VECTAR VOICE

Strengthening veterinary nursing ties within Europe

The final conference for the Veterinary European Clinical Training and Assessment Record project, otherwise known as Vectar, is now looming, and will be held in Finland at Amiedu College, on 30 August 2013.

The event will see all of our partners present their findings from this exciting and innovative project.

The conference is free to attend, and open to anyone with an interest in VN training across Europe. It will offer those who've not yet been involved in Vectar the chance to access the Clinical Training and Assessment Record (CTAR), an electronic experience log created to record essential skills, experience and competence, and to guide both students and the qualified veterinarians and nurses who supervise them.

Throughout this project the partners (see back page) have met twice, first in Amsterdam during summer 2012, and later in Porto during spring 2013. These meetings have been very beneficial, with all partners actively contributing to the development of the CTAR tool, skills list and clinical coach training package, and veterinary nurse training overall.

The strengthening of ties between our European partners has helped develop an effective and robust veterinary nursing training programme.

Although the August conference will be our last official Leonardo da Vinci-funded meeting, we hope to maintain these very useful ties for future developments in VN training.

We would like to thank all partners for their involvement and enthusiasm for this project, and look forward to seeing many of you in Helsinki in August.

Julie Dugmore
Vectar Project Leader

The story so far...

The CTAR has now been piloted by all of our partner veterinary nursing schools. In addition, and following the partner meetings in Amsterdam and Porto, evaluation reports have been undertaken by the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA). We were very pleased to read in its last report that:

"Participants found the leadership and management of the project to be very professional and efficient. Some of the partners who have participated in similar education projects before commented that Vectar was the best managed project in which they have participated."

One of the major benefits found during the pilots was that participating schools could monitor student progress and achievement from their school and identify, early in the programme, those students who appear to be 'failing' and undertake appropriate support measures.

There is a new concept for students in the CTAR, which requires them to reflect on their veterinary nursing experiences – this can only help develop critical evaluation and development of clinical skills.

Following feedback, further adaptations have been made to the skills list and functionality of the CTAR, which are being piloted by five of the ten partners. In addition, an online interactive clinical coach training programme has been developed to support those within practice involved in veterinary nurse training. The emphasis on this support programme is on the teaching of clinical skills by breaking down each component; these tools will be available at the summative conference in Helsinki.

Feedback from our partners regarding the functionality and the skills listed has been extremely positive, however, an important consideration would appear to be financial sustainability, given the current economic pressure on educational budgets.

Our final conference - 30 August 2013

Agenda

08.30 Welcome
- **Introduction to Amiedu**

08.40 Vectar
- **What, why, when and with whom?**

09.00 Students and the CTAR
- **Thomas More, Belgium**

09.20 Clinical coaches and the CTAR
- **Ami-säätiö, Amiedu, Finland**

09.40 Skills list and CTAR
- **Groenhorst, Netherlands**

10.00 Coffee

10.20 Sustainability and CTAR
- **Norwegian School of Veterinary Science, Norway**

10.40 Quality assurance and CTAR
- **Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, UK**

11.00 Social networking and CTAR
- **Abivet SLU, Italy**

11.20 To be a part of the Vectar project
- **Instituto Politécnico de Viseu, Portugal**

11.40 Lunch

12.40 Evaluation of the project
- **Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations**

13.00 Future of CTAR
- **SkillWise UK Ltd, UK**

13.30 Summing up progress so far, and where next?
- **Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, UK**

14.00 Coffee

14.30 Using CTAR
- **Your chance to try CTAR and ask qustions**

16.00 Conference closes
- **Thank you and farewell**

Welcome to Helsinki!

We have spent the warm summer season making the arrangements for the Vectar final conference here in Finland.

As well as the project partners, external organisations are welcome to participate in the event. In fact, we invite everyone that is interested in learning more about the Vectar project to join us in Amiedu, Helsinki, on 30 August.

