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INTRODUCTION

Continuing Personal Development (CPD) is critical for veterinary professionals to be updated with new techniques, research and trends whilst meeting both personal and professional goals.¹ Pharmaceutical stakeholders in this study refer to veterinary surgeons, domestic pet and farm animal owners and the veterinary team, including veterinary nurses, veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants.² A veterinary technician is an individual who has mastered the science and technology involved with the profession, a veterinary nurse delivers medical care to animal patients alongside the veterinary surgeon, and a veterinary assistant is trained informally while on the job.³

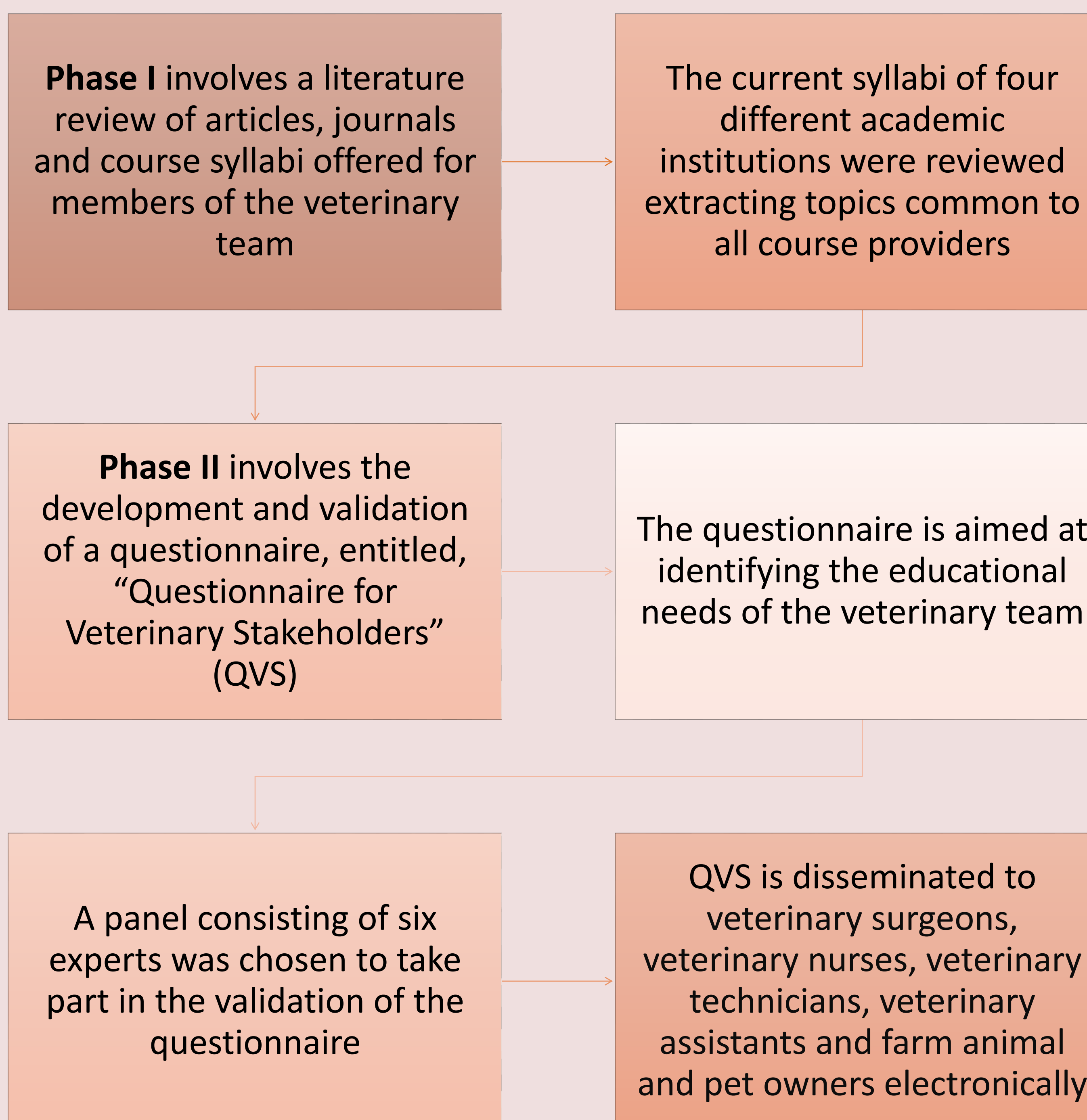
To date, there is no accreditation for veterinary nurses, veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants in Malta. The notable gap in the educational competencies of stakeholders is acknowledged. There is a need for continuing education in this area. The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology offers a Bachelor of Science in Animal Management and Veterinary Nursing.⁴ In the United States, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) accredits veterinary technology programs through the Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities.⁵ In the United Kingdom, the Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing, Foundation of Science (FdSc) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in Veterinary Nursing are nationally recognised qualifications.⁶

AIMS

The primary goal of the study is to address the educational requirements of the veterinary team by identifying possible topics for short courses tailored to their needs.

METHOD

The methodology is divided into two phases:



RESULTS

Results gathered from Phase I outlined the topics that are taught to each member of the veterinary team from four different academic entities. Comparison of the course syllabi from these academic entities was made. Table 1 shows the topics from the different entities for each member of the veterinary team.

The QVS developed in Phase II has four sections: *Section A* demographics, *Section B* determines perception of stakeholders towards conducting short courses, *Section C* assesses the relevance of the topics and *Section D* is aimed at the veterinary team to discuss the organisation of the short courses. A five-point Likert scale was used to indicate the respondents' level of agreement with a set of questions. The scale ranged from 1 to 5; 1 being strongly disagree. Thirty-four respondents completed the QVS, having an average age of 34 years. Twenty-six respondents strongly agreed that having short courses would result in a more successful veterinary service.

Table 1: Identified topics for members of the veterinary team

Veterinary Nurses	Veterinary Technicians	Veterinary Assistants
Veterinary Pathology: Overview of diseases in different organ systems in animals	Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology: Structures and function of the animal body	Medicinal Terminology: Commonly used veterinary terms and its brief and easy to understand explanation
Principles of Emergency and Critical Care	Taking patient history and physical exams	Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology: Structures and function of the animal bodies
Radiation: Fundamentals of an X-ray and the safety procedures	Preparing animals for surgery	Understanding the use of drugs in veterinary medicine
Carrying out diagnostic tests	Preparation of apparatus of surgery	Taking bookings, payments and completing necessary paperwork
Performing minor surgical procedures	Assisting during procedure	Handling and restraint of animals
Monitoring animals under anaesthesia	Patient care after surgery	Diet, deworming and grooming
Drug administration techniques	Procedures on taking x-ray images	Office Etiquette
Basic pharmaceutical calculations	Understand drug actions, interactions, and adverse reactions	
Advising owners on the health and welfare of animals		

CONCLUSION

This study established the need to conduct CPD by providing short courses tailored to the responsibilities of each member. To provide quality standards of patient care, the veterinary team must keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

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