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PIG ASSOCIATED ZOONOTIC RISK RECOGNITION, PERCEIVED EXPOSURE AND PREVENTIVE CONFIDENCE AMONG FINAL YEAR VETERINARY STUDENTS AT A ROMANIAN FACULTY

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Abstract

A cross-sectional survey of 99 final-year veterinary students at USAMV Cluj-Napoca examined pig-associated zoonotic knowledge, information sources, practical experiences, perceived exposure, confidence and training needs. It assessed spontaneous recall and prompted recognition. Recognition was high for several zoonoses but lower for hepatitis E and MRSA. Most students reported relevant activities, yet many perceived no previous potential exposure. The findings identify priorities for case-based One Health teaching and exposure prevention. Reported activities do not confirm pathogen contact, and the single-faculty design limits generalisation.

Introduction and aim

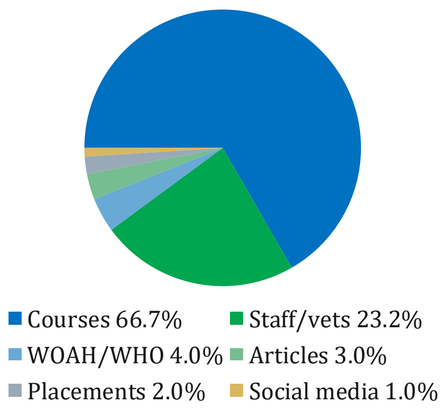
Zoonotic hazard recognition, exposure awareness and communication are distinct elements of veterinary preparation. This survey described these domains in a pig-associated context.

Materials and methods

Online questionnaire, USAMV Cluj-Napoca, October 2026: 99 consenting final-year students from 112 invited (88.4%). Descriptive, item-specific percentages; ambiguous single-choice responses excluded.

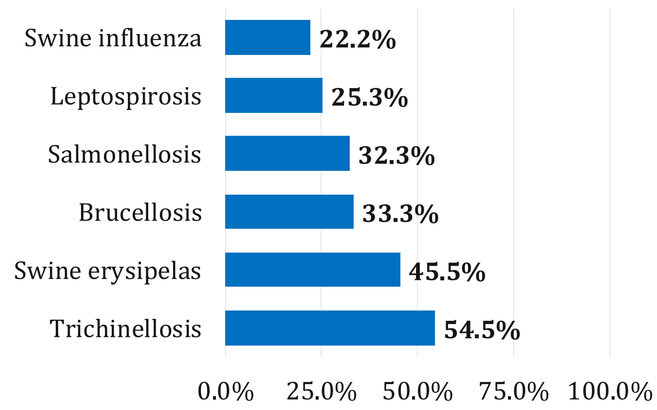
Results and discussion

Information sources (n=99)



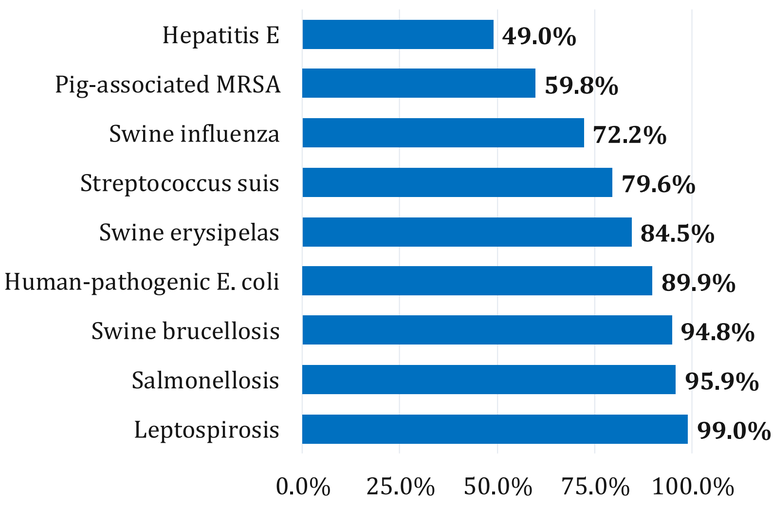
- University courses and teaching staff were the dominant reported information sources.

