



Perception Levels of Şuhut Vocational School Laborant and Veterinary Health Department Students on Animal Rescue

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Abstract

This survey study, on a voluntary basis, about animal rescue was carried out on 93 students from Şuhut Vocational School Laborant and Veterinary Health department, Afyon Kocatepe University. Of the students who participated in the survey, 64.5% were male and 35.5% female. While 65.6% of the participants kept animals in their homes, 34.4% did not. The question of whether they feel a deficiency in our country, regarding animal rescue, it is seen that animal owners have a higher positive response than those who do not, although no there is no statistically significant difference. Only 6.6% of animal owners; 6.5% of those without animals knows the necessity to call number 112 under animal emergencies. While the percentage of students who are aware of AFAD and fire brigades duties on animal search and rescue activities was 60 – 76% among animal owners and non-owners. 90.2% of the students with animals and 75% without answered positively to the question whether they came across any news about animal rescue or not. In conclusion, further studies should be done to raise the knowledge levels of Veterinary technician students on animal rescue.

Key Words: Şuhut Vocational School, animal rescue

Şuhut MYO Laborant ve Veteriner Sağlık Bölümü öğrencilerinin Hayvan Kurtarma Konusunda Algı Düzeyi

Öz

Hayvan kurtarma konusunda yapılan anket çalışması, Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Şuhut MYO Laborant ve Veteriner Sağlık Bölümü öğrencileri üzerinden gönüllülük esasına göre 93 kişide gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ankete katılan öğrencilerin %64,5'i erkek ve % 35,5'u kadın olmuştur. Katılımcıların %65,6'sı evlerinde hayvan beslerken, %34,4'ü beslememektedir. Hayvan kurtarma konusunda ülkemizde bir eksiklik hissediyor musunuz sorusuna, istatistiksel açıdan anlamlı bir fark bulunmamasına karşın, hayvan besleyenlerin beslemeyenlere göre daha yüksek oranda olumlu cevap verdiği görülmektedir. Hayvanlarla ilgili acil bir durum halinde nereyi ararsınız sorusunu; hayvan besleyenlerin sadece %6,6'sı; hayvan beslemeyenlerin ise %6,5'u 112 acil çağrı şeklinde cevaplandırmıştır. Ülkemizde hayvanlarda arama-kurtarma faaliyetlerini gerçekleştiren AFAD ve itfaiye birimlerinin bu görevlerinden haberdar olan öğrenci yüzdesi hayvan besleyenler arasında %60 iken, hayvan beslemeyenlerin oranı %76'ya yükselmiştir. Hayvan Kurtarma hakkında medyada hiç habere rastladınız mı sorusuna verilen cevaplar incelendiğinde "hayvan besleyen öğrencilerin %90,2 beslemeyenlerin ise %75 oranında evet cevabını verdikleri görülmektedir. Sonuç olarak hayvan kurtarma konusunda, Veteriner Tekniker öğrencilerin bilgi düzeylerini artırmaya yönelik çalışmalar yapılmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şuhut MYO, hayvan kurtarma

INTRODUCTION

Emergencies are the hazardous, serious events that affect both animals, people and also need response. Animal rescue is the transfer of the animal from danger zone to the safe place by using appropriate techniques. Animal rescue is a cooperation between search and rescue team, firefighter and veterinarian. Both of them must know their own capacities and try to reach a successful result. Rescue teams must work together with the vets that anesthetize and

inject tranquilizer to the animals in order to enhance the animal welfare. And in some situations responses can be inadequate or the condition of the animal may not allow the response. Although the operation may be disturbing, if necessary euthanasia is the last cure (1-5).

According to the regulations published in the Official Journal on October 15, 2011 with the number of 28085, veterinary technicians are defined as allied health personnel. They help veterinarians during the animal care service.

Therefore, it is alongside the veterinarian who is responsible for preventing the animal from injuries during animal rescue, increasing its welfare and taking preventive measures.

Our country is one of the countries where natural or subsequent emergencies are the most common. Firstly, other natural disasters, as well as individual occurrences occur frequently, especially earthquakes. After many disasters animals are also affected along with the people and significant financial losses occur. In these cases, AFAD and Fire Department (6-8) are among the leading institutions responsible for helping animals when they are in a difficult situation to ensure that the loss of life and property can be minimized.

In Turkey, the turning point in disaster planning and reorganizing the coordination is the earthquake that happened in Marmara on August 17, 1999. In this context, regarding the disasters at that time General Directorate of Civil Defense affiliated to The Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Directorate of Natural Disasters affiliated to The Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, General Directorate of Turkish Emergency Management affiliated to The Prime Ministry were all removed and with the 5902 Law No. in 2009 Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management was established and powers and responsibilities were gathered in this institution (9-10). In this context, AFAD organized International Animal Rescue Conference on 8 July 2017, Aksaray (2). Currently, AFAD is affiliated with the Internal Affairs Department.

