

## Supplementary Material S1

### Pet Owner Survey

Welcome!

Thank you for considering being a participant in this study. The survey is 100% digital and should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

On the next page, you will find a consent form. Please read through it carefully. By moving forward with the survey, you will be providing your consent to participate.

At the end of the survey you will have the option to sign up to enter a prize draw for a \$25 Amazon eGiftcard (odds are 1 in 100). You will also have an opportunity to provide your contact information if you are willing to be notified about future research projects on this topic. Any contact information you provide will be collected in a separate survey and will not be associated with your responses.

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ONTARIO VETERINARY COLLEGE  
Department of Population Medicine  
**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY**  
REB # 20-08-017

#### **The Effect of virtual (remote) veterinary care on the veterinarian-client relationship: the pet owner perspective**

You are being invited to participate in a research study led by Drs. Jason Coe, DVM, PhD, and Debbie Sigesmund, BSc, DVM from the University of Guelph. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Dr. Coe ([jcoe@uoguelph.ca](mailto:jcoe@uoguelph.ca)) or Dr. Sigesmund (647-297-3647 or [dsigesmu@uoguelph.ca](mailto:dsigesmu@uoguelph.ca)).

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

With increasing availability of technology, there is an increasing opportunity for pet owners and pets to receive veterinary care remotely. This type of interaction is called virtual veterinary care. The purpose of this study is to investigate pet owner perceptions and experiences communicating with veterinarians during virtual (remote) and/or face-to-face interactions.

#### **INCLUSION CRITERIA**

In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and be a pet owner or caregiver.

#### **PROCEDURES**

The survey is 100% digital and should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

The survey includes questions about:

- Your experiences receiving virtual (remote) and/or face-to-face veterinary care
  - Your opinion about virtual (remote) and face-to-face veterinary care
  - Your background

At the end of the survey, there is an opportunity to provide your name and email in a separate survey if you wish to:

- a. Participate in a draw and/or
- b. Be contacted by the research team about participation in future research studies (up to 2 years) on communication in virtual veterinary care.

#### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS**

There is no direct benefit for participating in this study. Ultimately, this information will lead to a better

understanding of how veterinarians communicate with pet owners using virtual methods and how these interactions can be enhanced.

#### POTENTIAL RISKS

There is minimal risk associated with this study. It is possible that if your computer browser is kept open, other people with access to that computer may see the survey and your completed survey responses. While there may be a risk of self-consciousness if your views differ from others, the information we are collecting is not particularly sensitive, and other members of your household are likely already aware of your common practices around receiving virtual (remote) veterinary care. To minimize this risk please exit the browser when you are finished with the survey. Also, please clear your browsing history and cache prior to exiting the browser. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time, or skip questions you do not wish to answer, without penalty or explanation.

#### COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

At the end of the survey, you can enter a random prize draw for \$25 CAD Amazon eGiftcard (odds are 1 in 100). Once the survey is closed, winners will be chosen using a random number generator. Each winner will be emailed 3 (three) times within 2 weeks before a new winner is selected. If interested, you can email the research team to receive an executive summary of study results (contact information is provided below).

#### CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your name will not appear on the survey and there will be no way to trace your survey responses back to you. If you choose to provide your name and email in order to enter the draw and/or be contacted about participating in future research, the information will be collected using a survey that is separate from the one collecting your data. An executive summary of aggregate results of all participating veterinary clients (pet owners) may be provided to corporate veterinary groups. We will take every measure to keep your individual responses confidential. All survey and identifying data will be collected using the online application Qualtrics. Qualtrics uses Transport Layer Security (TLS) encryption for all transmitted data and also protects surveys with passwords and HTTP referrer checking. Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the internet. All downloaded survey and identifying data will be kept on an encrypted laptop, encrypted hard drive stored in a locked cabinet in a locked and secure room at the University of Guelph and/or on a password protected computer. Only members of the research team will have access to identifiable data. For publication purposes, your data will be kept for 5 years following this study. After 5 years, any data previously downloaded from Qualtrics will be permanently deleted from any device holding this data. Survey data will also be deleted from the researchers' Qualtrics accounts by January 2026. If you provide your name and address to allow the research team to contact you about participating in future research, your name and email address will be deleted by January 2023. If you provide your name and address to receive an executive summary, your name and email address will be deleted by January 2022. Anonymized results may be published in academic journals, form part of a thesis or be presented at an external forum (e.g. conference, continuing education). By agreeing to participate in this study you are aware and agreeable to the use of deidentified verbatim quotes in published materials; your identity will not be associated with any published quotes.

#### PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop the survey at any time or skip any questions that you prefer not to answer without penalty. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so. For example, if there are too many incomplete responses to allow for analysis. Once your survey responses have been submitted, your data cannot be withdrawn from the study because they will be de-identified. If you withdraw prior to finishing the survey, please email Dr. Debbie Sigesmund at [dsigesmu@uoguelph.ca](mailto:dsigesmu@uoguelph.ca) if you wish to provide your contact information to enter the random prize draw.

#### RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You are under no obligation to participate in this research study. You may withdraw your consent and

discontinue participation without penalty. Once your survey responses have been submitted, your data cannot be withdrawn from the study because the survey results are anonymous. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study. This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants. If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB# 20-08-017), please contact:

Manager, Research Ethics  
437 University Centre  
University of Guelph  
Guelph, ON  
N1G 2W1  
Telephone: (519) 824-4120 ext. 56606  
Email: [reb@uoguelph.ca](mailto:reb@uoguelph.ca)

**Please feel free to print a copy of this information for your records.**

If you are interested in receiving an **executive summary** of the research findings (available upon completion of data collection and analysis), please feel free to email Dr Debbie Sigesmund at [dsigesmu@uoguelph.ca](mailto:dsigesmu@uoguelph.ca)

#### **ACCEPTANCE BY RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

**Proceeding with the survey will indicate you have read and accept our invitation to participate in the research project "The effect of virtual (remote) veterinary care on the veterinarian-client relationship" as described herein. You are agreeing to participate in this study with the assurance that your responses will remain confidential.**

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Screen 1: Are you 18 years of age or older?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*Skip To: End of Survey If Are you 18 years of age or older? = No*

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Q1 How did you hear about this survey?

- ☐ My veterinary hospital/veterinarian
- ☐ Friend or family
- ☐ Social media group, platform: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ University of Guelph website
- ☐ Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

In the **past six (6) months**, have you had a consultation with a veterinarian about a specific pet?

In this survey:

**Consultation** is defined as a face-to-face or virtual interaction with a veterinarian in order to get advice about preventative, illness or emergency care for a specific pet.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

*Display This Question:*

*If In the past six (6) months, have you had a consultation with a veterinarian about a specific pet?... = No*

Why did you select NO as your answer to the previous question?

Select all that apply.

- ☐ I do not own a pet
- ☐ My pet didn't need veterinary care
- ☐ Financial concerns
- ☐ Transportation concerns
- ☐ My pet is scared at the vet
- ☐ COVID-19 related restrictions
- ☐ Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

*Display This Question:*

*If Why did you select NO as your answer to the previous question? Select all that apply. = I do not own a pet*

**Thank you for participating in this survey!**

If you would like to be entered into a prize draw for a \$25 CAD Amazon eGift card (odds are 1 in 100) and/or

If you would like to be contacted by the research team for further research studies on this topic

Please click on the link below.

[Contact Information Link](#)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Thank you for participating in this survey! If you would like to be entered into a prize draw for... Is Displayed*

The following definitions will help you answer questions throughout the remainder of the survey:

**Real-time** refers to something happening instantaneously or happening "live".

**Texting/messaging** refers to written or visual communication sent electronically from one technological device (ex. smart phone) to another. May include photos or pre-recorded videos. Communication may be asynchronous or live synchronous:

**Asynchronous** means communication **not** occurring in real-time








**Synchronous** means communication occurring in real-time. Feels like a text-based "conversation"

**Live Videoconference** refers to audiovisual electronic communication that occurring in real-time.

On a scale of 0 to 100, how **comfortable** are you using the following technology platforms?

*If your choice is 0, please select 0.*

*If you have never used a particular technology platform please select "Never Used"*

	Completely Uncomfortable	Completely Comfortable
	0	100
Telephone		
Email		
Asynchronous texting/messaging		
Synchronous (live) texting/messaging		
Live videoconference		
Sharing photos digitally		
Sharing video digitally		

Are there **limitations** that prevent you from connecting with your veterinarian virtually?

