

## **Abstract for 3R Symposium 2018**

### **Toy animal simulators for use in small animal surgical training**

Rikke Langebæk, Associate professor, DVM, PhD, Department of Veterinary Clinical Science, Faculty of Health, University of Copenhagen

Effective acquisition of a skill requires practice. Therefore, it is of great importance to provide veterinary students with opportunities to practice their surgical skills before performing procedures on live patients. Traditionally, training has been carried out on research animals, but from an ethical point of view, it is questionable to use live animals for the sole purpose of practicing surgery, and furthermore, using research animals is laborious and very costly. Thus, both practical, ethical and economical considerations have led to an increased focus on artificial substitutes to live animals in veterinary clinical training. At the Department of Veterinary Clinical Science, Faculty of Health, University of Copenhagen, such considerations resulted in the development and implementation of a Surgical Skills Lab in 2007. A number of low fidelity, stuffed toy animal simulators was developed for the lab in order to teach 4<sup>th</sup> year students basic surgical skills. Eleven years' experience with The Surgical Skills Lab has shown that the simulators are a useful educational tool that provides students with a safe opportunity to practice before live animal surgery. Inspired by the success, additional low-fidelity simulators have been developed and implemented in a number of veterinary courses. The simulators, whose major parts are reusable and whose disposable parts are cheap and easily accessible, have turned out to be a relatively low budget solution with a useful pedagogical impact and a big ethical benefit.