

Beliefs and attitudes of Portuguese veterinarians about violence against animals and humans



Anabela Moreira



- ▶ FRAMEWORK introduction
- ▶ PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE research
- ▶ CLOSING REMARKS personal point of view





- ▶ **FRAMEWORK introduction**
- ▶ **PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE research**
- ▶ **CLOSING REMARKS personal point of view**





FRAMEWORK

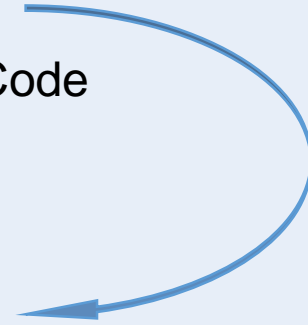


Legal System

Roman-Germanic System – Codes



Civil Code
Penal Code
Administrative Code
Work Code
...



Since 2014, the portuguese Penal Code has a 6th type:

Crimes against companion animals



Since 2015, in the official Annual Report of Homeland Security (RASI), these crimes have a individualized status and are evaluated as “major crime”





FRAMEWORK



Recognition of the relation between crimes (Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse)

Since 2014, Domestic Violence Risk Assessment
(Law Enforcement mandatory report formulary)



Ficha RVD- 1L¹

I. Local de aplicação: Local da ocorrência No posto/esquadra Outro local (qual?): _____

II. Contexto: Participação-Auto Participação-Aditamento

III. NUIPC: _____ IV. N.º de registo/NPP: _____ V. Data atual: _____

	SIM	NÃO	NA/D ²
1. O/A ofensor/a alguma vez usou violência física contra a vítima? <i>Especifique: Há quantos anos ocorreu o 1.º episódio: _____</i>			
2. O/A ofensor/a alguma vez usou violência física contra outros do agregado doméstico? <i>Contra quem? 2.1 Crianças <input type="checkbox"/> 2.2 Outros familiares <input type="checkbox"/> 2.3 Animais domésticos <input type="checkbox"/></i>			
3. O/A ofensor/a já tentou estrangular (apertar o pescoço), sufocar, afogar a vítima ou outro familiar? (incluir atos de "tortura física" - ex: queimar, ativar ácido)			
4. O/A ofensor/a já usou violência sexual sobre a vítima ou outro familiar?			



Question 2:

“Did the aggressor use violence against other member of the family?”

If **YES**, choose:

Children; Other members; **Domestic Animals**

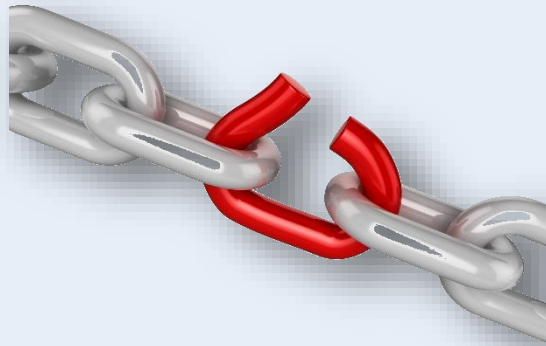




FRAMEWORK

Officially, the statistical link between these two types of crimes is not made

Crimes of Domestic Violence



Crimes against companion animals





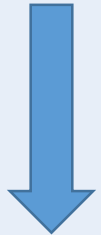
- ▶ FRAMEWORK introduction
- ▶ **PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE** research
- ▶ CLOSING REMARKS personal point of view





PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)

2014



2017



Perception and Recognition: three years after the criminalization of companion animal abuse, how do (portuguese) veterinarians look at the topic?