In the case of animal rescue, Fire Brigade and AFAD institutions are the leading institutions responsible for helping the animals when they are in a difficult situation in order to minimize the loss of life and property. Veterinary services are also engaged in various conditions in terms of animal health. In this study, knowledge level of the students in Şuhut Vocational School Laboratory and Veterinary Health Department, who will actively cooperate with public institutions involved in animal search and rescue efforts as a Veterinary Technician in their future professional life, was investigated through a questionnaire.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The questionnaire used in the study was prepared on the basis of the works of Kenar et al. titled "Perception Levels of Afyon Kocatepe University Veterinary Faculty Students on Animal Rescue" (11). This questionnaire was filled in by the students of "Afyon Kocatepe University, Şuhut Vocational School Laborant and Veterinary Health Department students. All procedures performed in the study were approved by the ethical committee (Letter of Health Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee dated 22.03.2019 and numbered 11875).

The study was composed of Şuhut Vocational School Laboratory and Veterinary Health Department undergraduate students in the 2018-2019 academic year. A total of 93 students' questionnaires were taken into consideration. Multiple-choice and short-answer written questions were used in the questionnaire to collect data. Some questions

were given the opportunity to give more than one answer. In the first part, there were questions (gender, class, etc.) that were used to determine the characteristics of the participants, and in the second part, the questions about the knowledge and thoughts about animal rescue were measured. In the research, questionnaires were applied in the form of written paper without time restrictions.

SPSS 20.0 was used in the analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics (Mean, SD) were given first. Chi square analyzes were used to test the differences and relationships. Survey questions were prepared by the researchers since it is a preliminary study. In the first part of the data collection tool, questions introducing the participants to the research are included. In the second part, questions about animal rescue and animal keeping and hosting are included.

RESULTS

Frequency and percentage calculations for determining and comparing the demographic characteristics of the participants were made and presented together in a table. The participants (n=93) constituting the sample group of the research were first compared in terms of their gender. Accordingly, 64.5% of the participants (between 17-28 years old) are male and 35.5% female students.

The majority (67.7%) of the participants is first and 32.3% second grade. In addition, 65.6% of them answered "feeding" and 34.4% saying "not feeding" to the question of "Do you feed animals in your home".

In this study conducted on veterinary technician students, when the effect of gender on animal nutrition was evaluated, 68.3% of male and 60.6% of female students had animals. With regard to ownership, no statistically significant difference was found between male and females ($p>0.05$). When the distribution of the students feed animals according to the first and second grades is examined; 69.8% consisted of first grade students and 56.7% second grade students. No statistically significant difference was found between the first and second grade students with or without animals ($p>0.05$). In addition, 66% of the animal owners kept a single animal; 34% two animals.

When the answers are given by the veterinary technician candidates to the question of "Do you feel a deficiency in our country in terms of animal rescue", it was seen that the findings obtained were grouped as those feeding animals and do not; classified under the themes "I definitely agree, I feel, I partially feel, I do not feel, I absolutely do not feel". The answers given by the veterinary technician candidates at the feeding and non-feeding levels in five parts are given in Table 1.

When the answers given to the question "Whether they feel a deficiency in their country about animal rescue" are analyzed; those who keep animals answered like that: I feel certainty 36.1%, I feel 36.1%, I feel partially 19.7%, I do not feel partially 8.1%. And 28.1% of those who do not keep animals answered I absolutely feel, 25% of them I feel, 37.5% I feel partially, 6.2% I do not feel partially and 3.1% I do not feel absolutely.

Table 1. Opinions of participants about animal rescue deficiency in Turkey

Groups	I feel definitely	I feel	I feel in part	I don't feel in part	I don't feel definitely	P
Animal owners	%36.1	%36.1	%19.7	%8.1	-	0.215-
Non owners	%28.1	%25	%37.5	%6.2	%3.1	

-: p>0.05

In the light of these answers, owners of animal have idea of more deficiency in animal rescue in our country, rather than others. However, no statistically significant difference was found between two groups (p>0.05).

An open-ended question of veterinary technician candidates, "You left your home at 9:00 am one day to catch the exam. On your way, you saw an injured animal (cat, dog, etc.) at the roadside. If you help the animal, you will not be able to reach the exam and your graduation depends on your success in this exam. The data obtained from the answers to the question "Can you help the animal in

this case?" are given in Table 5. When the responses given are examined, it can be seen that 44.3% of the students who keep animals answered positively as the highest. When evaluated statistically, there is no significant difference between two groups (p>0.05).

