

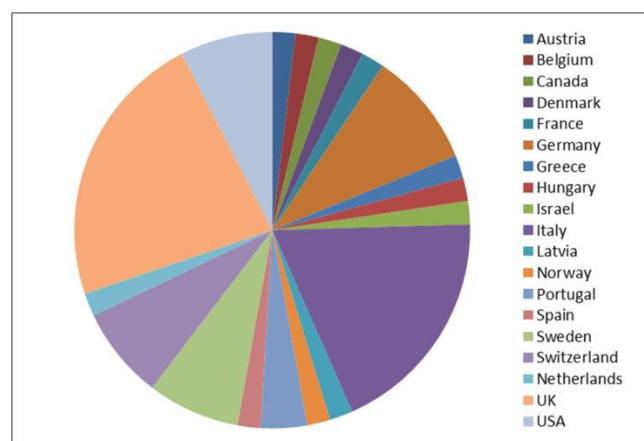
## REPORT OF 2012 SURVEY ON VETERINARY CLINICAL PATHOLOGY

An online voluntary survey was conducted on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012. Five different sections (A, B, C, D and E) were included in the survey and are specifically described above. The survey aimed to clarify the state of Veterinary Clinical Pathology in EU countries. Discussion of the results is summarized at the end.

### Section A: General feature of the survey

A total of 54 responders answered the questionnaire. Geographic distribution of the responders is shown in figure 1 and approximately corresponds to the one of ESVCP members. Italy and UK were the most represented countries in the survey, similarly to what occur in term of ESVCP memberships. Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and USA were also well represented.

**Figure 1.** Geographic distribution of survey responders



Most responders are working in academia (57%), but huge commercial labs (20%) and Industries (13%) were also present. Only 7% of responders were private vets.

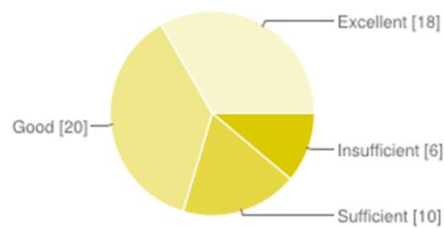
The majority of responders (50%) indicated the presence of 0 to 1 Vet Clin Path diplomate (ECVCP or ACVCP-CP) in their Institution, only a limited percentage of institutions have more than 5 diplomates (less than 10% of responders). The majority of institutions indicated to have a range of 1 to 5 employee, including resident and Clin Path non-diplomates. Additionally, diverse situations concerning laboratory technicians were present: a limited percentage (11%) of institutions has 0-1 technician, the majority have 1 to 5 technicians (40%) and more than 30% of institutions declared to have more than 10 technicians currently employed.

In **section B** a description of Institutions of the responders was collected.

It was requested to estimate the number of employed vet clin paths and technicians in regard to the market needs (estimation over 5 years). Most responders considered it adequate or understaffed, while only 6 out of 54 considered it redundant. A total of 36 new vet clin path positions and 39 technicians were estimated as possible future needs out of the 25 institutions who answered "understaffed".

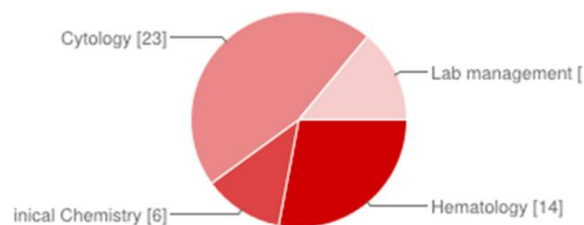
Most responders consider global instrumentation good to excellent regarding the technology index. Only 6 responders considered their instrumentation insufficient (see **figure 2**).

**Figure 2.** Quality of instrumentation



The responders were asked to describe their area of expertise. Results are shown in figure 3. Multiple answers were allowed in the survey, thus the sum of answers is different from the total number of responders.

**Figure 3.** Area of expertise of the responders



The **section C** of the survey was focused on the estimation of facilities and societies involved in veterinary clinical pathology in neighbor area of the responders.

A total of 38 Academia, 22 research sites, 24 Industries and 32 commercial labs were reported together with a non-valuable number of private practices in which Vet Clin Path facilities were present. More than 250 employed vet clin paths and 250 technicians were estimated.

Regarding scientific congresses, meetings and events more than 120 events/year on topics on clin path interest were identified in geographic areas of 45 responders.

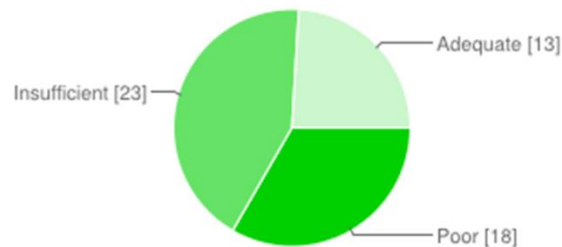
The responders were also asked to identify some possible contacts of scientific society active in their areas in veterinary clinical pathology, even though not exclusively. A total of 45 different scientific societies were identified and 29 contacts were collected. These addresses will be used to make a list of possible contacts for joined meetings and events, to disseminate and information about ESVCP activities and to recruit possible sponsorships.

