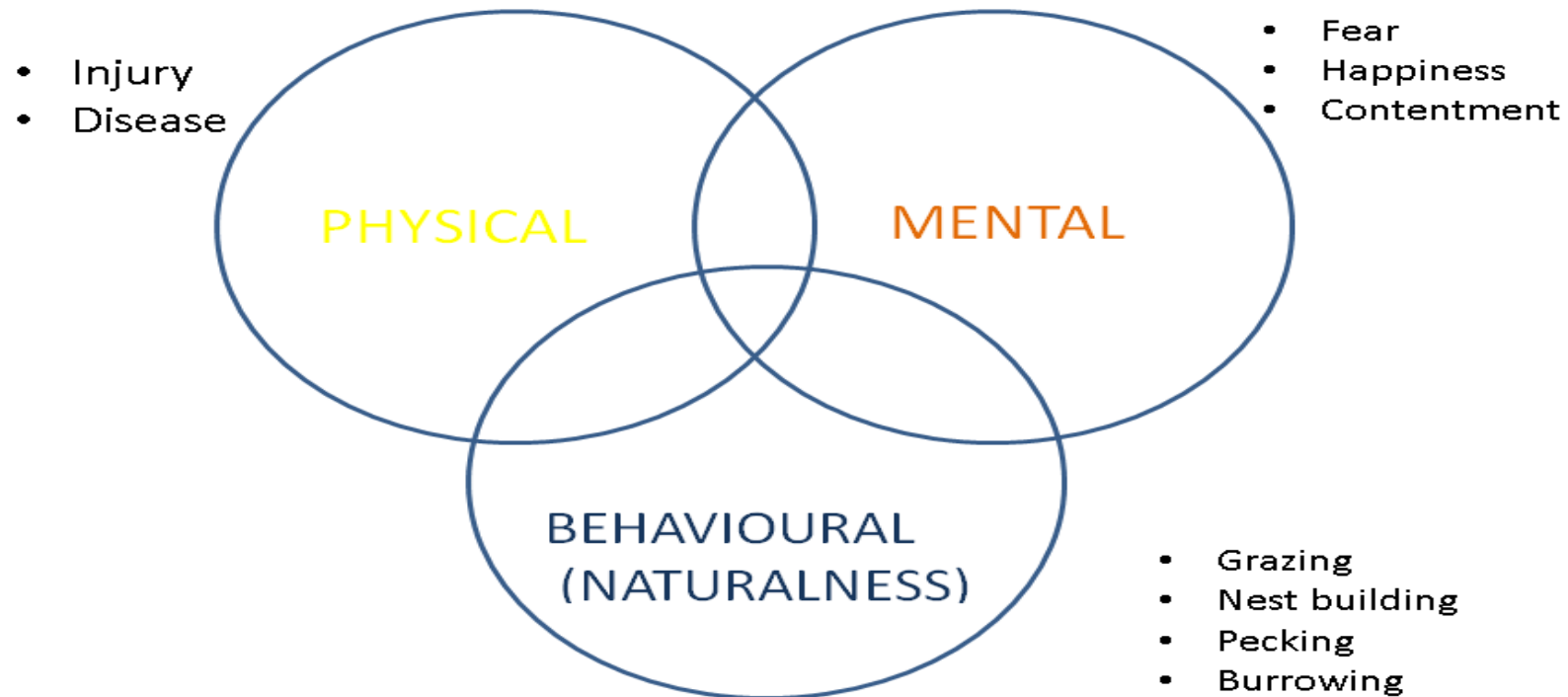
- Often considered to be the same as 'animal cruelty'
- Often confused with the ethical view of 'animal rights'
- May not easily be translated in to different languages



What is welfare?

- “A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease”

(WHO)



Differentiating between welfare and ethics



Welfare – Is about the subjective experience of the **Animal**

What is its quality of life?

Ethics – Is about what **WE** think about the animal's situation based on our own morals/viewpoints



Differentiating between welfare and ethics

Welfare-

Physical

Mental

Behavioural



Ethics-

Do you think this is wrong?

Do you think it is right?

Do you care?

**Whatever your views,
the animal is still experiencing the same welfare state**

Welfare assessment- The Five Freedoms and the Five Welfare Needs

The Five Welfare Needs

The five things all animals need are:



The right environment



The correct diet



Companionship



To be able to behave



Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease.



1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease
4. Freedom from fear and distress
5. Freedom to express normal behaviour

(Farm Animal Welfare Council, UK, 1993)

Duty of care framework

Focuses on what can be provided to the animal

- Safe, happy environment that can be enjoyed
- Legal responsibility to the owner

Obese Cat

Five freedoms

- **Too much** freedom from hunger
- Compromised freedom from disease
- Compromised freedom from discomfort
- Restricting natural behavior

Duty of Care

- Focuses on balanced diet



Assessing animal welfare

- Examples for situations of animals in poor state of welfare
- Examples for animals in good state of welfare

“What we can measure, we can manage”

What can be measured?