An animal (cow, horse, cat, dog, etc.) has fallen into the stream or is in a difficult situation. You have seen the animal which is in tough spot. The % values of the Veterinary Technician candidates who answer the question of "what would you do" are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' behaviors under crisis

Questions	Groups	I help with my own means	I notify the professional search & rescue	I don't take any action	p
When animals under difficult situation, what do you do?	Animal owners	%45.9	%54.1	-	0.358-
	Non owners	%40.6	%56.2	%3.1	
When animals are affected by barn fire, what do you do?	Animal owners	%45.9	%54.1	-	0.008**
	Non owners	%18.8	%75	%6.2	

** :p<0.01

Accordingly, 45.9% of those who keep animals said "I would help the animal with my own means", 54.1% of them said "I'd inform the professional search and rescue team". 40.6% of those who do not keep animals said "I would help the animal with my own means", 56.2% of them said They'd inform the professional search and rescue team and 3.1% of them said They would do nothing. In the light of these results, an animal (cow, horse, cat, dog, etc.) has fallen to the stream or is in a difficult situation. You have seen the animal. It is seen that answer to the question of 'What would you do?' is that those who have animals would inform a professional team when compared to those who haven't animals. However, no statistically significant difference was found between two groups (p>0.05).

A cow or sheep is trapped inside a barn fire. If you try to save the animal, your life will also be compromised. In this case, the % values of the Veterinary Technician candidates who answer the question of what would you do are shown in Table 2. 45.9% of those who feed animals said "I would help the animal with my own means"; 54.1% of them said "I'd inform the professional search and rescue team". 18.8% of those who do not feed animals said "I'd help the animal with my own means", 75% of them said "I'd inform the professional search and rescue team" and 6.2% of them said "I would do nothing". When these results are evaluated, of those who both feed and do not, tend to help with their own means was higher (p<0.01) than notifying to professional search and rescue team.

Veterinary technician candidate answers to the question of "where to call in case of an animal emergency", are shown in Table 3. Those who keep animals; 8.2% of them said they would call 155 police officers, 6.6% of them 112 emergency, 85.2% of them chose 'other' option. It is seen that 3.2% of animal owners answered as 155 police emergency, 6.5% as 112 emergency calls, 90.3% as others and any call to 154. In the light of these results, it is seen that those who do not feed animal mark the answer 'Other' to the question of where to call in case of an animal emergency. When these results were evaluated, there was no statistically significant difference between those who kept animals and those who did not (p>0.05).

Table 3. Calling officials under emergencies

Groups	155 - Police	112 - Emergency	Others	P
Animal owners	%8.2	%6.6	%85.2	0.657-
Non owners	%3.2	%6.5	%90.3	

Participants' answers to the question of "which institutions or organizations carry out search and rescue activities in animals in our country" are shown in Table 4. When the answers given to this question are evaluated; 36.7% of those who keep animals said the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, 3.3% of them said Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, 60% of them said AFAD and Fire Brigade. It is seen that 25% of those who do not feed animals answered

as Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, 76% of them said AFAD, Fire Brigade and any call to General Directorate of

Security. There was no statistically significant difference between two groups ($p>0.05$).

Table 4. Governmental rescue organizations in Turkey

Groups	Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock	Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs	AFAD and Fire brigade	General directorate of security	P
Animal owners	%36.7	%3.3	%60	-	0.265-
Non owners	%25.0	-	%76		

The findings of reading a book about animal love are shown in Table 5. When the opinions of the veterinary technician candidates for this question and the responses they gave were examined, "23% of the students who have animals said "Yes"; 77% of them said "No". it is seen that

25% of those who do not have animals answered "Yes" and 76.3% of them answered "No". When evaluated statistically, there is no significant difference between two groups ($p>0.05$).

Table 5. Reflections from participants' perspectives

Questions	Groups	Yes	No	p
Have you ever read a book about animal love?	Animal owners	%23.0	%77.0	0.825-
	Non owners	%25.0	%75.0	
Have you seen any rescue news in media?	Animal owners	%90.2	%9.8	0.048*
	Non owners	%75.0	%25.0	
Do you want to be animal rescue volunteer?	Animal owners	%86.9	%13.1	0.933-
	Non owners	%87.5	%12.5	
Could you help any animal under emergencies even risk in your graduation?	Animal owners	%44.3	%14.8	0.452-
	Non owners	%31.2	%15.6	

