



2003 National Survey Summary Part One

The following is a summary of the 2003 National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) national demographic survey conducted by the AVMA's Statistical Research Group. This survey has been conducted every four years since 1991. Questionnaires were sent to two groups of veterinary technicians - all 2003 Active NAVTA members and a second group of randomly selected nonmembers. Fifty-seven percent of NAVTA members returned their surveys, with 46% of the nonmembers responding.

Salary - Number One Concern

Veterinary technicians were asked to identify the three most significant problems they currently face in their careers. Although incomes have increased since we started collecting data, salary was still the number one concern.

	Average 2003	Average 1999	Average 1995	Average 1991
Member	\$30,500	\$27,070	\$22,000	\$19,200
Nonmember	\$26,560	\$24,100	\$19,900	\$17,500

Other concerns voiced by respondents included burnout, competition with assistants trained on the job, and lack of opportunity for advancement.

Future Concerns

Respondents were also asked to look toward the future and predict what three issues will most likely affect them five years from now. It was the general feeling that salary will continue to be an issue. (66.8% - Members, 67.4% - Nonmembers)

Forty-two percent of Members indicated that specialization in veterinary technology was the number two issue that would affect them five years from now, followed by 32.4% indicating credentialing for veterinary technicians, and 31.4% indicating non-educational ways to earn the title veterinary technician.

Career Satisfaction

Overall career satisfaction increased very slightly. Fourteen percent of Members and 19% of Nonmembers indicated they would probably or definitely change to another career in the future.

Philosophical Issues

NAVTA members responded to the following philosophical questions with little change from 1999.

Comment	strongly agree/ agree	disagree/ strongly disagree	no opinion
Veterinary technicians are so underpaid that the feasibility of staying in the profession is declining.	83.6%	14.6%	2%
In addition to veterinarians, only veterinary technicians should be allowed to perform certain asks, for example: take radiographs, induce anesthesia, perform dentals.	93.5%	5.6%	1%
As a technician, I am currently happy with the level of recognition and support given to veterinary technicians by professional veterinary organizations.	38.7%	57.5%	3.8%

Technology

Computer usage at home and work continues to increase. In the practice, 92% of respondents indicated they use the computer at work. Forty-nine percent for inventory, 88.3% for client records, 57.1% for word-processing, and 46.8% for Internet access.

We did find that NAVTA members overall use their computers, both at home and work, significantly more than the Nonmember group. It is also interesting to note how infrequently the Internet is accessed in the workplace.

Home	Once a day	Multiple times/day	Once a week	Never
Member	34.3	24.3	26.8	13.1
Nonmember	32.3	24.8	28.5	12.3
Work	Once a day	Multiple times/day	Once a week	Never
Member	13.2	29.6	18.5	38.5
Nonmember	8.9	18.1	20.0	51.1

This is the first in a series of informational summaries. Detailed articles relating to the data are appearing in the 2004 quarterly issues of *The NAVTA Journal*.

A. Patrick Navarre, BS, RVT & Carlene A. Decker, BS, CVT

© 2004 NAVTA, P.O. Box 224, Battle Ground, IN 47920, www.navta.net