Changes in behaviour, physiology, immunological status with respect to different handling conditions, transport, housing

Behaviour as a welfare indicator

- Objectively- Ethogram
- Animals making choices helps determine what the animal prefers and what it would actively avoid- Choice/preference test
- Motivational test- is the animal willing to pay for a particular choice



Physiological assessment of welfare

- Changes in various hormones and chemicals found in the body
- Limited use short term changes
- Invasive

New development

- Increasing interest in animal pain management and welfare
- Very often reading an animals facial expression/body language has had correlation with the physiological measures
- Pain score system- grimace scale
- Quantitative behavior assessment

Welfare assessment- Quality of Life

In livestock, the Farm Animal Welfare Committee have developed a 'Quality of life' way of thinking, which is related to current legal minimums (a life worth living)

A "good life"

"A life worth living"

"A life not worth living"

Good welfare



Poor welfare

Case decision management

Know the problem:

- Signalment
- History
- Clinical examination

Assessment:

- Differential diagnosis

Anticipated outcome?

- Finances
- Owner compliance
- Skills
- Resources
- Time
- Staff
- Quality of life

Develop your treatment plan

The responsibility of the Veterinary surgeon

Do no harm!



IFAW



IFAW

Prevent suffering!

Ultimate aim- a good quality of life



Euthanasia

“ A good death” (direct translation from Greek)

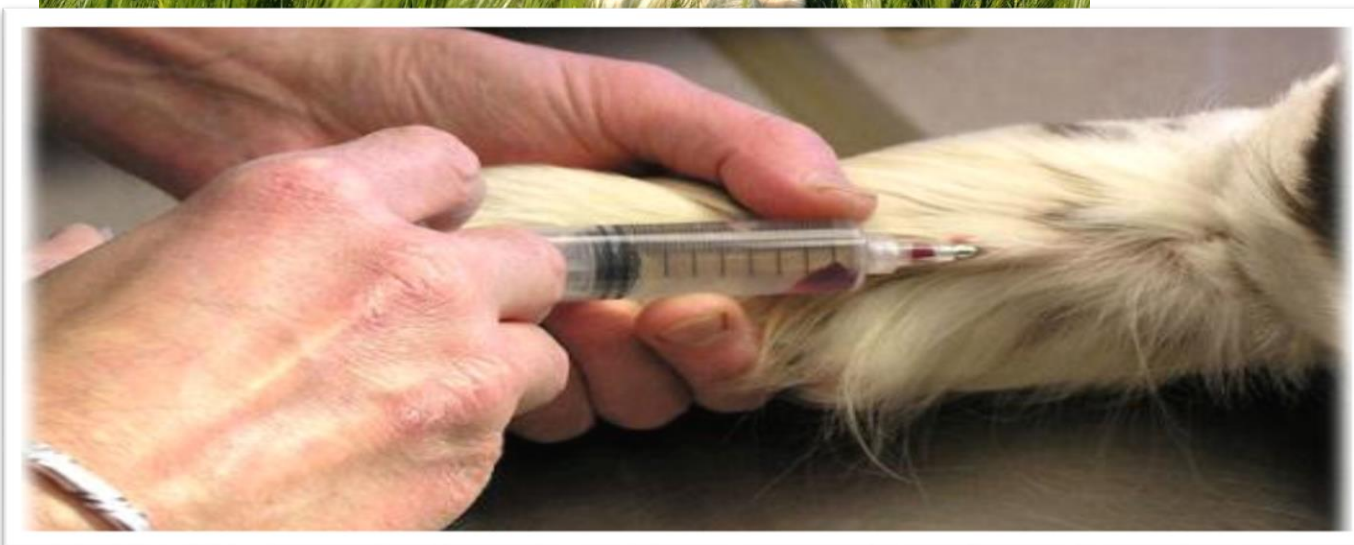
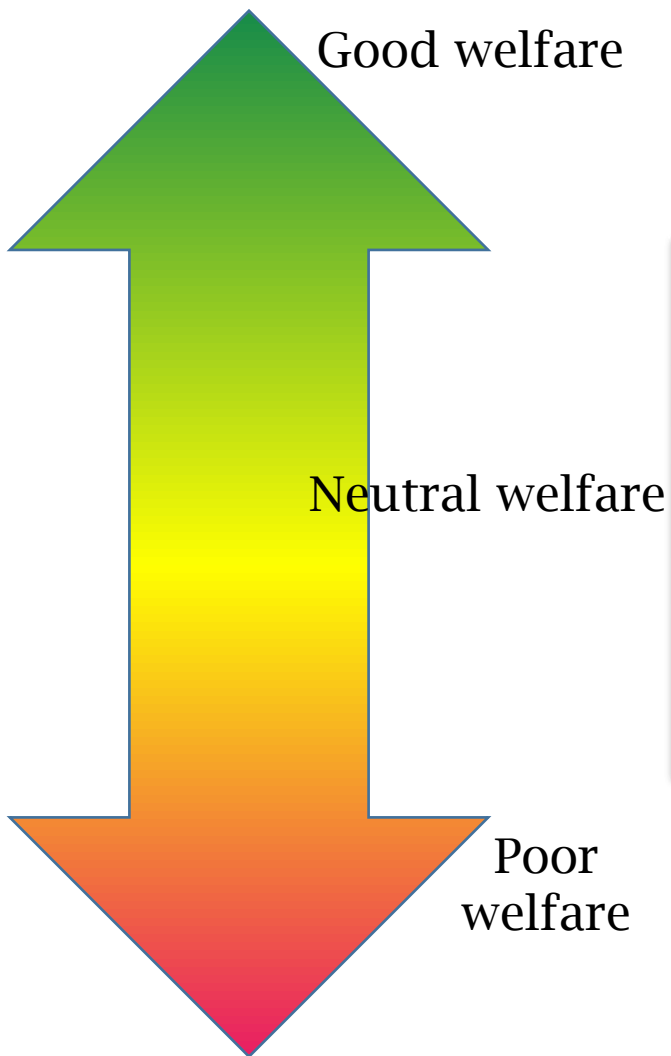
Dying can be a welfare problem.....