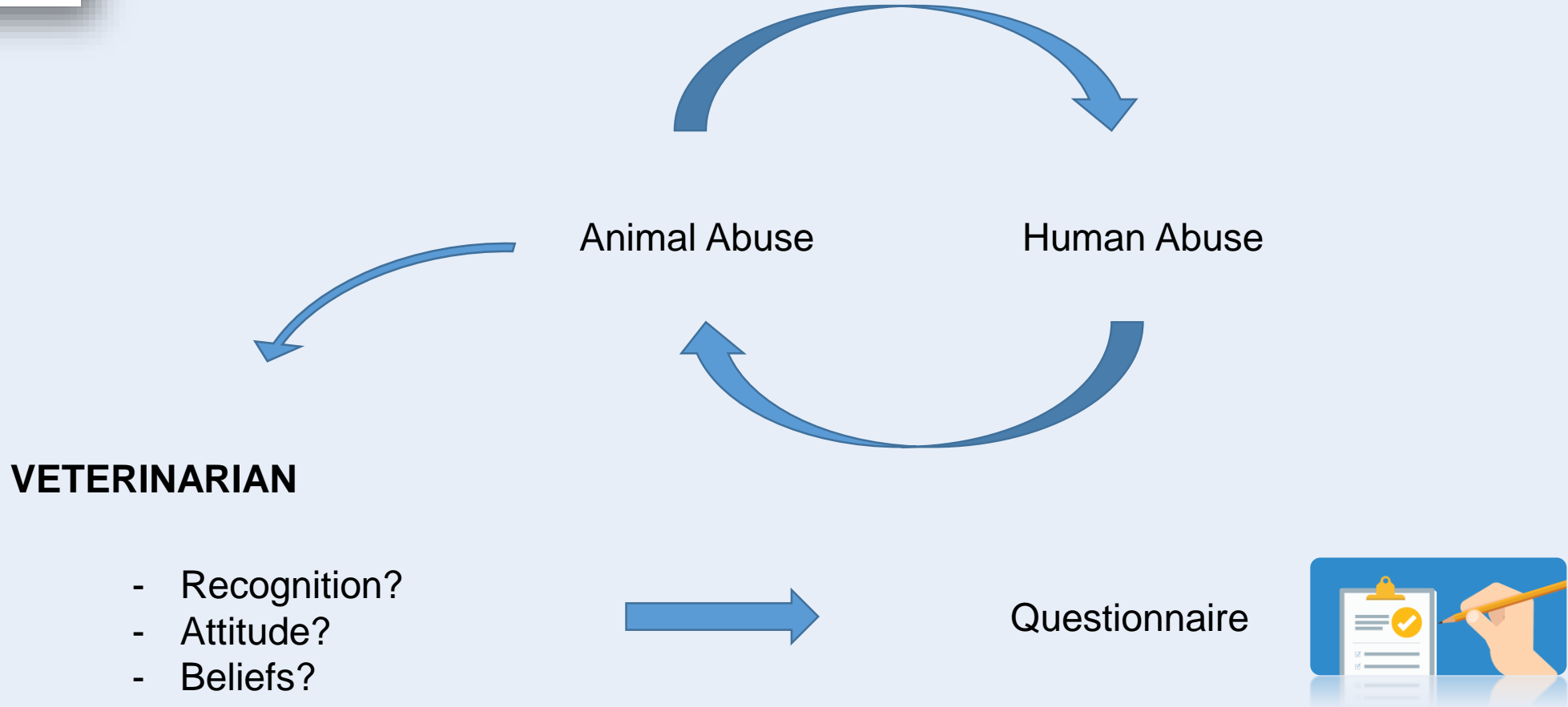


Is the **situation similar** between Portugal and other countries?





PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)







PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)



OBJECTIVES:



-  Analyze how abuse of companion animals is perceived and recognized by portuguese veterinarians;
-  Analyze their attitudes and beliefs regarding the connection between animal abuse and familiar form of violence




PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)



RESPONDENTS AND STRUCTURE:

-  Questionnaire accessible to all veterinarians practicing in Portugal;
-  Structure and Questions based on the works of:

Sharpe & Wittum, 1999 

Munro & Thrusfield, 2001 

Green & Gullone, 2005 

Williams *et al.*, 2008 








PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)



RESULTS overview:

-  349 Questionnaires were completed and eligible for analysis, representing 6% of registered veterinarians in Portugal. Of the 349 respondents, 277 were companion animals practitioners (private and/or officials).
-  10.5% (29/277) reported never having seen or suspected animal abuse or negligence in the last five years.
-  21.4% (53/248) reported that they had suspected or known of concomitant domestic violence.








PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)



RESULTS overview:



The most frequent signs/symptoms/situations that raised suspicion of animal abuse were:

-  delay in seeking veterinary assistance (63.7% - 158/248);
-  non-plausible or changing history (43.1% - 107/248);
-  lack of interest in the condition of the animal (41.1% - 102/248).



The species most frequently involved in cases of mistreatment were dogs, followed by cats.













PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)



RESULTS overview:



The main lesions/conditions identified, at least once, in suspected cases (n=248) were:

-  poor body condition (84.3%, 209/248);
-  poor fur and/or nail conditions (62.9%, 156/248);
-  poisoning (41.9%, 104/248);
-  bruises (38.7%, 96/248);
-  lacerations (32.7%, 81/248);
-  heatstroke (27.0%, 67/248);
-  limb fractures (25.0%, 62/248);
-  other conditions (<18.1% each, <45/248 each).










PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)



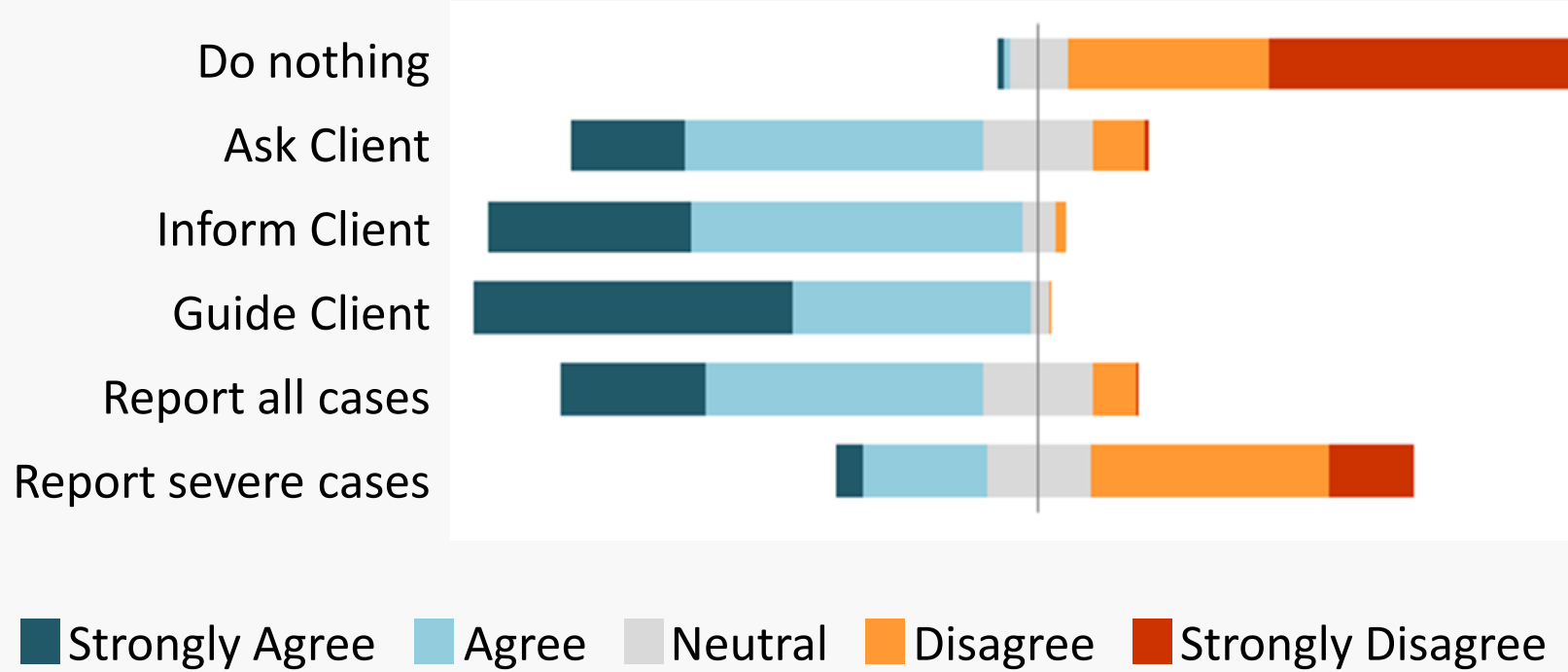
RESULTS overview:

