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EDITOR'S NOTE

Time's Up? Not Yet

It's 2019 and female veterinarians are still lagging behind their male peers in terms of pay, and men still outnumber women in more senior roles, despite a female majority across the profession as a whole.

More than 3500 vet professionals across 18 countries were recently surveyed for their salaries by year of their qualifying.¹ Results confirmed that men and women earn broadly similar salaries for the first decade after entering the profession, but then women begin to progressively fall significantly behind their male counterparts. If recognition of this disparity will help the situation improve, we need to make the problem more transparent. Some organizations undertake mandatory reporting of their gender pay gap, forcing companies to justify any such gap in the hope that this helps bring greater equality. Maybe the veterinary profession should have similar “blatant” transparency?

In 2016, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) released the New Graduate Starting Salary Calculator,² which initially did blatantly highlight the gender disparity. The calculator is based on statistically significant retrospective data and it considers a number of variables, such as geographic location, type of practice, and at that time, gender. Specific to gender, it instructed women to subtract \$2406.97 from the mean starting salary, which was a reflection of actual data.

The AVMA helped to highlight a problem for which there is no valid reason and is inherently unfair; today, this calculator does not mention

“You are unjust to women...”

**— Oscar Wilde
*A Woman of No Importance***

gender. The AVMA also published reports on the “Market for Veterinarians,” which contains data on employment and the influences of geography, qualification, experience, and gender.³ Our profession needs to accept and act on this data.

A recent study involved veterinary employers and managers who were asked to review the performance evaluation of a female or male vet. A fairly even split was found between those who felt female vets still faced discrimination and those who thought they did not. Where the proportions did differ, though, was in the gender of those who believed that women no longer face discrimination—66% were male.⁴

The veterinary profession is certainly not alone in facing this issue but if, in a profession that relies increasingly heavily on a female workforce, women are not thriving, then the future for that profession will be challenging. Although there may be a subset of individuals within the veterinary profession who need to re-evaluate their beliefs and actions, the profession needs to ensure that all vets, regardless of their gender, have fulfilling and equal career opportunities. **TVP**

¹ Gender pay gap will resolve in 2098, say experts. Veterinary Record website. veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/183/20/609. Accessed January 31, 2019.

² New salary calculator tool helps students and recent graduates. AVMA@Work website. atwork.avma.org/2016/05/05/new-salary-calculator-tool-helps-students-and-recent-graduates. Accessed January 30, 2019.

³ 2016 AVMA report on the market for veterinarians. Association of American Veterinary Colleges website. aavmc.org/data/files/annual%20reports/v3_econ_2016_report3_mketvet_061416.pdf. Accessed January 30, 2019.

⁴ Loeb J. Gender bias is alive and well in the vet profession. Veterinary Record website. veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/183/19/580.1. Accessed January 31, 2019.