



vetspecs

Veterinary Specialists

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THE SPECIALIST CONNECTION

Welcome Dr Damian Chase

In early January Vetspecs welcomed Dr Damian Chase to our growing specialist team. Damian has joined us after working as a small animal surgical specialist in Britain. Recently Damian travelled to Cameroon to perform orthopaedic surgery on the arm of a young gorilla. This is Shufai's incredible story.

Shufai is an 11 year old western lowland gorilla. He was still a baby clinging to his mother when hunters opened fire in the forests of Cameroon. The bullets killed his mother and left his arm peppered with gunshot pellets.

Too small to be killed for meat, the terrified little gorilla was kept as a pet tied to the bed in a small village before he was rescued by the conservation group Ape Action Africa and taken to a sanctuary where, with love and patience, his physical and emotional wounds began to heal.

Rachel Hogan, who manages the sanctuary in the Mefou National Park, took on the role of foster mother to the baby gorilla and he was given the name Shufai or "brave one".



Vetspecs welcomed Dr Damian Chase to the team in January.

Emergency surgery patched up the damage to his arm and head. But as he grew up, surrounded by his new gorilla family, it became apparent that the injury to his arm was getting worse.

The gunshot pellets had gone through Shufai's wrist, damaging the growth plate of the radius. This meant that the other bone

in the forearm, the ulna, continued to grow, while the radius did not. As a consequence, his ulna was deforming his wrist and threatening to break through the skin.

Eventually, the team at the centre realised he needed treatment and turned to Twycross Zoo in Warwickshire and Nottingham University vet school for help. >>>



The make shift theatre. Note the plastic to keep the insects out!



The piece of bone removed from Shufai's ulna.



The local Cameroon ambulance service.



Shufai after his first surgery.

After months of planning a team of vets from Britain flew to Cameroon in February 2012 in an attempt to perform surgery to save Shufai's arm.

This included Dr Sharon Redrobe, director of life sciences at Twycross Zoo, Professor Sandra Corr from Nottingham University and Dr Damian Chase, who at the time was working at Pride Veterinary Specialist Hospital in Derby.

The makeshift operating theatre had no glass in the windows and plastic sheeting put up to keep out insects. Electricity in the jungle is available in the evening for only four hours, so a generator is used. All of the surgical equipment was sterilised in the UK and brought in sealed bags.

During the operation, a 5cm piece of bone was removed from Shufai's ulna to relieve the pain and stop the deformity getting worse

Shufai recovered well and over the ensuing months he began to use his

arm more and more. Unfortunately after about 8 months the deformity began to get worse again. The team returned to Cameroon in February 2013 in one last attempt to see if anything could be done for Shufai's arm.

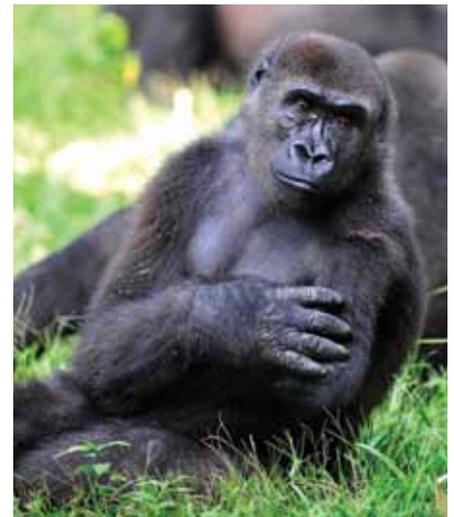
Sadly when Shufai was re-examined x-rays revealed that the damage to his wrist was irreparable. It became clear that the limb could not be saved and the difficult decision was made to amputate Shufai's arm.

Shufai made a remarkable recovery after the surgery and was soon playing and climbing trees, things that he had been unable to do for a long time. A year after surgery, Shufai is back to behaving like a normal gorilla and can look forward to a pain free future.

With some conservationists fearing gorillas could be extinct within 50 years, every gorilla is precious and every life saved is another small victory. If you would like to learn more of Shufai's story

and the work of Ape Action Africa, check out the links below:
www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2115197
www.itv.com/news/central/story/2013-03-26/endangered-apes-in-africa
www.apeactionafrica.org

Some photographs courtesy of Lucy Ray.



Shufai well on the road to recovery.



An adult Silverback male. These guys are big!