.....but death itself is not

Remember, welfare is about what the *animal ACTUALLY experiences*, not how WE think or feel



The welfare of eu

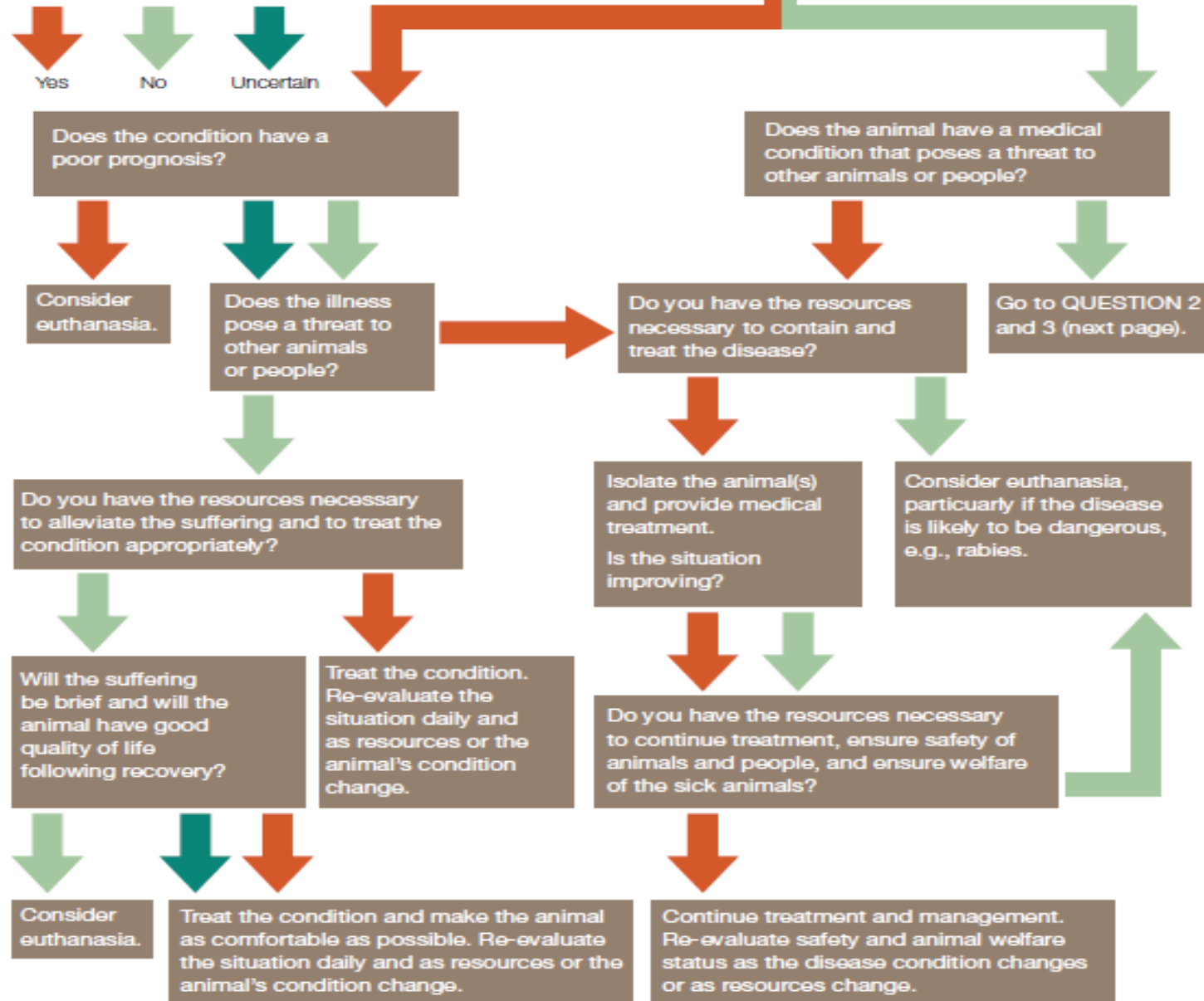


**PREVENT
SUFFERING**



Turn to accompanying euthanasia notes (page 19) for guidance on use of this algorithm.

QUESTION 1: Does the animal have a medical condition that is causing it to suffer?



IFAW's euthanasia decision algorithm

Table 1

The HHHHMM QoL scale. Pet caregivers can use this scale to evaluate the success of their Pawspice program. Patients are scored on a scale of 1 to 10

Score	Criterion
H: 0–10	Hurt: adequate pain control, including breathing ability, is first and foremost on the scale. Is the pet’s pain successfully managed? Is oxygen necessary?
H: 0–10	Hunger: is the pet eating enough? Does hand feeding help? Does the patient require a feeding tube?
H: 0–10	Hydration: is the patient dehydrated? For patients not drinking enough water, use subcutaneous fluids once or twice daily to supplement fluid intake
H: 0–10	Hygiene: the patient should be kept brushed and cleaned, particularly after elimination, avoid pressure sores and keep all wounds clean
H: 0–10	Happiness: does the pet express joy and interest? Is it responsive to things around it (eg, family, toys)? Is the pet depressed, lonely, anxious, bored, or afraid? Can the pet’s bed be near the kitchen and moved near family activities so as not to be isolated?
M: 0–10	Mobility: can the patient get up without assistance? Does the pet need human or mechanical help, such as a cart? Does it want to go for a walk? Is it having seizures or stumbling? Some caregivers believe euthanasia is preferable to amputation, but an animal with limited mobility may still be alert and responsive and can have a good QoL as long as the family is committed to quality care
M: 0–10	More good days than bad: when bad days outnumber good days, QoL might be too compromised. When a healthy human-animal bond is no longer possible, the caregiver must be made aware that the end is near. The decision needs to be made if the pet is suffering. If death comes peacefully and painlessly, that is OK
