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Determinants of Referrals by Paraprofessionals to Veterinarians

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Abstract

Building referral networks in veterinary service delivery by supporting and strengthening linkages between paraprofessionals and veterinarians is seen as an important approach towards improving the quality of veterinary services and ensuring prudent use of antimicrobial agents in animals. In this paper, a probit regression model is used to identify factors influencing referrals to veterinarians by paraprofessionals in animal health care. The results show that the paraprofessional's mobile phone ownership, gender, availability of veterinarians, training, prevalence of epidemic animal diseases, the number of paraprofessionals not trained in animal health, attendance of short term trainings, annual assessments, and membership in paraprofessional associations influence their referrals to veterinarian. The paper argues that the legislation/supervision of paraprofessionals as well as provision of mobile phones to paraprofessionals, expansion of their membership in associations, and investing in short term training are key to building and strengthening referrals between paraprofessionals and veterinarians.

Keywords: Referrals, paraprofessional, probit model