

Implementation of a self-developed dog spay model into the clinical final year at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Onderstepoort, South Africa

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Performing an ovariohysterectomy or spay on a bitch is a day one competency for veterinary graduates. Conventionally final year veterinary students perform three to four live animal spays during their four week surgical rotation within the Veterinary Academic Teaching Hospital. This is often the first surgical experience that the final year students have. This does not only affect surgical time with longer periods of general anaesthetics for the patients, but probably also has an influence on students' confidence and stress levels. Practicing how to spay on a model might help solve these issues. Knowing how to handle surgical instruments, how to suture and place ligatures, find the reproductive tract and identify other anatomical structures will help students to become competent and confident in the procedure before performing it on a live animal.

As commercially available spay models are very costly, a spay model was developed locally. This model consists of a spay model housing, kidneys, spleen, intestines, bladder, replaceable reproductive tract and a multilayer suture pad. Sixty final year students are receiving surgical training using the spay model before their first live animal spay. These students complete a questionnaire after performing their first live animal spay.

Analysis of questionnaires received so far from students that had exposure to the spay model before their first live animal spay, showed an overwhelmingly positive response. Most students indicated that they were better prepared, more confident and less stressed than what they would have been without the exposure.