Total	A total >35 points is an acceptable QoL for pets to maintain a good Pawspice

Adapted from Villalobos A, Kaplan L. Canine and feline geriatric oncology: honoring the human-animal bond. Ames (IA): Blackwell Publishing; 2007. Table 10.1, p. 304. Original article, Villalobos A. QoL scale helps make final call, VPN, 09/2004; with permission.

- Is it 'natural' to vaccinate or to treat an animal if they are ill?
- Can animals make informed choices about what they want?? No!



Indian legislation on euthanasia

Euthanasia is legal in India and veterinary surgeons have an obligation to carry out euthanasia when required

- ❖ Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960, Section 13
- ❖ Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)- statutory body established under this Act
- ❖ Animal Birth Control (2001) Rules



Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)

ANIMAL WELFARE BOARD OF INDIA
CHENNAI - 41

CRITERIA AND STANDARDS OF EUTHANASIA OF ANIMALS

Introduction

Euthanasia is an act of inducing humane death in an animal with minimal pain and distress. It is the responsibility of the veterinarian administering euthanasia to ensure that the animal is dealt with highest degree of respect, with an emphasis on making the entire procedure as painless and distress free for the animal as possible. Euthanasia should result in rapid loss of consciousness followed by cardiac or respiratory arrest and the ultimate loss of brain function. It is important that the death of the animal is confirmed after euthanasia by examining the animal for cessation of vital parameters (heart beat/respiration)

Concerns and Considerations

Decision making for euthanising animals

The following essential considerations must be kept in mind by the Veterinarian while performing euthanasia:

1. Veterinarians have the primary obligation to relieve an animal's incurable suffering and pain by performing euthanasia
2. A veterinarian must not cause any animal to suffer by failing to maintain adequate paw control and relief of suffering

Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
FOR
STERILIZATION OF STRAY DOGS UNDER
THE ANIMAL BIRTH CONTROL PROGRAMME