-  **ATTITUDES TOWARD ANIMAL ABUSE**
-  **ATTITUDES TOWARD HUMAN ABUSE**
-  **RELUCTANCE TO REPORT**
-  **RESOURCES AND BELIEFS – ANIMAL ABUSE**
-  **RESOURCES AND BELIEFS – HUMAN ABUSE AND THE *LINK***





ATTITUDES TOWARD ANIMAL ABUSE

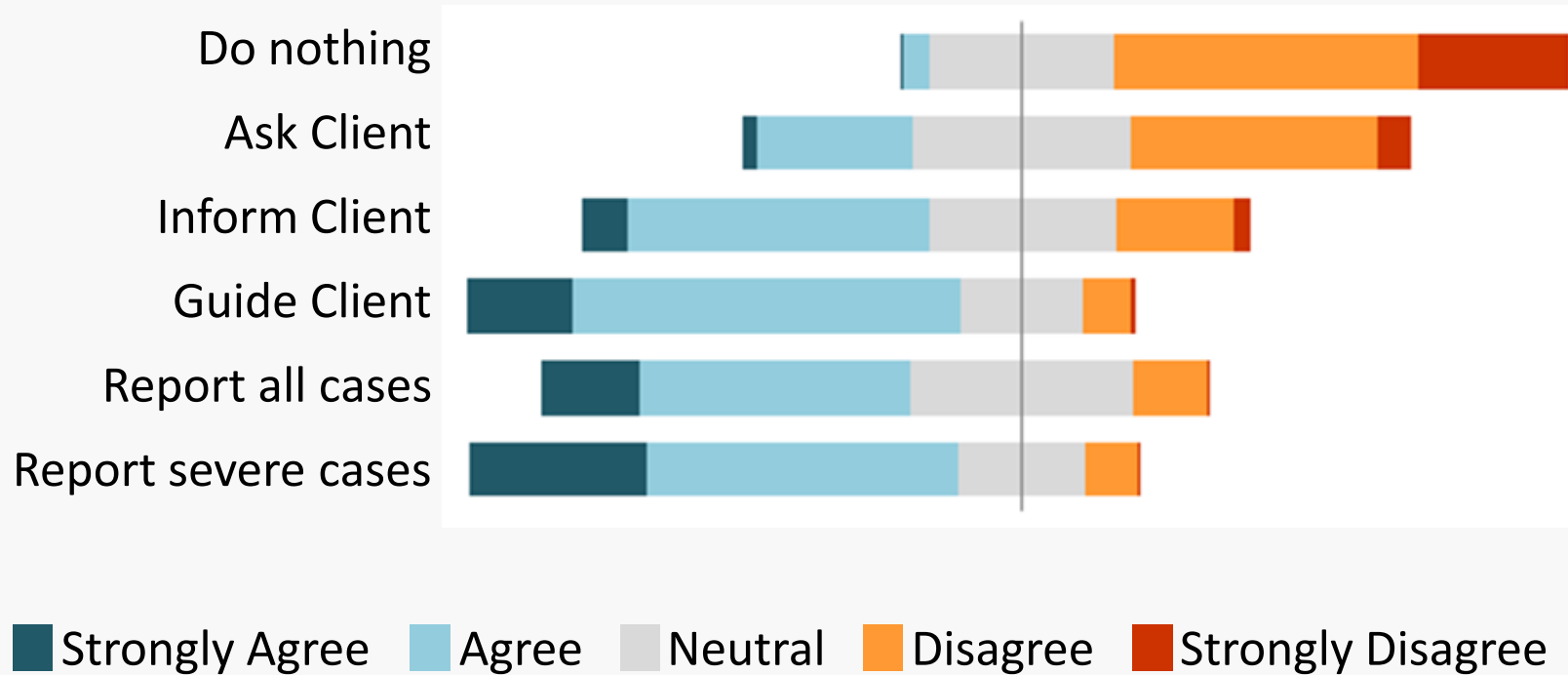


The results show a strong disagreement with the attitude of "do nothing". Attitudes of asking, informing and guiding the client received the agreement of the majority of respondents. No differences were found for gender, rural / urban and typology of practices with only **age** influencing the level of agreement (F=1.989, p=0.003).





