

Report on Site Visit to University of Tennessee

Jon Klingborg, DVM
Visit on August 12, 2016

About the Program:

The University of Tennessee offers a certification program in animal rehabilitation in Canine Rehabilitation—the CCRP (Certified Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner.)

- This is the only program in veterinary rehabilitation to win the distinguished Outstanding Non-Credit Program Award by the Association for Continuing Higher Education.
- Emphasis on evidenced-based medicine.
- Access to the latest clinical and laboratory research results presented by faculty who have performed research directly applicable to case management, often prior to publication.
- Access to and practice/training with an extensive array of treatment approaches, including a myriad of equipment and emerging modalities which are based on clinical research.
- Commitment to presenting a comprehensive curriculum that provides a solid foundation upon which to treat routine and complicated clinical cases, and to build and improve clinical practice in veterinary rehabilitation.

Site Visit:

Prior to my site visit, I sent a letter to the Jim Thompson, DVM-- Dean of the University of Tennessee School of Veterinary Medicine-- and mentioned some of the discussions we were having in the Animal Welfare Task Force; specifically: 1) Questions regarding the Curriculum of APR for veterinary students, 2) What supervision did they recommend for non-DVMs to perform APR?, and 3) Did they feel that additional certifications were necessary for DVMs to perform APR?

On August 12, 2016, I had the opportunity to chat with Dr. Juergen Schumacher, Professor & Director of Avian & Zoological Medicine, Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences and Assistant Professor Jeffrey Biskup, a small animal orthopedic surgeon.

Dean Thompson arranged for me to meet with the Animal Rehab faculty and tour their facility. I was not able to talk with Dr. Millis (Program Director of the CCRP program) and Dr. Drum (Supervising Clinician for the Small Animal Rehabilitation Service) because they were in Sweden for the International Animal Rehab conference. A brief CV for both is listed at the end of this report.

Dr. Biskup had spoken with Dr. Millis & Dr. Drum about my questions and shared their thoughts as well as his own.

When meeting with Drs. Schumacher and Biskup, I described the questions that we were pondering in the Animal Rehabilitation Task Force: Specifically, 1) curriculum, 2) supervision, & 3) certification.

I then asked, “what do you think?” Drs. Biskup & Schumacher said that they absolutely believed that APR should take place on a veterinary premise under some sort of direct supervision. (Note: I had not mentioned that ‘premise’

was another one of our discussion points.) Small Animal Hospital Director Dr. Schumacher and orthopedic surgeon Dr. Biskup were quite clear that indirect supervision of APR cases should be allowable *only in very special circumstances* and always within the clinic setting. Otherwise, they felt that direct supervision was most appropriate.

Drs. Schumacher & Biskup talked about how APR is woven into the curriculum—after every orthopedic surgery that a student participates in, the animal patient then goes to get Rehab— it’s not written into the curriculum as such, but that’s what happens in actual practice. Additionally, there are many other surgeries (besides orthopedics) that might require rehab. So, there is a tremendous amount of exposure to the APR modalities. Surgery is a required part of the curriculum, but Animal Rehab isn’t specifically spelled out as ‘required’; however, APR is the typical sequel to many surgeries, so they are intertwined. Those looking for specific ‘units’ on Animal Rehab will be frustrated, because it is an integrative modality and is taught that way.

Dr. Schumacher also shared his insight about the PT/DVM interaction. He has participated in some of the CCRP lectures where the PTs are certified through the Tennessee program and said that it is always interesting when he is describing a joint problem and the experienced PTs respond “Oh, well we just fix it like *this*” and he has to educate them that animals are different and that “*this*” is NOT how you fix it when dealing with animals. He acknowledges the skill set of PTs in providing Animal Rehab, but even after PTs have earned the CCRP, he strongly believes that APR should occur under direct supervision in almost all cases.

Dr. Biskup and Dr. Schumacher also don’t support the need for licensed DVMs to have additional certification to perform Animal Physical Rehab on animals.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Klingborg, DVM