Compiled by Animal Welfare Board of India

SECTION 9

EUTHANASIA, POST-MORTEM EXAMS & VERIFICATION OF ABC SURGERIES

9.1 Euthanasia

- Euthanasia should be carried out of incurably sick, mortally wounded or rabid dogs as per the ABC Rules. Besides, euthanasia may also be carried out on dogs suffering from a severe or life threatening injury or illness that has no cure, dogs severely injured in an accident and dogs found to be extremely aggressive and bad tempered, prone to biting people and with a history of having bitten people.
- Most dogs selected for euthanasia will be identified at the Pre-Surgical check stage. Some, however may not be identified until surgery is underway.
- Experience has shown that the highest euthanasia rates are seen at the beginning of an ABC programme in an area. To avoid unnecessary euthanasia, prior intensive training of the veterinary and Para veterinary staff is mandatory.
- Euthanasia, and its suitable methods, is the subject of further guidance from the AWBI.

9.1.1 The method utilized for euthanasia must serve the following criteria:

- Be painless
- Achieve rapid unconsciousness followed by death
- Minimise animal fear and distress
- Be reliable and irreversible



Dogs and cats:

1. Sedation with xylazine I/M followed by I/V thiopentone sodium
2. Sedation with acepromazine I/M followed by I/V thiopentone sodium
3. Sedation with diazepam I/V followed by I/V thiopentone sodium

Potassium chloride administration is
NOT an acceptable method under Indian legislation



- Electrocution
- Hanging
- Stunning
- Hypothermia
- Drowning
- Household solvents/products
- Formalin injection
- Neuromuscular blocking agents e.g. magnesium sulphate

- Rapid freezing
- Chloroform
- Exsanguination
- Decompression
- Air embolism
- Cyanide
- Chloral hydrate

Outcome of our decision- euthanase or not?

If we choose NOT to euthanase an animal, it is IMPORTANT that we are able to

provide good welfare rather than just basic survival....



Barriers to carrying out euthanasia

- 1. Religious beliefs-** Jainism, Hinduism
- 2. Cultural and educational issues-**
 - Lack of understanding of what euthanasia is amongst the laymen
 - Euthanasia is not “natural”
 - Lack of undergraduate education in veterinary students
- 3. Lack of access to humane euthanasia**



www.hindu.com



www.huffingtonpost.in

"All beings are fond of themselves, they like pleasure, they hate pain, they shun destruction, they want life and want to live long. To all life is dear; hence their life should be protected."

- Mahavira



www.newindianexpress.com

Making euthanasia easier



1. Ensuring that the correct drugs are available in your practice so that they are there when you need them.



2. Using your knowledge of animal welfare to explain to owners why euthanasia is important and why it is the right decision for their animals.



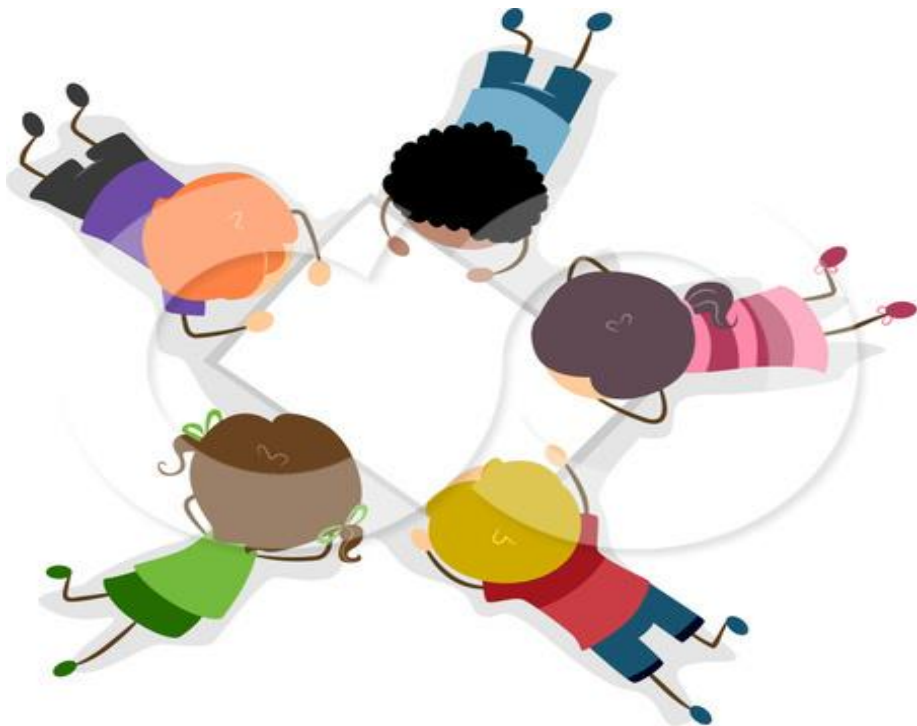
3. Explain to owners what to expect when their animal is euthanized *prior* to carrying it out

...and now a short video on how to perform euthanasia

Euthanasia



Work with your colleagues to discuss the following scenarios:



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You will need to discuss and consider:

- Current welfare issues with the scenario
- Treatment options (I will give you these)
- Concerns/considerations regarding welfare and ethics in treatment options
- What would you do?