ATTITUDES TOWARD HUMAN ABUSE



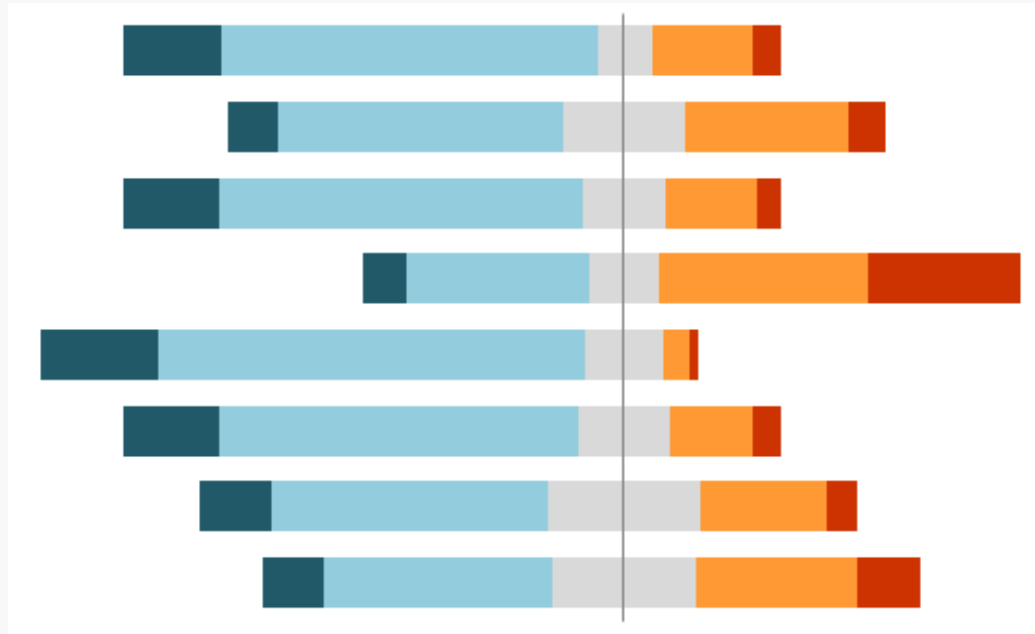
The results show a disagreement with the attitude of "do nothing". Attitudes of asking, informing and guiding the client received the agreement of the majority of respondents. No differences were found for gender, rural / urban and typology of practices with **age** influencing the level of agreement (F=1.611, p=0.031).





RELUCTANCE TO REPORT

- Not know how to proceed
- Believe it won't make a difference
- Fear of aggressive retaliation
- Fear of losing the client
- Not be absolutely sure if it is abuse
- Fear of legal action/retaliation
- Client confidentiality
- Time spent with documentation



