

Review of: "Enhancing Veterinary Services for Smallholder Farmers in Zimbabwe: A Comprehensive Literature Review"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

In this article "**Enhancing Veterinary Services for Smallholder Farmers in Zimbabwe: A Comprehensive Literature Review**", the authors review the literature relating to the development of veterinary service provision for smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe, the key actors involved in the system and the challenges facing farmers when trying to access veterinary services. This article explores some of the root causes and offers suggestions for improvement in provision.

Highlighting the challenges of accessing affordable, or even available, veterinary services in rural areas, this article stresses the need to improve collaboration between veterinary and para-veterinary professionals.

Suggestions for improvement:

1. For a literature review it feels rather light on literature, I feel it could have benefitted from inclusion and expansion of some of the very relevant topics mentioned within each section, drawing in examples from other countries and aiding some comparisons.
2. It would have been useful to include some definitions of the terminology used within this article to aid clarity.
3. Perhaps a little more detail about the roles/ job remits of the different para-professionals would have helped readers understand how, why and where there are gaps in provision.
4. A methods section would also have been an important addition to highlight the search terms and approach/es used to gather the information.
5. Ethnoveterinary medicine requires its own section to really expand the reader's knowledge about how widespread the reliance on this form of service provision is – there are lots of references about this, and in addition much literature can be drawn from outside the African continent.
6. Substandard drug use is also well documented in other countries, literature could have been drawn upon to highlight this issue to show it is not just confined to the African continent.
7. In the human health section, there should have been some mention about One health, and this section would have benefitted from inclusion about the dangers to the environment when slaughter houses are not subject to rigorous standards i.e. pollution of water sources etc.
8. Finally it was disappointing to see no mention of equids – donkeys, mules, horses – in the list of livestock that make improvements to the lives of people in rural communities as equids are often integral to ensuring people are able to earn money or access resources (carry water, food supplies etc), and support communities during drought conditions (ever increasing with climate change); they are almost always completely overlooked when discussions about livestock

are undertaken. There are articles published on the topic of equid use in Zimbabwe by authors such as K. Dzama, B. Mudamburi, N. Mhazo, J. Francis, S. Mkomwa and R. Blench to name a few.

I did enjoy reading this article, it is a very important topic and I hope the reviewers' comments help the authors develop this article further.