Case 1- A life worth living?

- These three dogs had scabies that had been left untreated for 3 years. They were living in a rescue shelter in a small, dark, barren shed as the owner correctly feared they might contaminate the other dogs at the shelter.
- This shelter housed over 300 dogs and only had 4 full time staff, so finding time for these three was almost impossible.
- The shelter workers would fill up their food and water bowls once a day and pour a watery disinfectant solution over the floor every day to prevent contaminating other areas of the rescue shelter. The whole process would take around 4 minutes and once completed the workers would close the door and walk away to attend to the other 300 dogs.



- For 23 hours and 56 minutes of the day, these dogs were alone in a dark room with no access to the outdoors or any form of comfort.
- Tied to the wall or locked in the wire cage with nothing to do or see, nothing to lie on or play with, no comfort, a wet floor, no relief from their itchy skin, no warmth in the winter, and no comfort from a human being.



Current welfare considerations for these dogs:

- Physical ?
- Psychological?
- Behavioural?

Options

- **Option 1:** Offer the shelter owner some basic advice but leave the dogs where they are. They've managed for this long and they are fed and watered.
- **Option 2:** Treat the dogs for scabies at the veterinary hospital and when better introduce them to the main dog population. Hope that they will be rehomed (the shelter rehomes 1-2 dogs/month).
- **Option 3:** Take them to another rescue shelter.
- **Option 4:** Euthanise all 3 dogs



What are the welfare and ethical concerns?

Option 1: Offer the shelter owner some basic advice but leave the dogs where they are. They've managed for this long and they are fed and watered.

Welfare concerns – the incredibly low quality of life they were experiencing.

Ethical concerns – Is it ethically justifiable to keep dogs alive in these conditions?



Option 2: at the dogs for scabies and when better introduce them to the main dog population. Hope that they will be rehomed (shelter rehomes 1-2 dogs/month).

Welfare concern – Significant mental suffering after experiencing extensive treatment in a kind, loving, comfortable veterinary hospital before being returned to the shelter. Concern would be that the skin condition would return due to high stress levels or that they would never be rehomed.

Ethical concern – Is it fair to take a dog from a negative welfare state, place it in a more positive one and then return it to a negative one?



Is this a life worth living?



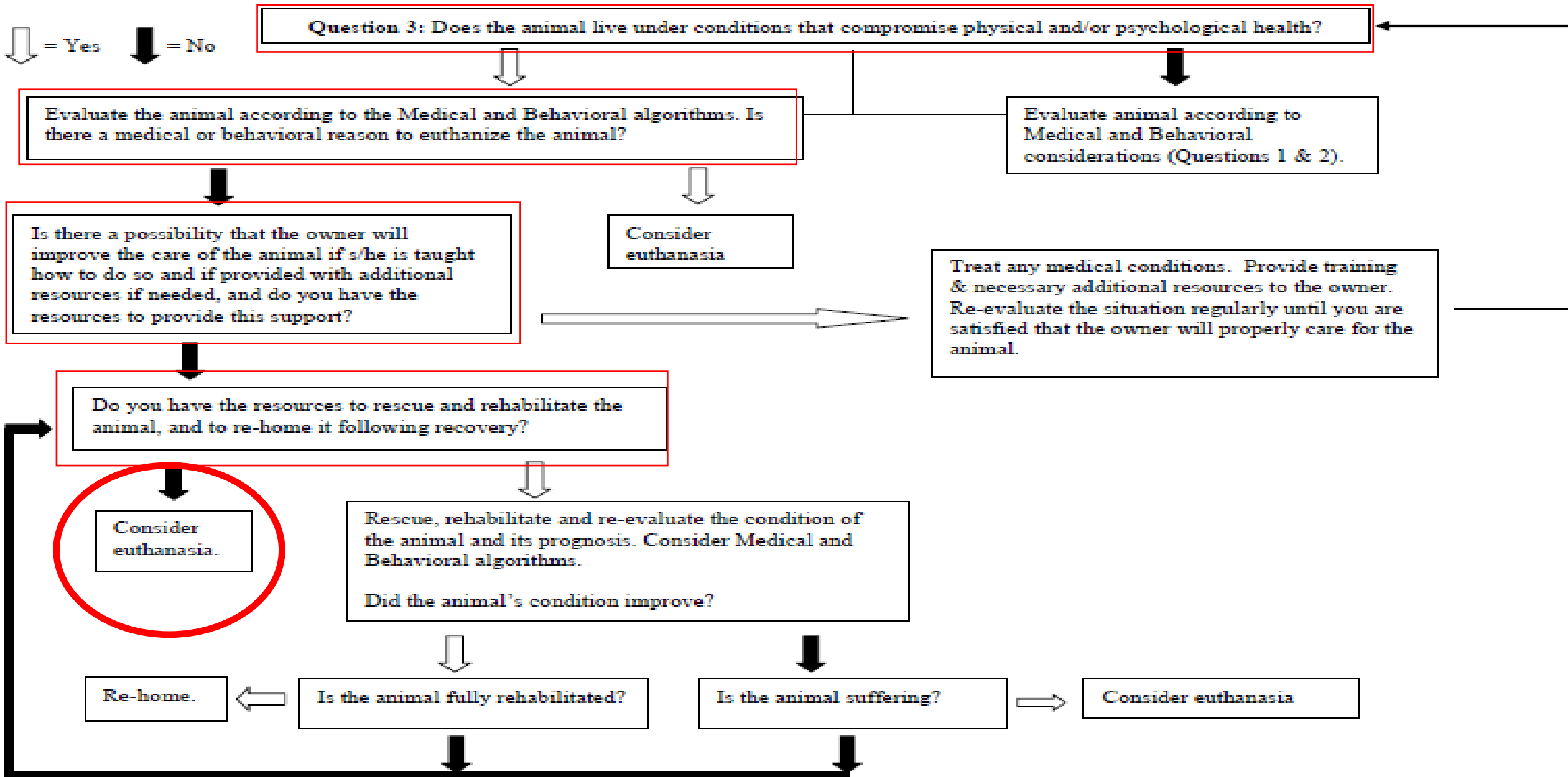
Once treated, this is where they would have lived for the rest of their lives.

