



"Professional" protection of animals - do veterinarians recognize cases of cruelty among their patients?



Assoc. Prof. Gergana Nikolova Balieva, PhD  
Trakia University, Stara Zagora



# Cruelty to animals

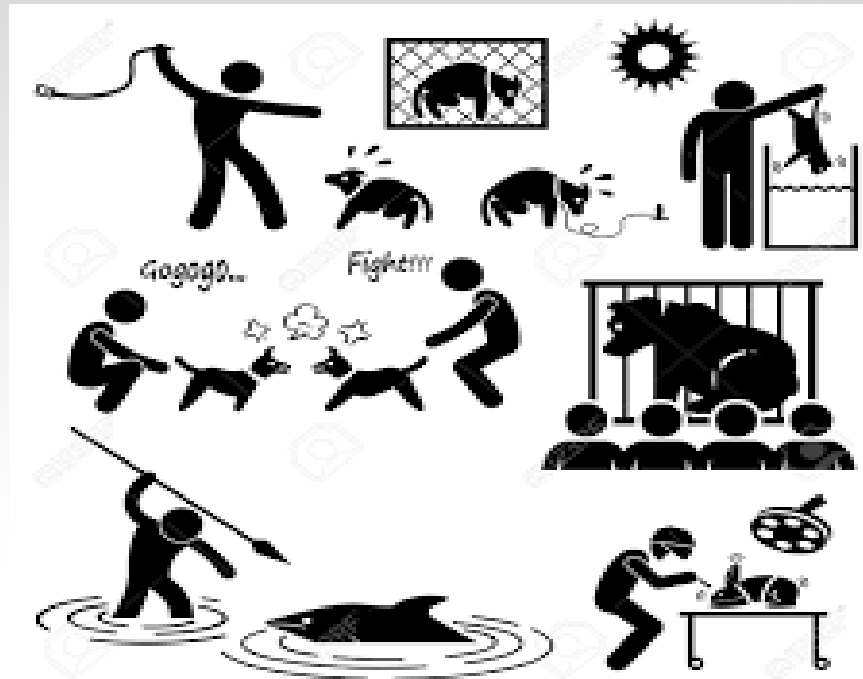
- The protection of animals from various manifestations of inhumane treatment towards them, the protection of their life and health are regulated in the **Animal Protection Act** of 2008.
- According to this law, **animal cruelty** is ***any act or omission that causes the animal prolonged or repeated suffering, or damage to its health, or stress.***
- **Administrative penalties** are provided for proven acts of cruelty and inhumane treatment of vertebrate animals - fines, if the case does not constitute a crime, or **confiscation of the animal** for the benefit of the state.



# Classification of abuse

- “**Animal abuse**” - used to encompass a great variety of circumstances.
- In addition, other terms, such as ‘**animal cruelty**’, ‘**maltreatment**’ or ‘**ill treatment**’ are also widespread.

Globally, at least one animal is abused every 60 seconds.

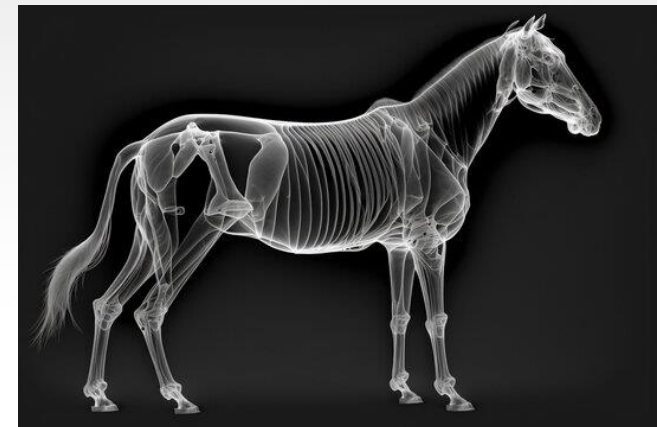


# Classification of abuse

- Four basic types of abuse: **physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.** More than one type may coexist.
- **Physical abuse**
- **Synonyms:**
- *non-accidental injury (NAI); battered pet syndrome*
- The perpetrator of physical abuse subjects the animal to a variety of actions that cause **bodily injury**. In some cases the fact that deliberate physical abuse has taken place is perfectly clear. In others it is much less straightforward, and therefore can be much more difficult to recognise and diagnose.



