VetComm Simulator: Development of an Interactive Training for Veterinary Communication

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Abstract:

In the rapidly evolving field of veterinary medicine, where communication plays a crucial role in client relations and patient welfare, the VetComm Simulator project aims to revolutionize veterinary education. By crafting an interactive, AI-powered training environment that replicates real-world veterinary interactions, this tool bridges the crucial gap in conventional training methods that typically lack ample hands-on experience in nuanced client communication and detailed history-taking skills. Importantly, the VetComm Simulator provides a low-pressure, stress-free setting, allowing students to cultivate their communication skills with confidence, ensuring they are well-prepared for the emotional and practical realities of veterinary practice. Recent investigations in the veterinary and medical education field underline the necessity of enhancing communication training within the veterinary curriculum and demonstrate the effectiveness of virtual scenarios in medical education.

The VetComm Simulator will leverage advanced AI to generate diverse, realistic virtual patients and scenarios, reflecting the varied situations veterinarians encounter. This immersive platform will enable students to hone their client-centered communication skills across multiple contexts, engaging with different client profiles including farmers, horse owners, and pet owners of dogs and cats. This variety ensures that students can practice tailored communication strategies for each unique client type and setting, fostering adaptability and empathy critical to veterinary practice. This approach not only facilitates the development of essential soft skills but also prepares students for a wide range of clinical situations, promoting adaptability and problem-solving capabilities.

Through voice recognition and synthesis, the platform will offer an interactive experience where students can practice their skills in a risk-free environment, receive instant feedback, and progressively improve their competency.

This project aligns with the call for innovative educational tools that can adapt to the challenges posed by the current limitations in veterinary training, as highlighted in the literature. By providing a scalable, accessible solution, the VetComm Simulator ensures that veterinary students can refine their communication skills anytime, anywhere, thus democratizing access to high-quality education resources.

Anticipated outcomes of the VetComm Simulator include improved student confidence and competence in client communication, leading to better client satisfaction and patient outcomes. The project also

aims to contribute to the body of research on veterinary education by evaluating the effectiveness of virtual simulations in developing communication skills.

The relevance of this project is underscored by the growing recognition of communication as a critical competency in veterinary practice, as evidenced by the increasing integration of communication skills training in veterinary curricula worldwide. However, existing training programs often fall short in providing the extensive, practical experience students need. The VetComm Simulator project proposes a novel solution to this challenge, leveraging technology to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

In conclusion, the VetComm Simulator represents a significant advancement in veterinary education, offering a forward-thinking approach to training the next generation of veterinarians. By integrating cutting-edge AI technology with evidence-based educational practices, this project promises to enhance the quality of veterinary care, improve educational outcomes, and set a new standard for communication training in veterinary medicine.