

Pet boom raises demand for veterinarians

More students in China are choosing veterinary medicine as a career thanks to rising salaries and the growing demand for animal care, according to industry sources.



Veterinarians perform an ultrasound test on a dog in May at a pet hospital in Shenyang, Liaoning province. [Photo/China Daily]

Up to 10,000 students graduate with majors in the field every year in China, but the country is still short more than 1 million vets, said Xiong Fuqiang, deputy Party chief of Nanjing Agricultural University's veterinary medicine school.

"Few students, especially female students, wanted to become vets in the past due to a heavy workload, low salary and bad working environment. But we have had good applicants in the past two years, and more than 60 percent of them are female."

He said that the average starting salary for veterinary graduates is 4,000 yuan (\$606) a month, and in three years their earnings can surpass 10,000 yuan, higher than the salaries of many other majors.

Zhao Yanbin, vice-president of the school, said more Chinese families are willing to spend money on their pets, including expensive medical treatment.

“Animals share more than 90 percent of the same diseases with people. They also have diabetes, heart disease and liver failure,” he said. But Zhao said medical expenses for pets—which are subject to less regulation—“can be double those for people.”

An MRI for pets can cost 2,500 to 3,000 yuan, while dialysis costs about 10,000 yuan.

Xiong said Nanjing, with 8 million people, had almost no pet hospitals before 2006, but now it has more than 100. He estimated the pet care market in China will keep increasing by 30 to 35 percent yearly.

“A small pet hospital, which has fewer than 10 employees, can make more than 10 million yuan a year,” he said. “A pet hospital affiliated with our university receives at least 40 pets a day.”

Zhang Fuhong, 39, a veterinarian who graduated from Shandong Agricultural University, started his professional career in 2012 and now owns a pet hospital in Liaocheng.

“It’s not a very respectable job in many people’s eyes,” Zhang said. “But it’s very easy to find a job if you study to be a veterinarian.”

Xiong said some veterinary medicine graduates don’t end up providing direct medical services, instead opting for jobs as civil servants or veterinary medicine researchers, aggravating the country’s shortage of veterinarians.

“Compared with doctors for people, veterinarians need to treat different kinds of animals and a wide variety of diseases,” Xiong said. “To some extent, they must have more professional knowledge and need more practice.”

He said that veterinary medicine schools in the country should be equipped with more laboratory equipment and students should have a chance to gain more clinical experience to help ease the shortage.

The demand for practitioners shows no signs of slowing.

The number of pets in China has increased by 12 percent every year for 10 years, Beijing Youth Daily reported in March. China has become the world’s third-largest pet market, just behind the United States and Japan, with the sales of supplies for dogs and cats reaching 172 billion yuan in 2016.

[Doctors asked to intervene in abuse cases](#)

Staff members at Shanghai medical institutions should keep detailed records on the physical condition and medical treatment of patients who may be

victims of domestic abuse, the city's health authorities said.

"If evidence of family violence is found during treatment, staff members should take prompt action, arrange for security personnel to isolate the person and report the incident to the police," the Shanghai Health and Family Planning Commission said in a recent notice.

"Medical staff members should actively work with the police to collect related medical documents," said the notice, which was published on Aug 22.

If cases are not reported and lead to serious consequences, the person directly responsible may face punishment, it said.

Earlier this month, a netizen uploaded a video showing a man beating his father in a hospital.

According to the online news portal The Paper, the father, 86, had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and had been in the hospital since Aug 11. The man often hit his father in the face, kicked his legs or stabbed his mouth with a spoon handle, the report said.

"Every one will become old one day. It's absolutely unacceptable to see a man treat his old father in such a rude and violent way," an anonymous netizen said.

Many netizens said the son should be severely punished for his behavior. Police said he has been detained for 10 days and was fined 500 yuan (\$76). His father was taken care of by other family members.

The health and family planning commission also required local medical institutions to strengthen public education and improve awareness about family violence.

[Nanotech research soars, but benefits still lag](#)

China's nanotechnology field is developing at an unprecedented pace, but it still needs a boost in turning research into the reality of producing groundbreaking works, China's top scientists said.

In 2016, Chinese scientists produced about 33 percent of the world's total science papers on nanotechnology, a fivefold increase since 1997, according to a collaborated white paper published on Tuesday by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, China's National Center for Nanoscience and Technology and Springer Nature, an international science journal publisher.

China also has become the world's largest nano-related patent contributor

since 2008, with 209,344 patent applications over the past two decades. This is twice as many as that of the United States, the second-largest contributor, the white paper said.

“China’s nanotechnology is developing at an unprecedented pace,” Bai Chunli, president of the academy, said at the opening ceremony of the Seventh International Conference on Nanoscience and Technology in Beijing on Tuesday.