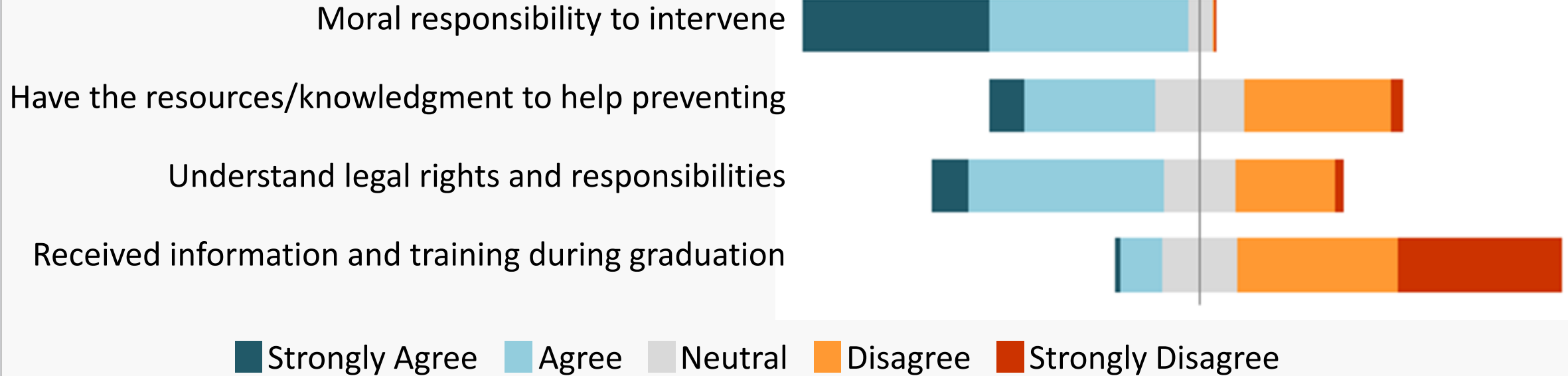
■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

As to causes stated as reasons for not reporting animal mistreatment it was observed that most respondents agree with the statements moderately, except for “fear of losing client”, where 55% strongly disagree or disagree. No differences were found for rural / urban and typology of practices, with **age** influencing the level of agreement (F=2.609, p=0.000) as also the **gender** (F=5.600, p=0.000).





RESOURCES AND BELIEFS – ANIMAL ABUSE



There is a strong agreement that veterinarians have a moral responsibility to intervene when they suspect animal abuse, with 93% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. However, 78.8% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that the training and information on this subject are adequate. No differences were found for gender, rural/urban and typology of practices, with only **age** influencing the level of agreement (F=3.164, p=0.000).





RESOURCES AND BELIEFS – HUMAN ABUSE AND THE *LINK*

Statements: “People who abuse animals are...

“...more likely to abuse their children”

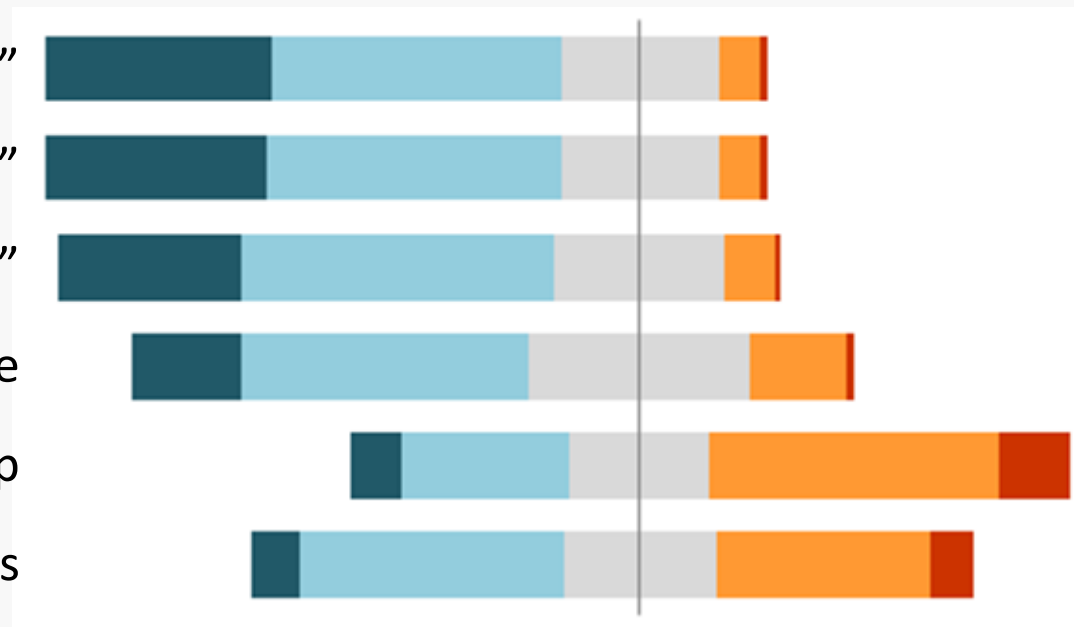
“ ...more likely to abuse their partner”