The conference will be also recorded on video, so if you are unable to participate, you can watch online later (www.vectar.org). The video will also help us spread the Vectar message and help market the CTAR across Europe.

We at Amiedu look forward to welcoming you to Helsinki!

Skills list and CTAR

Sara Albone and Annemarieke de Man, Groenhorst Barneveld, the Netherlands.

We are now nearing the end of the Vectar project, a good time to reflect on the last two years and what we have learnt from it.

At Groenhorst Barneveld, we were responsible for the review and adaption of the dossier and the CTAR skills lists. Vectar is a European project, it is therefore important that the products of this project were created in consensus with all the participating countries. Quite a difficult thing to achieve, considering that the veterinary nursing profession varies between countries, particularly in respect of the professional skills that a nurse is required to master before graduation.

We believe we can be proud of the products we have created – they are useable, user friendly and, most importantly, up to date and reflective of the veterinary nursing profession today.

We look forward to sharing them with you in Helsinki.

Quality assurance and CTAR

Julie Dugmore, Juliette Whatley (pictured), Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, UK

The acquisition of safe and effective clinical skills is critical to veterinary nurse training, and is fundamental to safe practice and, consequently, animal welfare.

It is therefore important that such skills are effectively taught and learned in the limited work placement time available, and that progress is recorded and monitored by the students' school.

CTAR has many features which enable a school to support and develop clinical supervisors and quality-assure student progress and achievement.

The final conference will provide an opportunity to share these features and discuss the advantages and benefits of using CTAR to monitor students during their clinical placement period.
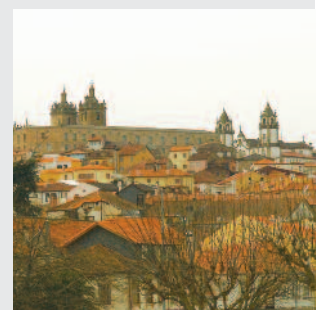
To be a part of the Vectar project

Cármen Nóbrega & João Mesquita, Instituto Politécnico de Viseu, Portugal

In our joint communication, we will discuss the advantages for a veterinary nursing school from a peripheral part of Europe in being part of a European project that aims to create an online recorded, work-based education programme.

Viseu

Not only have we had the opportunity to assess the clinical veterinary nursing skills list in a real-time environment, but we have also benefitted from a generous increase in international networking with scientifically and pedagogically sound partners.

We are now concentrating on sustainability when the project funding ends this year. We are receiving interest in this type of system for supporting clinical learning for vets as well as nurses from European schools not currently involved with the project, and also from South Africa. So things are looking positive.

This collaboration has generated many benefits to our partners and could be extended beyond the scope of Vectar, having the potential to inspire similar European collaborations amongst others who are in contact with the partners.

The partner schools are now well into the final phase of piloting both the revised CTAR and clinical coach training package and, following this academic year of trialling, further refinements may be made in our final meeting in autumn 2013.

Thinking of joining us?

We hope to see you at the wrap-up conference. Here are some practical details.

Where?

The conference will take place at Amiedu, Taitotalo Congress Centre, Valimotie 8, Helsinki, Finland.

When?

The event takes place on Friday 30 August, from 8.30-4.15 (see agenda overleaf).

Booking

The event is free to attend, but numbers are limited, so please contact the Vectar team to reserve your place: info@vectar.org or + 44 (0)20 7202 0788.

Can't make it?

We will include a report from the event on our website in due course, and a video from the event will also be available – www.vectar.org.

The Vectar partner organisations

The project is co-ordinated by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (UK).

Our partners are:

Abivet (Italy)

Accreditation Committee for Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE)

Amiedu (Finland)

Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA)

Groenhorst College (Netherlands)

Institutio Politécnico de Viseu (Portugal)

Katholeike Hogeschool Kempen (Belgium)

Norwegian School of Veterinary Science (Norway)

Skillwise Ltd (UK)

Questions?

If you would like to find out more about the Vectar project, we would love to hear from you. Contact us on:
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