China began nano-related research in the 1980s, and now “has become one of the world leaders in nano-related research,” he said.

Nanoscience is the study of extremely small things on scales of between 1 and 100 nanometers – a unit of measurement that is a billionth of a meter. At such a tiny scale, the properties of materials are often drastically different from those at larger sizes. Alloys that are weak or brittle can become strong and ductile. Compounds that are chemically inert can become powerful catalysts.

Manipulating these properties will lead to a wide range of products, from electronics to cancer treatments.

In the past five years, the Ministry of Education has devoted 500 million yuan (\$75 million) to universities for their nano-research. The academy also has invested 1 billion yuan in various labs and research institutes, the white paper said.

However, China still needs to put in more effort and investment to turn nanotechnology research into actual applications, Bai said.

Considering how expensive and complex nanotechnology research is, it will take a long time before scientists can unlock its full potential and benefit society, he added.

In addition, Chinese scientists still lag in creating groundbreaking research.

In terms of producing highly cited and influential science works, the US currently leads the world in seven major nanoscience fields, while China leads in two.

[16 jailed in Shanghai for abusive loan schemes](#)

Sixteen men involved in four cases of lending money at exorbitant interest rates- to juveniles in most cases – with the aim of grabbing residences possessed by their targets’ families, were sentenced to prison terms of two

to 16 years by Shanghai district courts on Monday.

That brought the number of such cases, a new form of debt trap, to 19, and the number of offenders to 49 so far in the city. The offenders were found guilty of fraud and extortion, the Shanghai High People's Court said.

"Many of the victims in such cases, which began to emerge last year, are university or high school students. What the offenders are really targeting are their parents' house properties, since real estate prices have continued to soar in the city in recent years," said Huang Xiangqing, deputy director of the court.

In a typical case, in which eight offenders received jail terms on Monday, a 17-year-old girl surnamed Hang wanted to borrow 3,000 yuan (\$454) to buy a smartphone in 2015. But the loan sharks, led by a man named Qu, cajoled her into borrowing more. They told her that juveniles are not required to pay interest, and if the money is paid back before the agreed date, there would be no charge.

Based on such assurances, and thinking she had nothing to lose, the girl signed a contract to borrow 160,000 yuan.

She was accompanied to a bank. But Hang only got 5,000 yuan at the time and was promised that she would get the rest of the money soon.

The loan sharks then vanished for seven months. When they returned, they told Hang that her cumulative debt had reached 900,000 yuan. To repay that, she was hoodwinked into selling the loan sharks an apartment that she co-owned with her parents. It was worth as much as 1.94 million yuan, but she sold it to the fraudsters for 1.6 million yuan.

It was not clear how the fraudsters were able to circumvent the parents' signatures for the sale.

There are similarities in many such cases, the court's Huang said. Most of the time, loan sharks sign two versions of a contract to lend money. The second version typically includes provisions different from what was promised the victim.

"The nature of such cases is a combination of fraud and plunder. The offenders usually loaned much more money than what the borrowers originally wanted and pushed them into a debt trap," Huang said.

"It's different from a traditional usurious loan, in which those who borrow money expect high interest rather than believing that there won't be any interest charges if money is paid back as scheduled."

Duan Shouliang, chief judge at a criminal tribunal of the Shanghai High People's Court, said courts will strictly punish loan sharks, especially the organizers of the schemes.

"Offenders in such crimes usually form groups with the characteristics of a gang, restricting the freedom of their victims and treating them with

violence. This undermines the social atmosphere and creates security risks," he said.

[Li stresses targeted works in poverty reduction](#)

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has asked for an improved poverty reduction campaign through regional collaboration.



Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang (C), who attended the meeting Tuesday, said east-west collaboration needs to be strengthened in accordance with the poverty reduction target.[Photo: Xinhua]

In a written message to a meeting on east-west collaboration for poverty reduction, the premier said China's poverty relief campaign is going through a critical stage and government agencies should keep up the fight for progress.

In the past year, results have been seen as the government increased help for developed eastern regions and underdeveloped western ones to cooperate by providing support in funding, personnel, technology and industrial development, he said.

Li demanded more works to bring growth to poor region.

Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang, who attended the meeting Tuesday, said east-west collaboration needs to be strengthened in accordance with the poverty reduction target.

The two sides should expand cooperation to more sectors with more innovative measures, he said.

Eastern regions will make more room for industrial development while the western regions can quicken pace of poverty eradication, said Wang.

China has set 2020 as the target year to complete the building of a "moderately prosperous society," which requires the eradication of poverty.

To achieve the target, China needs to bring more than 10 million people out of poverty every year, meaning nearly one million people per month or 20 people per minute.