The most subjective and speculative point (point C1) include an estimation of the number of new clin path positions (either vet clin path or technicians) in the next five years in their area. While the number of technicians was very difficult to estimate, a total of 142 possible new positions were identified with a

prevalence of commercial labs (40), vet clinics (35), research labs (30) and industries (25). The number of estimated positions in academia was reduced (12)

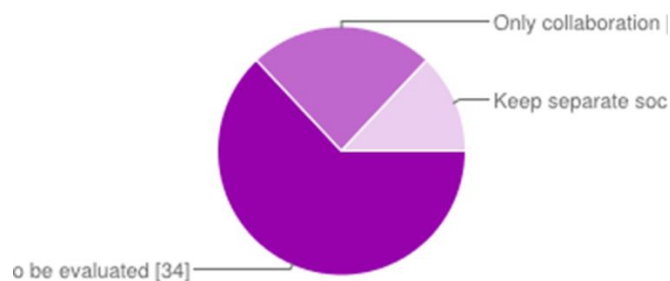
**Section D** was used to interrogate ESVCP members about their opinion on specific issues regarding ESVCP decision to be held in the next future. The first question regarded the awareness of the role of veterinary clinical pathology (VCP) in other veterinary specialties. Results are shown in figure 3.

**Figure 3. Role of VCP in other veterinary specialties**



The second question is about the possibility of merging ESVCP with other scientific societies active in VCP in order to increase critical mass of members. Results were the following.

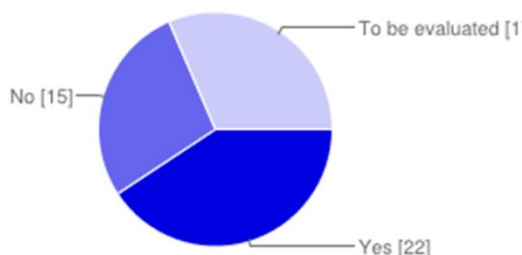
**Figure 4. Possibility of merging ECVCP with other societies**



A question (point D3) was on the geographic areas in which ESVCP should increase VCP visibility and memberships. The highest score was obtained for East Europe (9), followed by South Africa (4), Switzerland (2), Scandinavian (2) and South America, Asia and Australia (1 each). One responder indicated “countries without ECVCP diplomates” as a possible option.

Another question was on the possible non-traditional areas of veterinary clinical pathology on which ESVCP should expand visibility and memberships (point D4). The most voted areas were microbiology/infectious diseases (8) and molecular biology (7). Toxicology and lab animals (2), zoo animals (2) and new pets, equine med, biochemistry, physiology and endocrinology (1) also received votes. In addition, 1 responder suggested the possibility to expand the preparation/education of technicians. Interestingly, most responders consider microbiology as a possible sub-specialty to be included in VCP.

**Figure 5.** Microbiology as sub-specialty to be included in VCP



The final section (**section E**) included an open space for suggestions and comment on issues that ESVCP should take in consideration for future development. Some interesting comments regards the necessity of a more regular newsletter (quarterly), the necessity of focusing meetings on practical aspects rather than research topics, of having joint meetings with other societies and the active participation to practitioner meeting.

## DISCUSSION

The success of the survey is mainly due to the high number of responding members from different institutions and countries that mirror the actual composition of ESVCP members. I wish to personally thank all the ESVCP members to have participated to the survey. This is a valuable tool to improve the aims and visibility of our society. The use of an online survey about specific issues was successful and should be replicate for other aims, such as to gather feedback and evaluation of meeting organization and program. Online surveys do not require specific informatic skills and easily provide useful information without being time and money-consuming.

Currently, Academia and commercial labs appear the most diffuse workplace, employing diplomates, non-diplomates VCP and technicians. Most of these institutions appear adequate in term of instrumentation and personnel, even though in many cases the workload is higher compared to the staff. This could be considered a positive condition, suggesting the need of more VCP to be employed in the next years. Future working position may include mostly commercial labs and vet clinics. Open positions in academia appears at the moment almost saturated.

A more coordinated interaction of ESVCP with other international or local societies involved in VCP was suggested from many members, although others considered useful to maintain our own independence. A list of possible contacts (international or local societies) has been collected and this may be useful for joining meetings or to diffuse ESVCP info and events. The next meeting in Berlin 2013 is moving towards the direction of a more strict collaboration with local societies, as suggested by some of the responders.

The possibility to open our society to new emerging countries has to be considered in order to increase the critical mass of ESVCP membership. This should include east Europe and extra EU countries, mainly those countries where ECVCP diplomates are not present. Some steps have already been taken in this direction, for instance during the successful meeting we had last year in Ljubljana (SLO). The same should be further pursued in the next future. In addition, VCP should be open to new fields of laboratory medicine. Microbiology and molecular biology appeared the most promising field to be expanded. ECVCP should take in consideration these specialties as possible partners to increase the number of diplomates and subspecialty of our college.

Finally, some interesting suggestions concerning improvement of communication between ESVCP board and members were given. More regular newsletters and detailed meeting organization and topics should facilitate the participation also of private vets and technicians. The board of the society is actually moving towards this direction, giving more standardized procedures for meeting organization, scientific program and prizes. Furthermore, the introduction of a post-meeting survey should provide the possibility to gather comments from participating members about program and organization. Moreover it could also include a survey to check why other members decided not to attend the congress. These should provide further useful information to improve the quality of future meetings.

A part of these SOPs will be already applied in the next meeting in Berlin and they will be likely finalized and actively used for the organization of 2014 ESVCP meeting in Milan.

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