

A retrospective analysis of the completeness of wildlife intake forms at a veterinary teaching hospital

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There has been an extensive level of research evaluating the completeness and efficacy of medical records in human medicine. However, such efforts are not as widely implemented in veterinary medicine and, in particular, in wildlife rehabilitation centers despite the ability of intake related information to have direct implications for both patient care and population health. This retrospective study analyzed intake forms from 1489 wildlife intakes presenting to the AVC Wildlife Service (AVCWS) between 2016 and 2020. Level of completeness was assessed for nine sections, and associated subsections, of the intake sheet: Intake Form Presence, Finder Information, Animal Intake Information, Intake Form Properly Scanned, Signalment, Physical Examination, Indication of Radiographs Taken, End of Care Information, and Sent to Pathology. Based on defined characteristics, each category was assessed regarding its degree of completeness. Results demonstrated that information that is traditionally completed by the finder (Finder Information) is most often complete, with the subsection with the lowest percent of incompleteness being 1.07% (date of admission) and the highest being 18.33% (location found). The highest percent of incompleteness noted overall for sections was 61.85% (Indication of Radiographs Taken), and 52.72% (hindlimb, a subsection of Physical Examination) for subsections. The section of the intake form that was deemed most incomplete was Physical Examination, with subsections ranging from 42.92% to 52.72% incomplete. Factors that likely contributed to level of completeness of intake forms, such as staffing levels, wildlife related training level of staff, and resource (including time) availability, were identified.