Source:  
Internet



# Classification of abuse

- **Sexual abuse**
- This means the use of an animal for sexual gratification.
- The term '*animal sexual abuse*' is preferable to the more familiar '*bestiality*' or '*zoophilia*', both of which focus primarily on the perpetrator, and thus fail to convey any sense of the physical harm that may occur to the animal.
- It is the very fact that the abuse involves the sexual organs or anus/rectum that distinguishes the abuse as sexual in nature.



Photographs by M. Merck, Veterinary Forensics, 1-st ed.



# Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering



Major Cowering

## More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips  
when no food nearby



Panting  
when not hot or thirsty



Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side



Moving in Slow Motion  
walking slow on floor



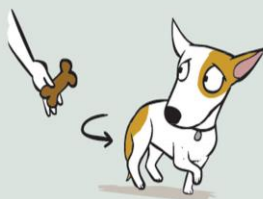
Acting Sleepy or Yawning  
when they shouldn't be tired



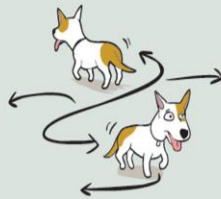
Hypervigilant  
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat  
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



Pacing

## Classification of abuse

- Emotional abuse
- Although some might claim that animals have no emotions, and therefore cannot be emotionally abused, it is difficult to believe that veterinarians and animal behaviour specialists would agree.
- For example, **regular threatening behaviour and verbal harassment of the animal (shouts, angry gestures), or a failure to provide psychological comfort, clearly constitute emotional abuse.**

Source:  
Internet



It makes me sad that when I grow up,  
you'll be afraid of me and hate me  
for no good reason...

I'm sorry.

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwhitehorsevet.com.au%2Ffears-phobias-anxieties%2F&psig=AOvVaw0X1ws06iZTT6kMBp1G64fP&ust=1715118716931000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBIQjRxqFwoTCMCEmaGB-oUDFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE>

# Classification of abuse

- **Neglect**
- This simply means a failure to provide the animal with the basic physical necessities of life: **food, water and shelter.**
- It also includes **failure to seek veterinary attention** for injury *and* for naturally occurring illness.
- Abandonment of an animal is a clear example of neglect, as is the all too common practice of allowing a collar to tighten and constrict the neck of a growing animal.

Source:  
Internet



Photographs by M. Merck, Veterinary Forensics, 1-st ed.

# Animal abuse and the veterinary personality

- Veterinarians are deeply concerned about the well-being of their patients, but they also often have compassion for animal owners.
- For example, they may assume that the owner has an extremely stressful home environment and can therefore be excused for a certain display of violence towards their animal, which further creates stress by "eliminating" it from the home.



<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fslideplayer.com%2Fslide%2F14248012%2F&psig=AOvVaw3cw9HdD-KGlyTWB5kkHuiN&ust=1715119890361000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBIQjRxqFwoTCOj2zeCF-oUDFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD>