Option 3: Take them to another rescue shelter.

- **Welfare concern** - Would the next shelter be any better? Stress of being moved. Stress of being integrated, risk of introducing infection to other dogs
- **Ethical concern**- Is it fair to move the dogs to another shelter that is likely not to be any better?

Option 4: Euthanase all 3 dogs.

- No welfare concerns regarding euthanasia if it is performed humanely.
- Ethical concerns – removing the dog's right to life because we deem its life not one worth living.



Outcome

- Unfortunately, whilst the medical condition of these dogs was theoretically treatable, *the lack of resources, lack of social contact, poor rehoming prospects and general poor condition of the shelter* meant that any treatment was unlikely to be successful, and their quality of life would remain poor.
- Euthanasia was selected as being in the best option in the current scenario

Case 2: Paraplegic corgi



Case 2: Paraplegic corgi

7 year old, adored family pet with an intervertebral prolapsed disc. Unable to stand or walk for 48 hours. Drags herself around with her front legs. Can still urinate and has no deep pain status. Very bright dog but paraplegic.

Current welfare considerations:

Physical ?

Psychological?

Behavioural?

Current welfare considerations

- Physical - the dog was unable to go for walks or run or play. She had to be walked with a towel or sling to allow her to toilet. She was only mobile in the wooden floor rooms of the house. She had hair loss and sores developing on her belly and stifles from the friction of dragging herself around.
- Behavioural / psychological - the dog was experiencing a reduced welfare state as she was unable to go for her walks anymore which she had enjoyed very much. A sense of frustration? Her owner continued to love and adore her though.

Discuss the welfare issues and ethical issues for each of the 4 options:

- **Option no.1** Surgery to remove the prolapsed disc. Operation must be done in first 24-72 hours of prolapse.
- **Option no.2** Do nothing. Allow the dog to live out her natural life in this condition providing as much supportive care as possible.
- **Option no. 3** Buy a cart for the dog to get around in.
- **Option no.4** Euthanasia.

Welfare concerns?

Ethical concerns?

Option 1: Surgery to remove the prolapsed disc.

- **Welfare concerns** - This is a major operation and requires an extended recovery period in the hospital, physiotherapy and possible hydro therapy post-operatively. It also may be unsuccessful.
- **Ethical concerns** - Can we subject a dog to something potentially painful and extensive that may not have a positive outcome when we cannot explain why to it?

Option 2: Do nothing. Allow the dog to live out her natural life in this condition providing as much supportive care as possible.

- **Welfare concern** - Mental suffering i.e. frustration as it tries and fails to carry out its normal activities. Pain from dragging itself around and physical damage
- **Ethical concern** - Is this a life worth living? Dogs NEED to be walked and stimulated by new environments, sights, sounds and smells.

