

We cannot charge and work less, and pay more

Dear editor,

Usually I am financially worried, but now I am furious. The most worrying challenge facing the veterinary practice of the future is how we will generate the income (which can only come from our clients) to be able to pay our graduate vets who are in such debt.

Shams Mir (point of view; April 13 issue) is crusading for parking spaces – this is the equivalent of declaring that decorating must be done when the house is about to ignite.

I am enraged that Dr Mir has lumped all our practices together, portraying a small minority as the majority. If I had the unfortunate experiences at numerous practices that I can only assume Dr Mir has suffered, I most certainly would not be a vet.

My husband and I counted up 13 veterinary practices we worked at between us before setting up our own from scratch. There were only two "bad" ones. One had five-minute appointments, which didn't suit (but is it not a free market that allows a practice to have its own priorities and choice as to what it offers?). However, a change was made to a fantastic neighbouring practice. The second "bad" practice was owned by a vet who was not good with animals. There again, a change in practice rectified that. No union would have changed his competence.

I publicly invite Dr Mir to spend a few days at our practice, during which time I need to take him meticulously through the accounts so he is then able to give an informed opinion. I insist on this (and anyone else who is interested may come as well).

There isn't a financial Tardis: we can't charge less, work shorter hours and pay more. Our assistants, as I am sure the majority are elsewhere, can do what they like clinically as long as they have the owner on board and charge for what they do.

In summary, my mind is blowing when I consider:

- The salary level necessary to help get our assistants out of debt and on the housing ladder. I can't see how we can do this.
- The welfare of animals, especially farm animals, if we are giving more and more family time – perhaps a 9am to 5pm day and time off in school holidays for vets? We, incidentally, are raising three children and working full time, but have the right backup in place. Our children are not delinquents or drug addicts – well, not since the last time I saw them. They have happy and full lives.
- Closing all the town practices that are converted buildings because the parking is inadequate. Shall we make them close until they build nice, new, out-of-town, purpose-built premises? Incidentally, why

does Dr Mir appear to think it is okay that a veterinary surgeon should have "four times" the priority parking over a valued nurse or receptionist – we are a team, you know.

How very upset I am to be tarnished in this way, as a partner in a veterinary practice. We look forward to seeing you at our practice, Dr Mir (there is plenty of free parking).

Yours faithfully,

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