Shufai

Merial/Ancare Surgical Resident Update – Year Two for Dr Aparna Tikekar

Learning the ways of the western surgical world before heading home to become the first small animal specialist in India is an impressive goal. Year two of Aparna's Vetspecs three-year residency surgical training program is well underway.

Aparna began her surgical training as an intern at Massey University. This was followed by another internship here at Vetspecs in Christchurch. With the support of our sponsors Merial/Ancare and SVS, Vetspecs was able to follow her internship with a surgical residency program. Year One of Aparna's program saw our surgeons focused on teaching her the science of surgery including evidence-based decision making, case management and common surgical procedures. In her second year Aparna is now performing surgery herself under direct specialist supervision. She is fast becoming proficient at tibial tuberosity advancement, Salter Harris fracture fixation and arthroscopy. Her year is now mapped out with externships at other specialist facilities including the Veterinary Specialist Group in Auckland and the University of Melbourne.

Aparna's case management is fully thought through and well researched with evidence-based philosophy. Success at the Australia and New Zealand College of Veterinary Science membership exams in 2013 has led to an increased knowledge and confidence for Aparna while still maintaining the humble



nature required to be working in a world where things can go beautifully wrong. The direction of knowledge has not been one way. Vetspecs is becoming increasingly understanding of Indian culture with frequent opportunities for tasting Indian cuisine and wise proverbs offered to enhance team members' quality of life.

In 2014 Aparna will be gaining technical surgical confidence and is on the way to achieving her dream of bringing veterinary health expertise to the eastern world. We are proud to be part of one amazing woman's path to medical enlightenment.



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Basic Nutrition – A vet nurses view

By Libby Leader CertVN

We are all teaching nutrition to our clients. Whether it is prescription, life stage or the ever popular weight loss diet, all animals need to eat. How many of us actually practice what we preach? I know I am guilty of telling clients “feed this and only this” then go home and feed my cats a piece of fish from the fish and chip shop! I am not perfect, and neither are our clients. Only difference is I know better! As a vet nurse it is part of my job to educate clients about the many aspects of nutrition and feeding. Let’s look at some of the basic ways you can feed your pet.....

Free choice feeding - Is food available at all times?

In my experience, the fussiest hospital patient (the one that we desperately need to be eating) is the one that generally gets fed as they please at home (free choice feeding). This can mean having a bowl of biscuits to graze on throughout the day, or offerings of the owners scraps or home cooked meals on tap.

Food restricted meal feeding - usually once a day or twice a day....

Food restricted meal feeding is feeding your pet once or a twice a day usually at set times to instil routine. It is common for an owner to feed twice a day.

Timed feeding – 5 minutes and your time is up!

Timed feeding is great for puppies and the disciplined dog owner. If Fluffy has not eaten all his meal in 5 minutes, he misses out. It is that simple. This feeding

style is great for those owners looking to create good behaviour patterns during meal times. Finding out which feeding style is used will help a lot.

A few feeding tips...

A little tip for the bigger pet: If Bella scoffs her food in 3 seconds, she could benefit from having her meal served in an egg carton or one of those special bowls designed to stretch out the length of time it takes her to eat. Another tip: don't feed pets in the kitchen. When we are cooking our dinner and Max is at our feet we are more likely to give him that extra bit of chicken or biscuit. Let's face it Max knows which side his bread is buttered. When I was flattening I had a cat who had her food in the kitchen and whenever someone would come over she would meow and smooch at the pantry door; to avoid that feeling of heartlessness every visitor gave in and grabbed a few biscuits for her. Cunning and cheeky is the pet of a vet nurse.

Premium diets versus supermarket food and the ever popular raw food...

It is one of our most common struggles as a veterinary professional when it comes to selling food. “I don't see why I need to buy your expensive food for kittens when I can get food for half the price at the supermarket”. If owners aren't saying it, they are probably thinking it. But what's really in that food? So many things that are not needed, it's almost like eating McDonalds every day.

The pet food marketplace is confusing and complicated with many opposing viewpoints. Raw diets, homemade or purchased have lots of nutritional imbalances and safety issues. Many people think that natural is the way to go and is superior. However there is scarce scientific evidence to support these claims. Cats and dogs have been domesticated for so long now that, to compare their eating habits to that of the wolves or wild cats would be like comparing us to apes. They are completely different and the wild animals on these diets have a significantly shorter life span than our domesticated pets.