Option 3 : Buy a cart for the dog to get around in

- **Welfare concerns** - Mental suffering from initial stress of the cart, then physical problems from sores developing in pelvic and chest area due to rubbing when used. Behavioural- cannot run around “normally” even with cart
- **Ethical concern** - Is this a life worth living for a dog? Is the cart too restrictive causing further frustration?

Option 4: Euthanasia

- No welfare concerns with euthanasia if it is performed humanely.
- Ethical concerns - the dog was otherwise a healthy animal and euthanasia would deny the dog to live out its natural lifespan. Are we able to reliably judge what the quality of life actually was for that dog?

Outcome

- Option 1 was not possible. Although the owner loved her dog, she simply could not afford that sort of financial commitment.

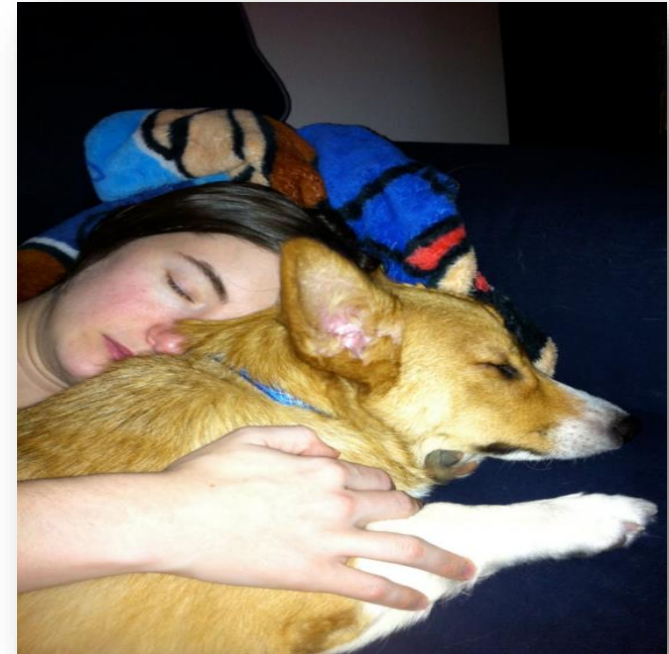
Outcome

Options 2 and 3 were chosen and the dog lived her life in her paraplegic condition. The cart was unsuccessful and the dog became very stressed each time the owner tried to place her in it. After a week the owner ceased trying to use it and would use a sling to take her into the garden to go to the toilet. Since most of the house had wooden floors it was deemed that she could get around the house quite easily. The owner also believed that the dog was very bright and seemed happy enough to just be in her company. She thought that not going for walks was a small sacrifice to pay for still being alive.



Outcome

- After a year, and with no deterioration to the dog's condition, the owner opted for option 4. The dog was euthanased in her own home with the owner holding her and talking to her.
- The owner had believed her dog had a life worth living and looked after her as best she could in her paraplegic condition - however, what changed over time? Was she keeping the dog alive for the dog or for herself? Was there a welfare issue here?



- This illustrates how difficult it can be for humans to rationally assess animal welfare.
- The welfare of this dog did not change from day 1 of spinal trauma to day 365 of spinal trauma.
- Only the owner's understanding of its welfare changed in that time.
- On day one the owner did not want to accept how difficult and frustrating it would be for the dog to not be able to walk or run or play but by day 365 she had a greater understanding of how limited the dog's life had become.
- Remember that animals have no concept of time; therefore a long life does not necessarily equal a good life.

And to finish....

This dog was brought into a clinic in Goa. The owner was concerned about a non-healing wound



When the dog was examined, it was realised that the wound was on the stump of one of the two hindlimbs that had been partially amputated. He was not concerned by the fact that the dog could not walk and refused to believe that its welfare was compromised when this was discussed with him. He eventually took his dog away.

The owner was not able to assess the dog's welfare without his own feelings affecting his judgement.....



Useful websites:

1. International Fund for Animal Welfare- The welfare basis for euthanasia of dogs and cats and policy development document (with euthanasia algorithms)

<http://www.ifaw.org/sites/default/files/ICAM%20Euthanasia%20Protocol.pdf>

2. Animal Welfare Board of India (AWB)- Criteria and Standards of Euthanasia of Animals Document

<http://awbi.org/?q=node/187>

3. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960

<http://envfor.nic.in/legis/awbi/awbi01.html>

4. <https://www.coursera.org/learn/animal-welfare/home/welcome>

Acknowledgements:

- Dr Fritha Langford, Edinburgh University
- Dr Ilona Otter, WVS
- Dr Heather Bacon, Jeanne Marchig International Centre for Animal Welfare Education, Edinburgh University
- Professor Natalie Waran, Edinburgh University
- Miss Hayley Walters, Edinburgh University
- Dr Aswin Susheelaan, WVS
- Dr Parvinder Singh

Any questions?

