Report for Hill's Pet Food Company – Sponsors of Client Simulations in VET442 2012

The cost of the client simulations was $5558.89; details are shown in the attached spread sheet. Also attached are student evaluation comments for each of the three groups.

The table below shows student satisfaction scores on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high).

		6	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	10	n	Mean	std dev
2/05/2012	1st Gp	1	5	1	7		6	6	26	8.4	1.18
9/05/2012	2nd Gp	1	4		10	1	6	6	28	8.4	1.09
16/05/2012	3rd Gp				7		13	7	28	9	0.72
	Overall								86	8.62	1.04

Students, staff & actors were pleased with the outcome (some student comments are appended below). We did have a 'client' who had to have her own dog euthanased within the period, and so I acted in her place for the last session.

Four small animal cases were used for the simulation classes with the object of combining communication skills with diagnostic pathology; connecting with a client, taking a history, making and explaining a diagnosis without using jargon (as shown on the attached workshop outline). Two cases were reasonably straight forward and were used at the start, then two others involved either 'breaking bad news' or dealing with a challenging client. All cases included negotiating costs, justifying tests, and expressing empathy. Client scripts incorporated many practical points, (e.g. legal age is 18; pensioner needs; variable human-animal bonds, different client personalities, etc)

More resources are required to perfect client simulations, both in venue and organisation.

a) Venue –5 individual consultation rooms are needed, with a central 'control room' and waiting room for the clients. We used the anatomy laboratories for the last session – these were very cold; and anatomy museum and two adjacent rooms for the first two sessions.
b) Organization – more time is needed to run coaching and training sessions for both clients and facilitators to ensure correct & consistent techniques are being used, and the learning environment is 'safe' for both students and clients . Such sessions may need to be run after-hours, or repeated several times as new facilitators & clients are recruited. Dedicated educators in client communication are now on staff at some veterinary schools. Consistent role-modeling by teaching and clinical staff is also required, which can involve refresher training.

We are extremely grateful to Hill's Pet Food Company for sponsoring the simulations this year. We would be more than happy to provide any further information and to name Hill's pet foods in our client scripts.

Jennifer N Mills
23/5/2012

Student comments:
More of the same please! More of this kind of learning in the other units would be much appreciated!

This session is really important when it comes to being a successful vet. It'd be nice if we have more opportunities to learn more in this area in the future in our course.

Unsolicited student email: 16/5/2012 *After attending the communications session this afternoon I thought I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for your effort to plan, organize and coordinate "clients"... I would imagine a tremendous amount of work behind the scene.*
I personally took away much pointers from being engaged and providing/gaining feedback from everybody in the group. It certainly enhanced my learning curve at this stage in the veterinary school and sets one in the right path into thinking about effective communication. The knowledge and technical skills every veterinary graduate have will not serve its full purpose if the message isn't being brought across in the right manner.