

## Pet Owners Satisfied With Vet Visits

**Poll shows that effective communication, education most important to customer satisfaction.**

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About 92 percent of people who took their pets to a veterinarian in the past three months were very satisfied with their visit, according to a new poll. About 92 percent of pet owners who took their pets to a veterinarian in the past three months were very satisfied with their visit and would recommend their veterinarian, according to findings from BNR Research PetPoll 2008, a nationwide telephone survey of pet owners that was released in December covering a range of topics. The client satisfaction portion surveyed 438 pet owners.

However, continued satisfaction rates depend upon effective client education and communication, the poll revealed. Clients who have an "excellent" understanding of their pets' treatment plans are significantly more likely to follow the plan "all of the time" (86 percent) compared to those who have a "good" understanding (65 percent). Noncompliance increases the probability that the recommended treatment will not work, which also results in a less-than-satisfied client, according to BNR Research.

Also, with household budgets getting tighter due to the economy, BNR Research said it expects more scrutiny and questions related to the cost of veterinary services. One-third of clients rated their hospitals' explanation of fees and charges as less than "excellent." If pet owners do not understand the value of the services they are receiving, hospitals are at risk of facing both dissatisfied and lost clients, according to the company.

To help overcome these challenges, BNR Research suggests that veterinarians follow good communication practices such as confirming with the client that they understand what they are told, as well as the use of handouts and videos to reinforce or supplement their discussions.

Another component of the poll evaluated the demand for pet insurance. About 3 percent of the 980 pet owners surveyed had pet insurance. However, nearly all of those pet insurance customers are satisfied with their plans and they are willing to recommend them to others.

The major obstacles hindering the sale of more pet insurance policies are related to cost, according to the poll.