*Please select all that apply*

- ☐ No access to the internet
- ☐ Unreliable access to the internet
- ☐ No access to a phone
- ☐ Unreliable access to a phone
- ☐ No access to a computer/laptop/tablet
- ☐ Limited access to a computer/laptop/tablet
- ☐ No limitations
- ☐ Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

The following definitions apply to the rest of the questions in the survey:

**Face-to-face** means you and the veterinarian were both in the **SAME** physical space or room.

**Virtual (remote)** means you and the veterinarian were **NOT** in the same physical space or room. The interaction occurs using at least one of the following **technology platforms**: telephone, email, asynchronous texting/messaging, synchronous texting/messaging or live videoconference.

b. Any form of veterinary care for a pet

	Human Healthcare	Veterinary Care
Telephone		
Email		
Asynchronous texting/messaging		
Synchronous texting/messaging		
Live videoconference		
Other, please explain:		

The following questions are about your **general opinion** on consultations with a veterinarian about a pet.

Which **method** would you prefer to use during a consultation with a veterinarian?

Please order the following items from most preferred to least preferred.

\_\_\_\_\_ Email  
\_\_\_\_\_ Face-to-face  
\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone  
\_\_\_\_\_ Asynchronous texting/messaging  
\_\_\_\_\_ Synchronous texting/messaging  
\_\_\_\_\_ Videoconference

On a scale of 0 - 100, please rate how much you **agree** with each of the following statements.

0 is completely disagree and 100 is completely agree.

If your choice is 0, please select 0.



I feel confident that I am able to establish a rapport (connection) with the veterinarian during a ....

Completely Disagree

Completely Agree

0

100

Virtual Consultation	
Face-to-Face Consultation	

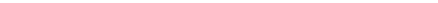

I feel confident that I am able to communicate all of my concerns to the veterinarian during a....

Completely Disagree

Completely Agree

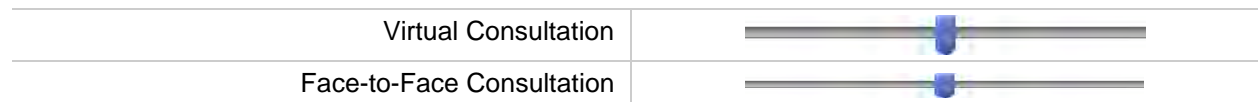
0

100

Virtual Consultation	
Face-to-Face Consultation	

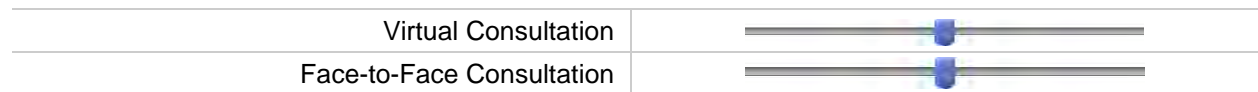
I feel confident that my veterinarian will address (deal with) all of my concerns during a ....

Completely Disagree 0 Completely Agree 100



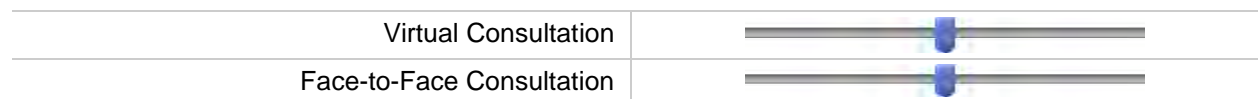
I feel confident that I will have an opportunity to ask questions during a ....

Completely Disagree 0 Completely Agree 100



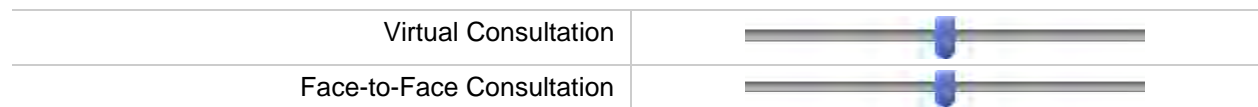
I feel confident that I can be involved as much as I want to be in decisions about my pet's care and treatment during a ....

Completely Disagree 0 Completely Agree 100



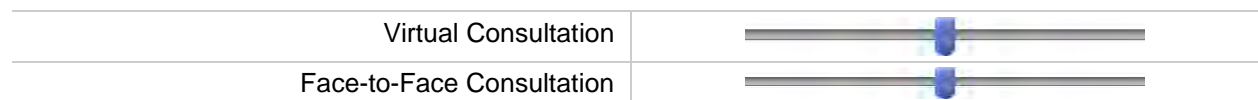
I feel confident that my pet will receive excellent care from the veterinarian during a....

