

Rebecca Haber

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison SVM I've been introduced to several holistic modalities such as acupuncture and nutritional therapy, both through my classes and attending club meetings. I plan to learn as much as possible during my time here in order to gain the full complement of holistic modalities to integrate into standard Western veterinary medicine. I hope to learn more about the various alternative pain treatments such as homeopathic and holistic treatment options for less popular species such as small mammal pets and reptiles.

I have always had an interest in holistic medicine and integrative therapies in veterinary medicine. Immediately prior to veterinary school, I had the opportunity to work at a small animal clinic as a veterinary technician for Dr. Sara Winikoff at Rockland Holistic Veterinary Care in Blauvelt, NY. Dr. Winikoff practiced an integrated treatment that often incorporated Acupuncture, Nutritional therapy and Herbal medicine. The efficacy of these treatments was astounding. Not only did every acupuncture session end with the dog profusely thanking Dr. Winikoff with kisses, but there was always a noticeable difference in the gait and attitude of the animal following treatment, with an evident reduction in pain. From this experience I learned about the tremendous number of treatment options available to patients through alternative medicine, especially for dogs with chronic pain such as from arthritis or IVDD.

Holistic medicine is a glimpse of hope for pet owners who've not been able to save a beloved pet because they couldn't afford surgery. Primarily, a holistic approach broadens the depth of options available to our patients for a variety of conditions that lead to chronic pain such as arthritis, IVDD, and cancer, as well as orthopedic injuries such as Anterior Cruciate Ligament

(ACL) tears in dogs. Herbal medicine also offers clients a more affordable alternative to pharmaceuticals and/or surgery when circumstances hinder standard treatment. At a panel discussion given by my professors and clinicians on pain across species, it became clear to me how exceedingly common pain is encountered in veterinary medicine. For these reasons, I feel it is necessary to study the alternative therapies that are available to our patients, in order to offer clients all the tools possible to improve the quality of life of their pets amidst financial constraints that may arise.