*: $p<0.05$

The % values of the students who answered the question whether they have encountered any news about animal rescue in visual, written and social media are shown in Table 5. 90.2% of the students who have animals answered positively, 9.8% of them answered negatively. It is seen that 75% of those who do not have animals answered as positive, and 25% answered negative. There was a significant difference between two groups ($p>0.05$) The findings of the question as "Do you want to be animal rescue volunteer" is seen in Table 5. Accordingly, the ratio of those who want to be volunteer was found to be statistically non significant ($p>0.05$) at both groups.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In our country, modern animal rescue techniques are being used more effectively day by day. To give a concrete example; On February 5, 2017 a 3-month-old Kangal dog fell into a 70-meter-deep water well in Dere Seki District of Beykoz. With the notice of the citizens who saw the dog falling, a successful rescue work was carried out in Turkey and abroad with the cooperation of the Provincial Disaster and Emergency Directorate (AFAD), fire brigade, municipal teams and animal lovers approximately 10 days. The team affiliated to Zonguldak, The Coal Institution scene of the incident also gave contributions to the rescue. The teams, which tried a new method, saved the puppy from the well, together with the steel rope, by connecting the water pipes (12).

In addition, the lack of timely medical response to animals which are exposed to disasters, their proper reco-

very and removal from flood debris, and not using modern techniques during evacuation all increase animal casualties. In fact, in such cases, news such as "Animal rescue scandals" were encountered more frequently in the press until 10 years ago. For example; in a report published on May 31, 2006, "Firefighters and citizens used every means to save the horse that fell into Karakoyun Stream from 5 meters in Şanlıurfa. The horse, which got stuck in the swamp, was removed in pain, with primitive rescue methods that lasted for hours. The horse, whose foot and neck were broken, was removed with difficulty and it was at the point of death". Similarly, in a news article published in Milliyet newspaper on 29 September 2009, it is said that the efforts to save the pregnant cow who got stuck in the mud while trying to drink water from the Sakarya river turned into torture (13-14). In addition to the experience of rescuers, if there were materials that would allow them to take them out of the place without harming the animal, views that would upset people would not be encountered.

When asked which department carry out the search and rescue operations for animals it is seen that 60% of those who have animals and 76% of those who do not have animals would inform AFAD and Fire Department teams. Participants put these institutions in the forefront, as the names of both institutions are widely mentioned in many search and rescue cases in television and other media news. However, if an animal is stuck, 45.9% of those who have animals answered that they would help the animal with their own means, and 54.1% of them replied that they would consult to a professional search and rescue team. On

the other hand, these rates are between 18.8% and 75%, respectively, for those who do not have animals. Contrary to expectations, this difference in both groups suggests that animal keepers are willing to help first, because of their attachment to their animals instead of receiving professional help.

One of the main reasons for large losses of animals in difficult situations during emergencies is the lack of equipment and personnel of the relevant private and public institutions. In addition, the lack of sufficient awareness of animal welfare and insufficient funding for economic reasons affects the success levels of search and rescue personnel. Veterinarians and Technicians support search and rescue personnel in animal rescue cases when it is necessary. In order to carry out a successful recovery process various professional groups (stakeholders working in the veterinary field, search and rescue personnel) must work in cooperation (2). In the survey conducted, it has been observed that the majority of the candidate (up to 76%) veterinary technicians are aware of the duty area of AFAD and the fire department working in this field.

However, instead of calling 112 during an emergency the majority of students marked other options. Within the project of merging emergency calls under the roof of one call center which is conducted by the Ministry of Interior, 112 emergency call center started to serve all over the country at the end of 2018 (15). In this way, it was observed that the students were not aware of this issue due to the recent combining of different numbers of Police, Emergency, Gendarmerie, AFAD, ambulance and fire brigade. It is seen that there is a lack of information on this subject and students need to be informed by means of communication together with the other parts of society.

In our country, there have been positive steps regarding modern animal rescue especially in the last ten years. This situation is consistent with the survey results presented. While the rate of students who answered the question of whether they have encountered any news about Animal Rescue in visual, written and social media was 90.2% in animal keepers, successful rescue news increased to 94%, according to current survey. On the other hand, awareness and institutional capacities of civil and official institutions are increasing. As an example, it was reported that the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Fire Department carried out 17682 successful animal rescue operations in 2018, and 3,900 in the first four months of 2019 (16). Among the rescued animal species, cats, dogs, birds are at the forefront and there are large animals such as cows, horses as well as iguanas and eagles which are rare in city life.

As a result, in order to conduct successful animal rescue operations, Agriculture and Forestry directorates in provinces and districts should collaborate with AFAD and Fire Brigades. Furthermore, Vocational Schools where veterinary technicians being trained, should focus on this issue, encourage students to read related documents and organize seminars to raise awareness levels.

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