When a supermarket food shows on the label that they meet the AAFCO requirements, that does not mean that it is AAFCO tested and therefore it may not have all the minimum nutrients your pet needs to have a balanced and complete diet. What about all the things that are not needed? These can include fillers, excess minerals and lots of salt! Veterinary diets are more costly and one of the reasons for this is that they remove the excess minerals (ash) to appropriate levels and this is a costly process. However the cost of veterinary diets per feed or per year is considerably less as you are feeding a smaller amount each meal.

A tale of two pets...

Each pet has different life factors that dictate how much they need to be fed on a daily basis. Starting with the guidelines on the back of the bag, these can be tailored to each animal's needs. >>>



Libby's cat Devlin enjoying some sun.



Becky's dog Charlie Bear.

In one corner we have Charlie. Charlie Bear is a spayed female Bull Mastiff crossed with an American Staffy. She is 4 years and 8 months old and is fed a veterinary diet. Her owner needs to feed half of the recommended daily intake on the bag. If she has any more she tends to pile on the pounds. She is very active and is on a good food so why does she gain on such a low calorie intake?



Secondly we have Devlin. Dev is a spayed female DSH. She is 1 year and 2 months and tiny for her age. She is also on a veterinary diet. She eats her recommended daily intake (according to the bag), plus eats half her brothers food. She will also sneak any scraps she can get her mitts on, even things that cats generally steer clear of (carrots, lettuce and the odd bit of broccoli). She is wormed every 3 months with a broad spectrum wormer and is still tiny.

Is it because Devlin is a younger model than Charlie, or is it the difference in species? At the end of the day my point is that the bag is only a guideline, it's not written in stone.

So to summarise, ask these three questions. Where are you feeding, what are you feeding and how are you feeding? Encourage people to read the ingredients and guarantees on a bag and do it yourself because you can only really teach what you know.

If you are interested in learning more each veterinary food has their own website with tons of information. Look up AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials); see what they are all about. For those of you with the time and a will to learn, do the Hills VNA. After all these days knowledge is only a mouse click away.

STAFF PROFILE

Kristina Boyd – Qualified Veterinary Nurse CertVN

Where did you complete your nursing studies?

I graduated from Christchurch Institute of Technology in 2013. My journey towards becoming a Vet Nurse started in 2009 when I studied and completed the National Certificate in Animal Care. This was a great course and stepping stone towards my final goal. However, in 2010 I decided to put my studies on hold and travel overseas. I first spent a year living and working in Brisbane, Australia where I made some great friends and loved the warmer climate. My next adventure took me to England where I spent 2 months travelling about. My highlight there was the amazing Glastonbury Festival where I saw Beyonce, U2 and Coldplay live. After this I ventured to Dublin, Ireland. Here I spent a year working in a prestigious 5-star hotel and of course visiting the many Irish pubs in the city. I can safely say that I am not a fan of Guinness at all! In 2012, I returned to New Zealand and applied for the National Certificate in Vet Nursing. This was a really good course which taught me a lot and I am so glad that I made the decision to return home and finish my qualification.

Tell us about your role at Vetspecs?

My job at Vetspecs is my first real Vet Nursing Job after qualifying. Apart from work experience while studying and some part time work at a local Vet Clinic, I was a real newbie. I have learnt so much during my first 5 months at Vetspecs and continue to do so every day. I have recently been taught how to administer an Epidural which I find both challenging and exciting. One thing I love is seeing an animal progress with its recovery. Whether it is a pelvic fracture, cruciate injury or a spinal patient, to see them get better and better is just so amazing and rewarding. Having Animal Physio in the same building as us is perfect as we get to see some of our patients' progress first hand.

Tell us a bit about your life outside the clinic.

I love spending time socialising with my boyfriend and friends. I live in a lovely house in Cashmere where we quite often invite people over for BBQ's and a few drinks. Along with my boyfriend and 2 flatmates, we are also joined by Scoobie the kitten and Krooga the dog. Scoobie is a curious, little madam who



thinks she owns the place and Krooga is such a sweetie who is always at the door to greet me when I get home. I also work one afternoon a week at a women's gym called Curves, where I try to workout 5 times a week. This is an attempt to burn off all the chocolate and cake we always have at Vetspecs!

Where was the last place you went on holiday?

