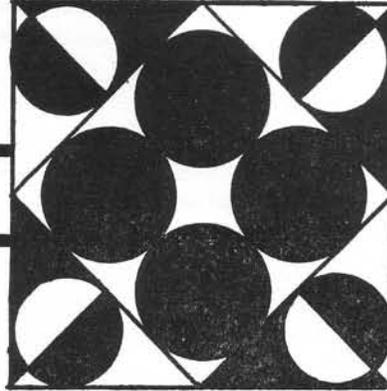


Idea Corner



Continuing Education for Vets

Laboratory animal medicine, a subspecialty of veterinary medicine, needs more graduate veterinarians. Many who assume laboratory animal medicine roles have had little or no training in this expanding discipline. Since laboratory animal veterinarians are employed in isolated facilities throughout the United States, a program should be developed for their continuing education.

A survey was sent to several institutions asking about their training capabilities. Now, only 5 of the 18 schools of veterinary medicine surveyed offer continuing education in laboratory animal medicine. None of the seven postdoctoral training programs sponsored by the National Institutes of Health provides continuing education in this discipline.

Possibly a way of providing specialized training would be through individualized programmed instruction. This method solves two problems: (1) the cost of formal continuing education and (2) the inconvenience of a lecture schedule.

Autotutorial programs that describe the management and diseases of several species of laboratory animals have been prepared by different colleges and universities. These programs consist of a cassette tape, a printed narration with behavioral objectives, and a set of 2 x 2 Kodachrome slides. A complete program could be sent to a veterinarian in an isolated area. He then needs to supply only a slide projector and cassette recorder to study the program.

Problems with autotutorial instruction include: (1) coordinating the program, (2) acquiring and reproducing autotutorial sets, (3) periodically updating individualized programs, and (4) financing. This could best be undertaken by one of the present laboratory animal medicine organizations such as the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, the American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners, or the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine.

The programs could be financed by charging nominal fees. Possibly, funding from institutional or gov-

ernmental grants could be explored. When the program is completed, each participant should receive a certificate.

Autotutorial instruction could provide the training needed for continuing education in laboratory animal medicine.

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