“...more likely to commit other type of crimes”

Moral responsibility to intervene

Have the resources/knowledgment to provide help

Understand legal rights and responsibilities



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Results show agreement or strong agreement of the majority of respondents with statements regarding the acknowledgment of the link between animal and human abuse. The opinions were not influenced by any of the demographic parameters. Most (54.7%) of respondents strongly agree or agree that they have a moral and ethical responsibility to intervene in cases of suspected or known domestic violence, even if 49.9% disagree or strongly disagree that they have the resources or knowledge to offer help.







PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)



CONCLUSIONS:

-  The main conclusions are in line with ones drawn in previous studies, indicating that attitudes and beliefs probably are **not strongly affected by geographical, cultural, social and professional factors**.
-  The majority of respondents have **witnessed cases of mistreatment of animals** and, although they **felt a strong ethical duty to intervene** actively, they consider that their **knowledge and skills in this area are not yet adequate**.







PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)



CONCLUSIONS:

-  It was also concluded that, while **recognizing the existence of a link between animal and human abuse**, they felt less comfortable about issues of human abuse, mostly due to lack of knowledge on how to offer help.
-  The conclusions of this work extend awareness of **the need to develop and provide veterinarians with tools for a more effective intervention in the area of animal abuse and its relation with human abuse, namely domestic violence.**





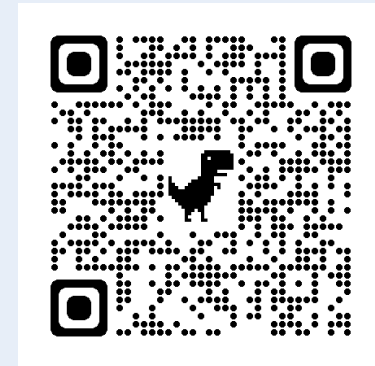
PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE (animal and human)



SUPPORT and AVAILABILITY

This study was **supported by CIISA** (Project UID/CVT/00276/2013).

Results and Conclusions presented were extracted from the Master Degree Dissertation in Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences “*Crimes contra animais de companhia – percepção., tipificação e relação com outros ilícitos penais em Medicina Veterinária Forense*” (Moreira, A., 2017, Medicine Faculty, University of Lisbon, Portugal)





- ▶ FRAMEWORK introduction
- ▶ PORTUGUESE VETERINARIANS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE research
- ▶ **CLOSING REMARKS personal point of view**



CLOSING REMARKS

As the 10th anniversary of the law that criminalized the abuse of companion animals approaches, will the beliefs and attitudes of veterinarians regarding animal and human abuse be maintained? - The evaluation questionnaire will soon be reissued to try to answer the question.

In recent years, several initiatives have taken place in Portugal, which have made invaluable contributions to greater knowledge and awareness about animal abuse and its relationship with interpersonal violence, namely domestic violence. – Encourage the continuation of these types of events, at national, regional and/or local level.





CLOSING REMARKS

Take Action - Long Term - Awareness raising, education, training and metrics, in the context of animal and human abuse and its relation, are seminal points.

Take Action - Short Term - Mechanisms that promote and facilitate the exchange of information between the different stakeholders (security, health and well-being, and protection of children, adults and animals), namely through cross-referencing, allowing rapid intervention, in situations of immediate danger, or precautionary intervention, in situations of risk.

Take Action - Short Term - Programs to support victims of domestic violence, animals and humans, should be a priority, namely removal of animals and ability to temporarily house them in a safe place, in case of co-housing is not possible.





CLOSING REMARKS

The collaborative and coordinated approach is one of the biggest advantages, if not the biggest, of the “One” (health, medicine, welfare) concept. At the interface between humans and animals, and taking into account the impact of violence on the health and well-being of community and victims, regardless of species, perhaps the concept “One Violence” is also appropriate.





Be here for you:
amoreira@fmv.ulisboa.pt

Have a fantastic Congress



Enjoy Lisbon!!!
One of a kind