Completely Disagree 0 Completely Agree 100



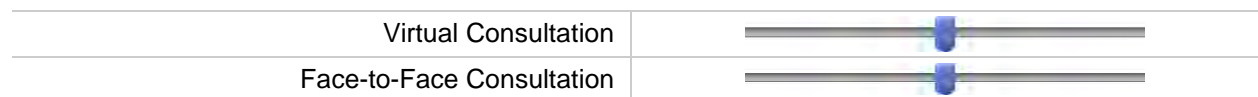
I feel confident that my veterinarian will spend enough time with me and my pet during a....

Completely Disagree 0 Completely Agree 100



I feel confident that I am able to talk about financial concerns during a....

Completely Disagree 0 Completely Agree 100



The following questions are about your **most recent consultation** with a veterinarian about a pet. *The consultation may have occurred face-to-face, virtually (remote) or a combination of both. Virtual consultations may use one or more of the following technology platforms: telephone, email, asynchronous texting/messaging, synchronous texting/messaging; live videoconference.*

How long ago was your most recent consultation?

If less than 1 month, please write "0" for months and enter the appropriate number of days.

Days \_\_\_\_\_

Months \_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe the interaction between yourself and the veterinarian during your most recent consultation?

- ☐ Face-to-face
- ☐ Virtual
- ☐ Combination of face-to-face and virtual

*Display This Question:*

*If How would you describe the interaction between yourself and the veterinarian during your most rec... = Virtual*

*Or How would you describe the interaction between yourself and the veterinarian during your most rec... = Combination of face-to-face and virtual*

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to recommend a **virtual (remote)** consultation with a veterinarian to a friend or colleague?

*0 is not at all likely, 10 is extremely likely.*

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10



*Display This Question:*

*If How would you describe the interaction between yourself and the veterinarian during your most rec... = Face-to-face*

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to recommend a **face-to-face** consultation with a veterinarian to a friend or colleague

*0 is not at all likely, 10 is extremely likely.*

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

What kinds of pet(s) are currently in your household?

*Choose all that apply*

- ☐ Dog
- ☐ Cat
- ☐ Bird
- ☐ Reptile (ex. snakes, turtles, lizards)
- ☐ Amphibian (ex. toads, frogs, salamanders)
- ☐ Small Mammal (ex. ferrets, rats, mice, guinea pigs)
- ☐ Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been a pet owner where you are the primary caregiver?

*If less than 1 year, please write "0" for years and enter the appropriate number of months.*

Years \_\_\_\_\_

Months \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have at least one pet that has complex medical needs requiring frequent veterinary care (examples include cancer, diabetes, arthritis)?

Yes

No

Do you currently have a regular veterinary hospital for your pet(s)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How long have you been taking your pet(s) to your regular veterinary hospital?

*If less than 1 year, please enter "0" for years and enter the approximate number of months*

Years \_\_\_\_\_

Months \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how long does it take you to travel to your regular veterinary hospital?

*If travel time is less than 1 hour, please enter "0" for hours and enter the approximate number of minutes.*

Hours \_\_\_\_\_

Minutes \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you consult (meet) with a veterinarian about your pet(s)?

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Every 2-3 years
- ☐ Every 4-5 years
- ☐ More than every 5 years

Have you ever had a consultation (either face-to-face or virtual) with a veterinarian about a specific pet BEFORE March 11, 2020 (World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

To help us better understand the survey results, please tell us about yourself:

In which country do you currently live?

- ☐ Canada
- ☐ United States of America
- ☐ Other, Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

*Display This Question:*

*If In which country do you currently live? = Canada*

In which province/territory do you currently live?

▼ Alberta (1) ... Yukon (13)

*Display This Question:*

*If In which country do you currently live? = United States of America*

In which state/territory do you currently live?

▼ AL Alabama (1) ... VI U.S. Virgin Islands (56)

How would you describe the area where you live?

- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Rural

I identify my gender as:

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ My gender identity is not listed above \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

What year were you born?

▼ 2005 (1) ... 1920 (86)

What is the highest level of education you have received?

- ☐ Less than high school
- ☐ High school diploma or equivalent (e.g. GED)
- ☐ Some college or university
- ☐ College diploma
- ☐ Bachelor degree
- ☐ Graduate degree
- ☐ Professional degree

What was your total combined household income last year?

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 - \$34,999
- ☐ \$35,000 - \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 - \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 - \$149,999
- ☐ More than \$150,000

Do you have any other comments about virtual veterinary care that you would like to share?

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**Thank you for participating in this survey.**

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If you would like to be contacted by the research team for further research studies on this topic

Please click on the link below. [Contact Information Link](#)