After spending up large at Kathmandu on camping gear, my boyfriend and I spent last Waitangi weekend in Peketa. Peketa is a small campground 15 minutes south of Kaikoura situated right next to the sea. It is so relaxing there and just so nice to get away from the rat race of the city. While there, we spent our time surf casting, walking down the beach and nearby tracks, and playing board games by candle light. Our awesome set up and the chilled out atmosphere made our stay so comfortable that I can't wait until our next trip.



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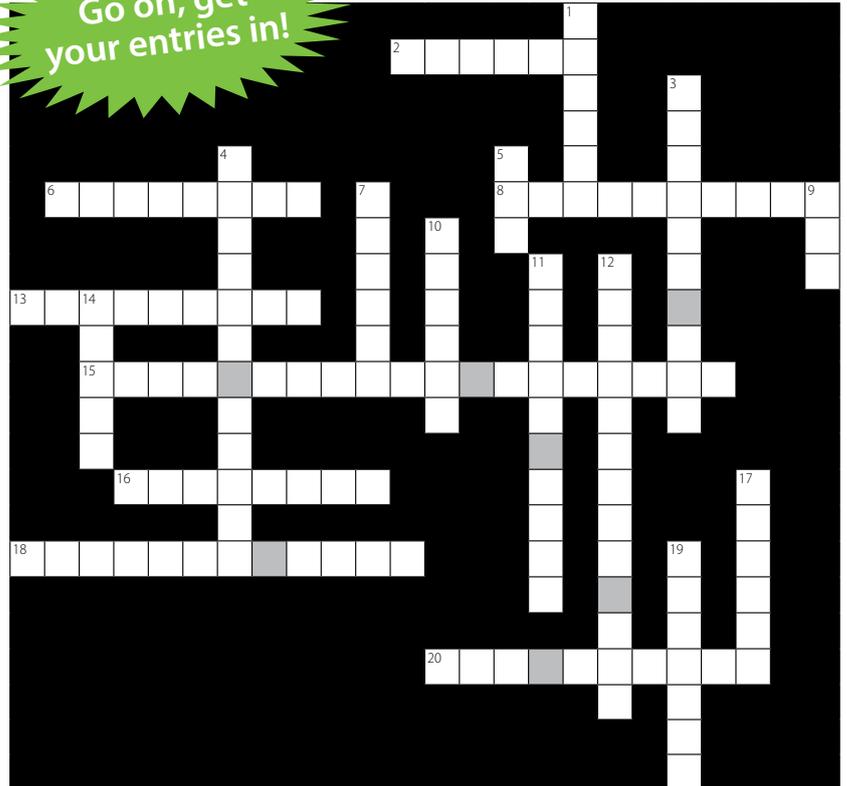
Crossword

ACROSS

2. Where did Kristina last go on holiday? (6)
6. Aparna is travelling to which New Zealand city to complete an externship as part of her training? (8)
8. Port Nicholson is the name of which North Island harbour? (10)
13. The Association of American Feed Control (9)
15. Is food available at all times? (4, 6, 7)
16. The pink and white terraces were gone for good after which volcano erupted? (8)
18. Becky's dog's name is (7, 4)
20. Feeding a pet that scoffs their food out of an will slow down the time it takes them to consume their food. (3, 6)

DOWN

1. Shufai had damage to the growth plate. (6)
3. Hill's j/d is clinically proven to assist mobility in just days. (6, 3)
4. Our latest surgeon to join our growing team. (6, 5)
5. Aparna is in year of her residency programme. (3)
7. The name of the Gorilla Damian was involved with is? (6)
9. New Zealand was briefly governed by which Australian state? (3)
10. Aparna began her surgical training at University. (6)
11. Who captained the Endeavour? (5, 4)
12. Golden Bay was named what by Abel Tasman? (9, 3)
14. Conservationists fear gorillas could be extinct in years. (5)
17. Kristina has spent time living in which Irish city? (6)
19. A New Zealand reptile often referred to as a living fossil. (7)



Fax, email or post your completed crossword to Vetspecs by 24th of April 2014. All correct entries go into the draw to win a \$100 hamper, kindly supplied by SVS. Remember to include your name, clinic name and contact number so you can be notified. Winner will be drawn on Thursday the 1st May 2014 and put on our facebook page.



Vetspecs team

Left to right: Brent Higgins, Helen Milner (Owner and Director), Philippa Burns, Aparna Tikekar, Kristina Boyd, Lauren Keenan, Becky Clarke, Katie Cambie, Libby Leader, and Damian Chase.



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