# Animal abuse and the veterinary personality

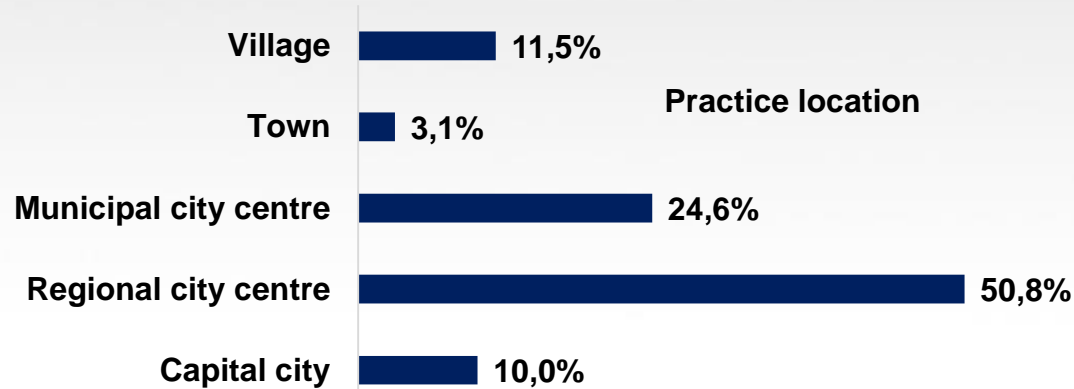
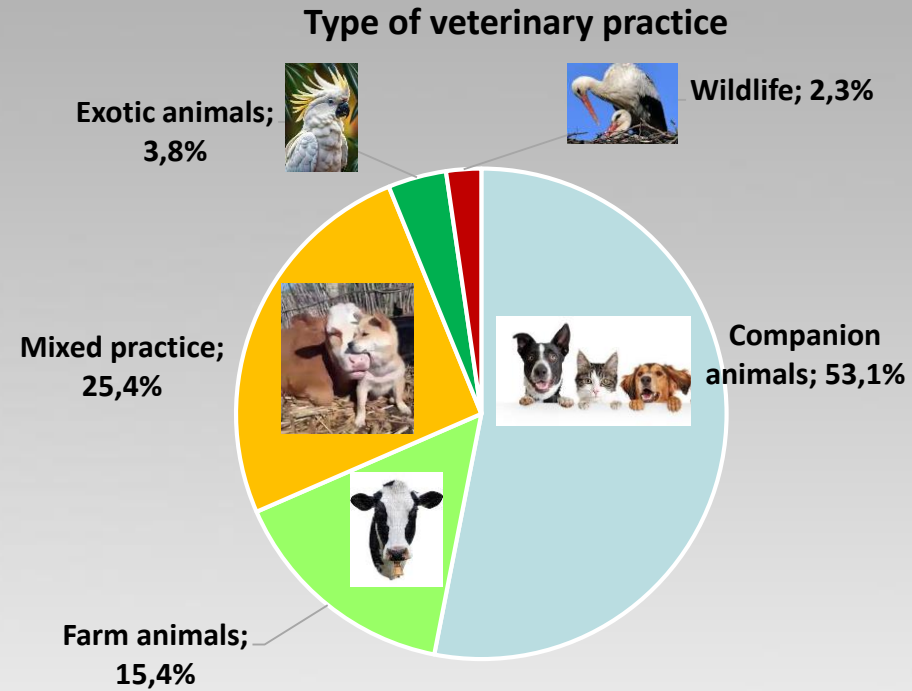
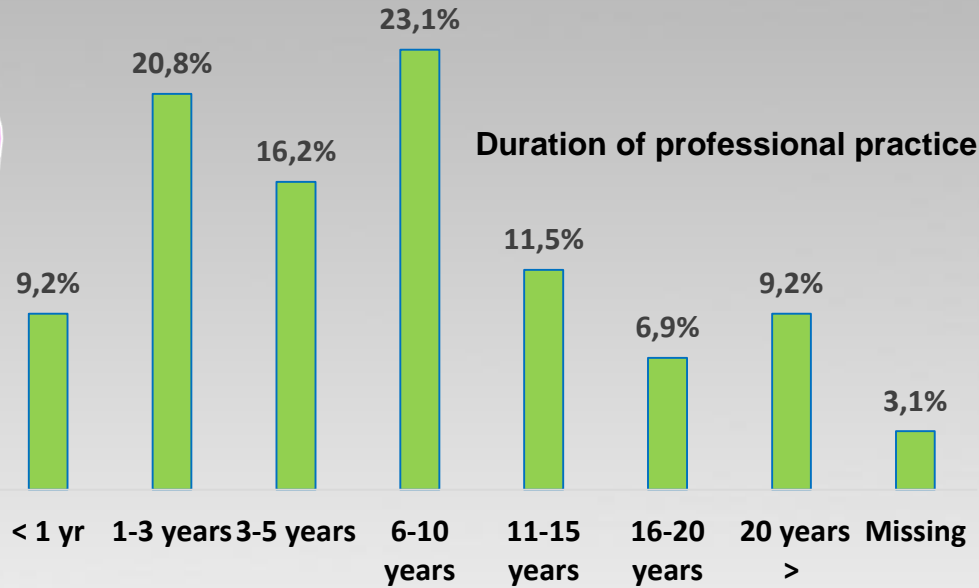
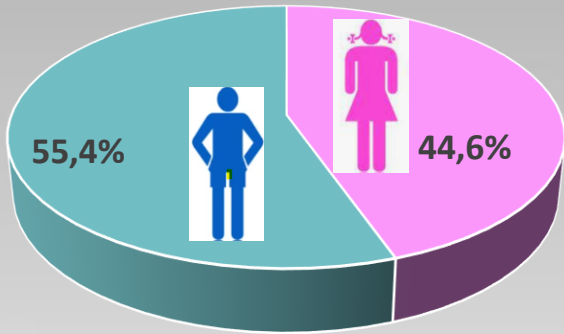
- Veterinarians need, therefore, to remember that their **primary responsibility is to the animal.**
- They can also be reassured that it is not their responsibility to *prove* abuse (of any type), because ***their responsibility is solely to provide relevant veterinary evidence.***



