

CPD AND PARTIES IN MAASTRICHT

MAASTRICHT was an excellent location for the 2012 meeting of The European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ECVIM). If you have never been to this conference, but have an interest in small animal internal medicine, it is an excellent meeting to add to your CPD calendar.

The congress is held in a different European city each year and next year it is being held in Liverpool, so this would be an excellent first meeting for UK vets to attend. In addition to excellent lectures and abstracts, the congress has a lively social programme.

The programme has streams of lectures organised by special interest societies, such as comparative gastroenterology, hepatology, nephrology and urology, oncology, internal medicine, cardiology and feline medicine. Therefore, there is invariably at least one talk you want to attend in each session and it is easy to move between rooms. There are also oral abstract sessions, again organised by the specialist societies, and poster exhibits of abstracts. Here you can learn about the latest research of groups from across Europe. There are pre and post-congress sessions organised by some special interest groups, practical stenting sessions and masterclasses.

The conference, of course,

KATE MURPHY qualified from the University of Bristol and is a medicine clinician at Bath Veterinary Referrals. Previously Kate was a senior clinical fellow in small animal emergency medicine and intensive care at the University of Bristol. Kate enjoys all aspects of internal medicine.

KATE MURPHY

BVSc(Hons), DSAM, DipECVIM-CA, PGCert(HE), MRCVS

discovers that the wine flows a little too freely as delegates mix serious learning with a lively social agenda in the Netherlands

has a commercial exhibition and this is an excellent opportunity to catch up on new developments from the industry.

I attended excellent talks by a number of speakers, but particularly enjoyed Simon Priestnall (from the RVC and a University of Bristol graduate) talk about emerging respiratory pathogens based on his PhD research and some brilliantly illustrated talks by Alyson Berent from the US about stenting feline ureters.

Apart from providing excellent CPD opportunity, these conferences provide an opportunity to travel and experience different European cities and their culture. The opening ceremony was held in Selexyz Dominicanen in the centre of Maastricht, a 700-year-old church that has been converted to a beautiful bookstore, and was a wonderful start to the congress complete with wine and canapés.

Wine and more wine

Wine is quite a feature at the social events, and a wine and cheese reception the following night in the exhibition hall, sponsored by Nestlé Purina, provided delegates with a social opportunity to view the posters with friends and chat to the authors. Friday night is party night with a dinner, more wine and the chance to welcome new diplomates into the colleges. There is dancing afterwards, described by some as "Eurovision on the dancefloor".

I can't comment on this year's dance-off as I left after the dinner and a little too much of the fine wine. The main congress ends on Saturday and if you stay until the end you can enjoy another drink, this time as you bid farewell to new and old friends. The conference is relatively small with between 700 and 900 delegates each year. It is a small, friendly meeting and it is not open only to diplomates



Delegates enjoying a drink at the poster reception.



and residents, but to anyone who is interested in companion animal internal medicine. For those who find it hard to find CPD that challenges them, this is a great meeting to try. So, plan your medicine CPD for next year and join the ECVIM congress in Liverpool from September 12 to 14. ■

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people, an hour session leads to life-changing results. Giving an alternative explanation for behaviour enables certain individuals to gain a new perspective and the drive to pursue it. "If you can convince them they have the right to change their beliefs, it gives them energy and confidence," he says. "You let them know they have the right to be more assertive and the response in behaviour can be almost immediate."

That creates a space for addressing psychology in veterinary practice, in Brian's view, and the uptake of "coaching" by many employers and employees is testament to that. He addresses its bearing on practice performance simply. "As vets we take an oath to look after animals and that should always come first. After that, clients and colleagues have a right to trust, fairness and respect, and finally profit, the

right return on our investment." He pauses reflectively. "My personal philosophy is pet, people, profit – the triple bottom line."

Therapeutic efficacy for evidence-based positive psychology, such as cognitive behaviour therapy, has increased steadily over the past decade. So what of classical psychological models such as Freudian psychotherapy or behaviourism – what do they tell us about the human condition?

"All models are just hypotheses to explain certain behaviours and phenomena," says Brian, undeterred by the deliberately ambiguous question. "They try to explain a complex mix of thought, feeling and behaviour, how they are connected, and why people initiate and persist with certain behaviours. That fascinates me. I'm always asking 'why did you do that?' That is what psychology tries to answer." ■