

Why does gender matter for Animal Health Professional organizations?

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28th of April 2025



World
Organisation
for Animal
Health
Founded in 1924

Organisation
mondiale
de la santé
animale
Fondée en 1924

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal
Fundada en 1924



Introduction

“Vets don’t seem to understand that diseases circulate because humans move and thus technocentric solutions will not solve social problems” (field notes Dec 2024)

The focus of the presentation will be on

- The changing profile of the workforce and how it affects animal health
- A review of gender issues in the workforce
- A review of gender issues animal health workers need to consider

How can VS be gender-friendly places?



Feminisation of the animal health professions in Asia Pacific region

Data from
Kochkina O.
2024 WOA
Gender
Assessment
of Veterinary
Services in
South-East
Asia 2023

Collected with
DFAT support

- In **Brunei, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore** Women constitute ~60%-70% of vets in public or private sectors
In **Thailand** ~50% of licensed vets are women
- In **Indonesia** ~50% of the employees in the Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health Services
- In **Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam** 30-40% of vets are women
- In **PNG** and **Timor-Leste** <30% of vets are women



Feminisation continued..(Kochkina 2024)

“I get spoken over and I noticed that even the DG or DDG get spoken over...When you raise your voice, you are the “emotional female” but how else will I be heard?

(personal field notes December 2024)

- ✓ 25% of all women respondents reported experiencing different treatment because of their gender
- Issues reported are common to gender at work
 - ✓ Inequality in promotion and pay
 - ✓ Sexual harassment in the workplace
- Specific for the veterinary sector,
 - ✓ Common perception that women are not fit for farms
 - ✓ Age discrimination age for young female vets



Workers' aspirations (Kochkina 2024)

Feminization has implications on where animal health workers want to or can work.

High levels of stress reported by both men and women

- Women are less likely to consider a job in rural/remote areas (labor shortage in some places)
- 40% of Women students reported aiming to work in private animal health facility – pets – and 17% on farms and 17% for government
- Both men and women equally report challenges in life work balance (stress, long working hours, work “spilling over” into personal life)
- About **40% of respondents** (men and women) may have faced professional burn out issues at some point of their careers



Why does the gender of animal health professional matter?

- *Social expectations placed on women may stop them from networking outside working hours, attend additional training..*
- *Men and women are at different risks of zoonoses especially in labs during pregnancy*

Women are the primary care provider in their home and have different needs than their male counterparts:

- They need maternity leave which is not available everywhere or is insufficient; paternity leave almost inexistent
- They need flexible working hours and may not be able to do overtime
- They need a safe work environment free of harassment
- They need appropriate facilities (such as separate changing rooms)



Why does the gender of animal health professionals matter? Continued..

In Nepal to reach the level of Secretary within the Ministry, managing a district is a must on the CV, however with less school facilities women are less likely to be able to accept such postings

- Women are likely to face discrimination from other colleagues and farmers
- Occupational segregation may divert women towards some field within animal health such as labs or private practices in urban settings where there is less chance of career progression

But Kochkina data shows that men too are equally affected by stress and are less interested in joining the profession



Why does gender matter to animal health?

- *Men and women play different roles along the value chains, face different constraints and costs*
- *Men and women are at different risks of zoonoses*
- *Men and women have different capacity to respond to crisis and are affected differently by epidemics*
- Women are key actors in poultry and small animal husbandry value chains, even when they don't own the animals. BUT they may be less aware of the need to maintain biosecurity
- Men more likely to focus on economic return and women on food security outcomes
- Boys under 14 are more at risk of rabies
- Men more likely to interact with government services
- Women have less access to information, finances and decision making

Gender based constraints affect efficient labor allocation resource and skills which may affect access to services and private resources aimed at promoting healthy value chains



Gender matters for efficiency: eg vaccine systems

- *Women, the poor, and marginal farmers have less chance to access information and services*
- *Socio-economic status, KAP towards vaccination, access to information combined with ethnicity, location and access to education and gender affect vaccination*
- VS perceived to prioritize larger herds (owned by men) or areas where some ethnic groups demanded the vaccines whilst others were more resistant (PPR)
- VS more likely to target cattle rather than goats for vaccination against RVF
- Information tends to reach men first and widows less likely to be approached (even when there are animal owners); men more likely to be contacted during mobilization
- Women may face cultural barriers to becoming CAHW
- Women face prejudices: “not able to vaccinate large or small ruminants”
- Old or disabled men herders face difficulties accessing vaccination centers
- Physical accessibility to vaccines is more a challenge for women



Gender matters for efficiency: use of antibiotics

Intersectionality

Gender differences in antibiotic use are contextual and intersect with other socio-demographic factors

- Gender differences in antibiotic use is known but causes of differences not studied
- Women have a better knowledge and antibiotics and AMR (for human use)
- In Cambodia study 74% men (39% females) had heard of AMR in animal; poorer women with lower levels of education and from IP communities are less likely to have knowledge

But a lot remains unexplained: more studies needed



Filling the data gaps

Improve the quality and quantity of sex-disaggregated data and evidence related to gender-responsive livestock development in international databases and platforms, national statistical systems and applied indicators

The evidence base to guide gender-responsive planning and decision-making needs strengthening:

- Investments can be better directed towards priority areas and target groups
- Efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women can be monitored and reported on
- The impact of gender-responsive investment in animal health is better understood

<https://www.woah.org/app/uploads/2023/04/8-2-clare-wenham-slides.pdf>



Conclusions

“How can I take cultural norms into account whilst delivering services to men and women livestock keepers?”

- The profile of the animal health workforce is changing globally: more women are joining and less professionals are working on livestock health

Social norms attribute different roles and responsibilities for men and women which have implications

- at the workplace
- In the management of animal health

Though gender policy and anti-discrimination legislation exist in many countries implementation is lacking :

- lack of awareness, political commitment, financial and human resources to implement policies

A gender lens needs to be added by AHW to understand better opportunities and bottlenecks faced by men and women to improve effectiveness of interventions.



Questions?



Thank you !

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