**Do veterinarians recognize cases of cruelty in their patients?**

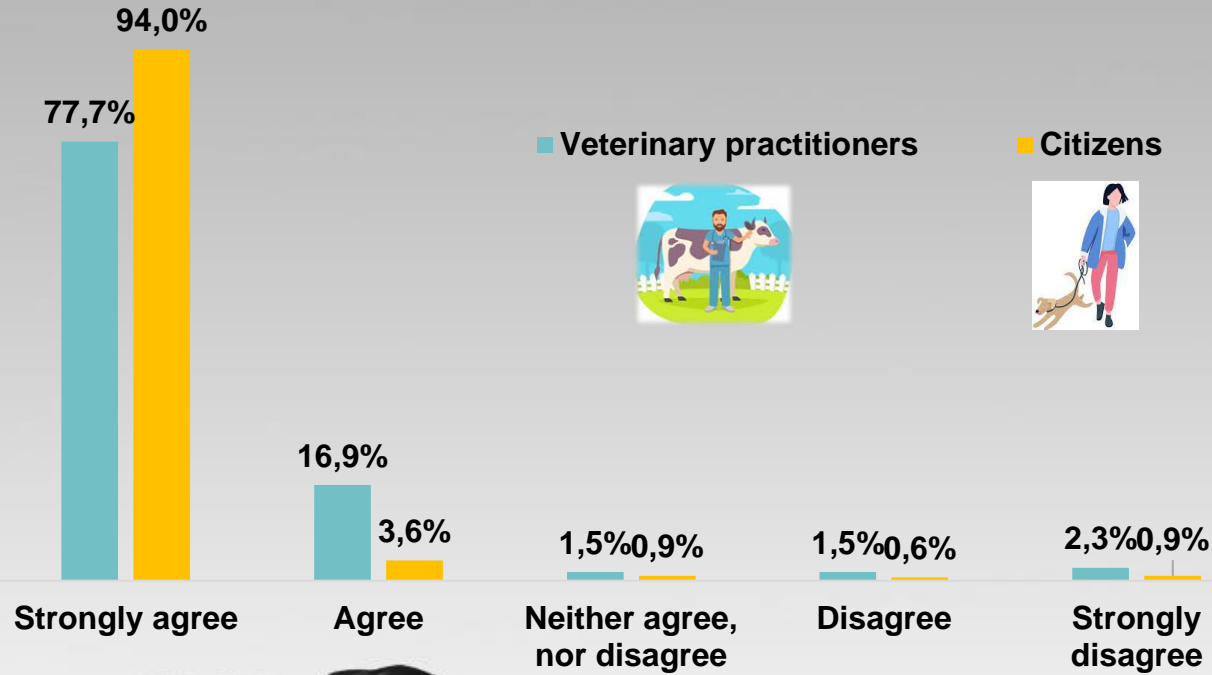
# Veterinarians` awareness of animal cruelty and interpersonal violence

