

Alternative Veterinary Practices in Difficult Contexts

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The use of alternative equipment by some veterinary practitioners is not only motivated by the shortages encountered in the field, but also by the high cost of certain imported equipment. Indeed, in developing countries or countries in economic crisis, it is sometimes difficult to acquire the instrumentation and equipment necessary to perform a medical or surgical intervention to save animals, despite the fact that many medical techniques are widely and freely available on the web.

In my practice of bovine medicine and surgery, there have been times when I have had to resort to improvisation to solve an emergency clinical case! This ranges from simple equipment, such as a urine drainage catheter made from a household hose [1], to a more complicated procedure; such as using a trocar and rods to secure a left displaced abomasum using the toggle-pin suture technique [2] or using a regular rumen puncture trocar cannula for removal of a nasal papillary adenoma in sheep (unpublished work).

But my most important experience and the one I wish to share with my colleagues, is a ruminotomy in a cow; in which I used commercial fishing line for closure of the rumen wall, as well as the abdominal wall muscles with the skin, using a mass suture technique [3]. The result was excellent, of course some additional precautions were essential for the success of this experimental surgery; which required a little more time than a conventional procedure. Thus, one of the main advantages was a much lower cost; the conventional suture being 60 times more expensive than the fishing line.

In this context, the veterinary community is called upon to share its unconventional experiences, in order to help veterinarians in marginalized settings overcome the challenges they face on a daily basis.

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