- Survey in Bulgaria – 130 veterinary practitioners

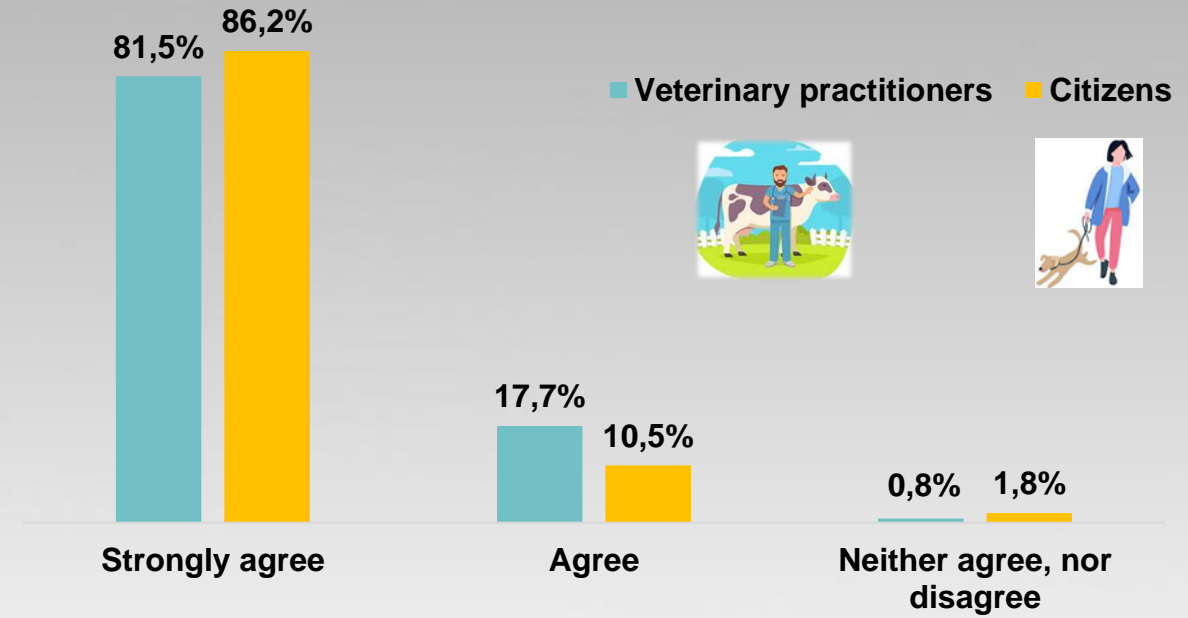


# Veterinarians` awareness of animal cruelty and interpersonal violence

Animals have emotions and sentience

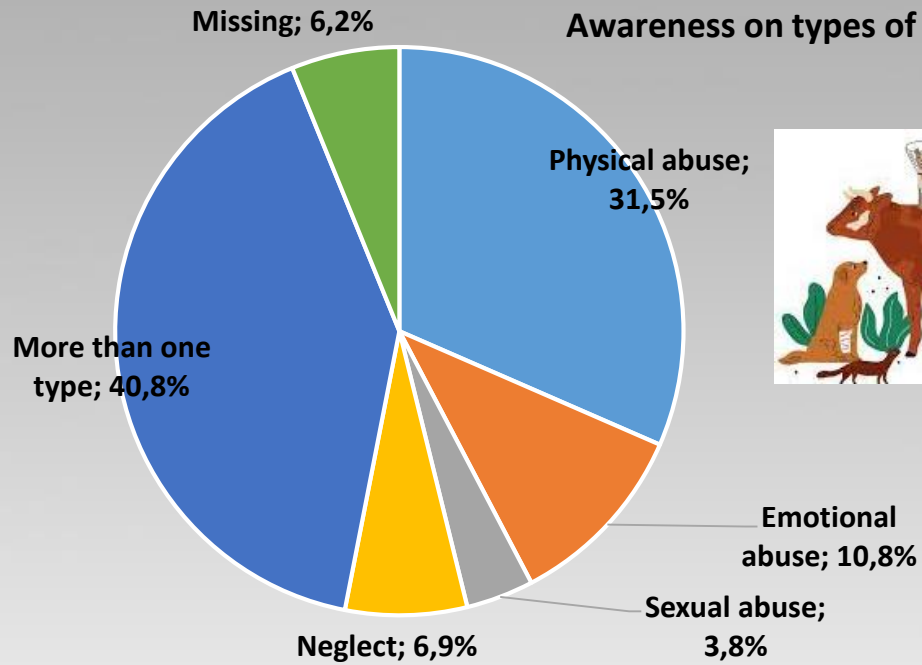


I know which acts represent animal abuse

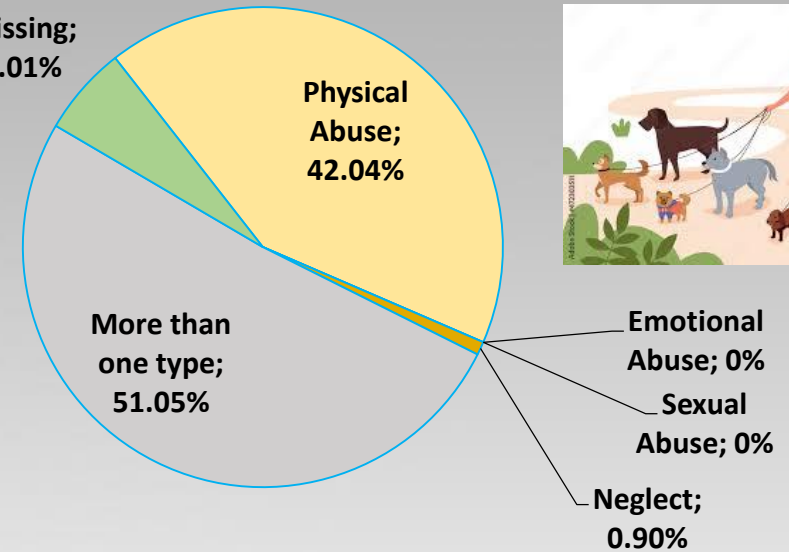


# Veterinarians` awareness of animal cruelty and interpersonal violence

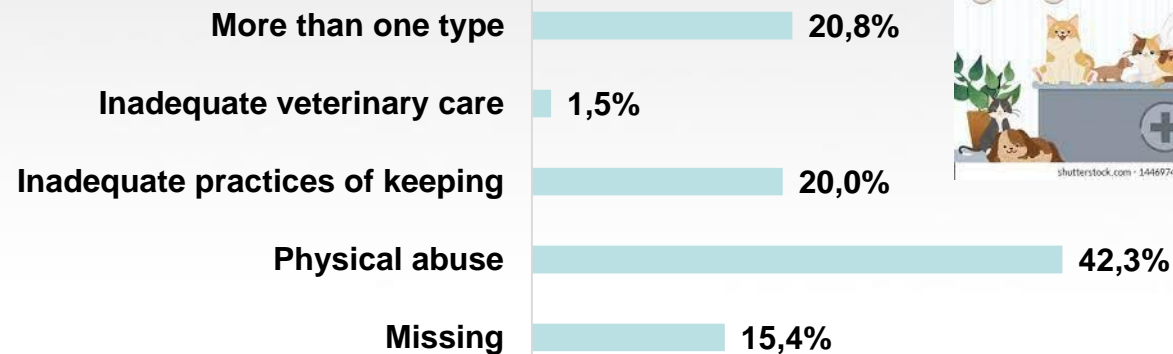
Awareness on types of animal cruelty



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6.01%



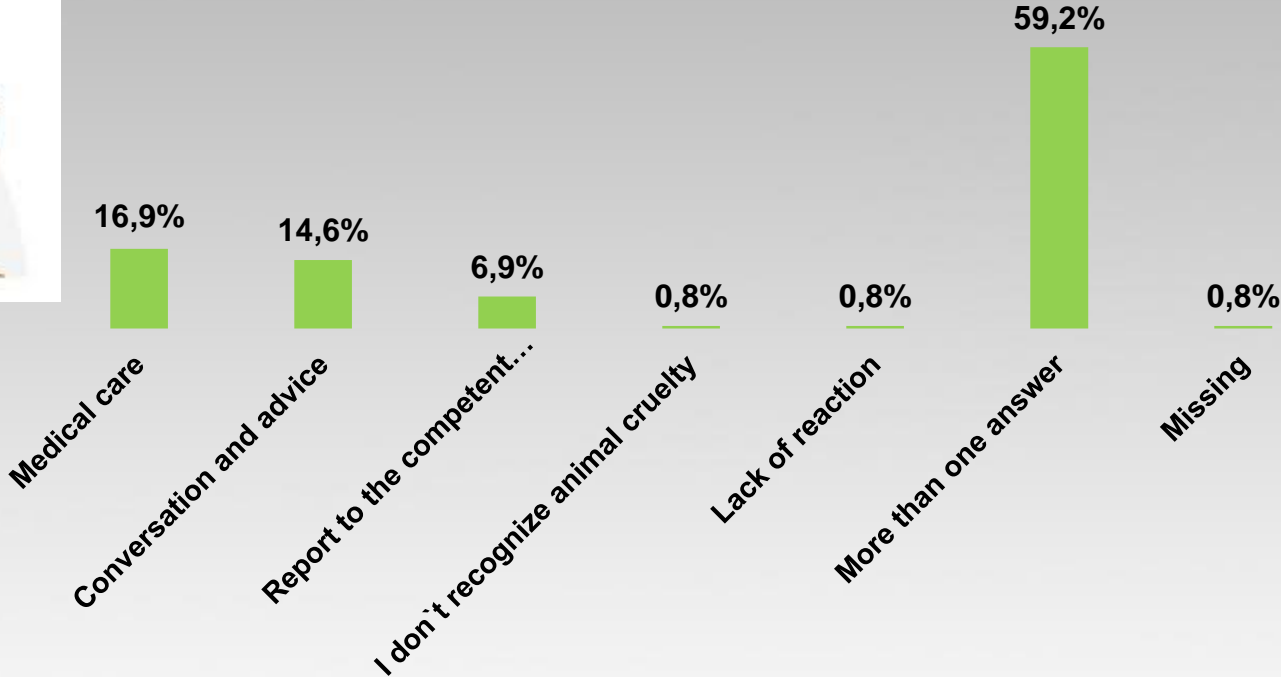
Recognized cases of animal abuse at the veterinary practice





# Veterinarians` awareness of animal cruelty and interpersonal violence

Veterinarians' response to established cases of cruelty at the veterinary practice



Sector "Zoopolice and cynology"  
 at the General Directorate  
 "National Police"  
 Republic of Bulgaria  
 Ministry of Interior





# Competent authorities for animal protection in Bulgaria

- Regarding the Bulgarian legislation **the protection of animals** is controlled by three ministries :
  - **Ministry of Environment and Water** – controls the wildlife and biodiversity;
  - **Ministry of Agriculture and Food** – animal welfare and animal health;
  - **Ministry of Interior** – when there is a crime against animals.
- 
- All signals for animal abuse , including incidents, should be reported to **112 emergency phone number**. The signals afterwards are sent to the Local Police Department and a patrol is sent to investigate the situation. Depending on the situation zoopolicy could be called.
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- **Zoopolicy in Bulgaria was launched in 2015**. Each Regional Department of the Ministry of Interior has appointed police officers (two policemen from each Local Police Dep.) to be responsible for control on animal protection, regarding cruelty to animals.



**INTER-INSTITUTIONAL  
COOPERATION!!!**



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION!**