Most frequently named zoonoses



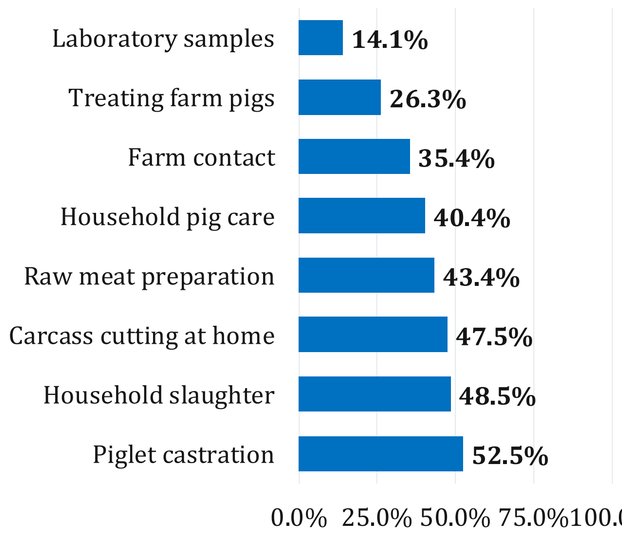
- Trichinellosis and swine erysipelas were most often recalled without prompting. Synonyms were grouped; each group counted once per student (n=99).

Prompted recognition of zoonotic status



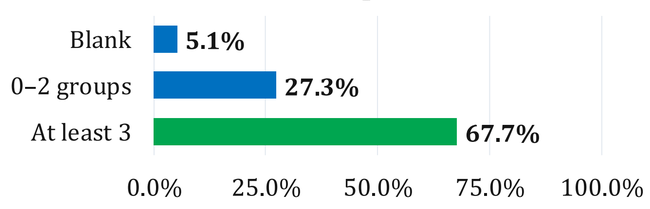
- Hepatitis E and MRSA were less often recognised. African swine fever was misclassified by 18.2% (n=99).

Reported exposure-related activities



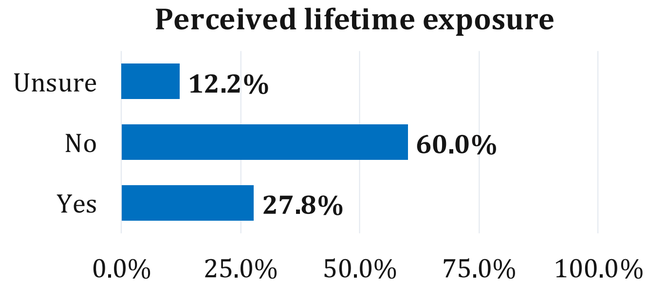
- Household and practical tasks were common. Participation indicates an exposure opportunity, not confirmed pathogen contact. Eight most reported tasks are shown (n=99; multiple selections).

Spontaneous recall: at least three examples



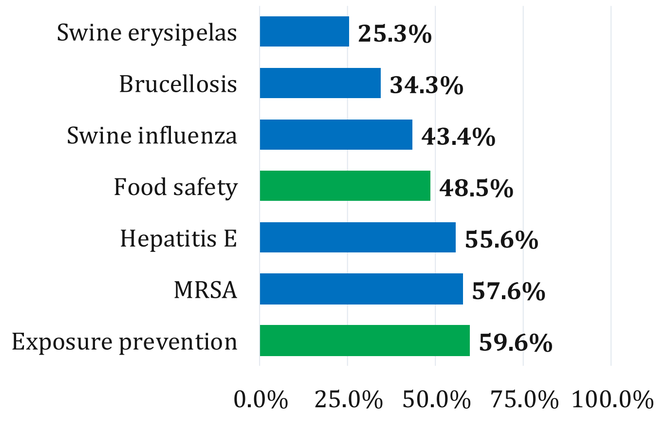
- Free recall and prompted recognition measure different knowledge domains. This exploratory grouping requires author review; blank answers are separate (n=99).

Perceived lifetime exposure



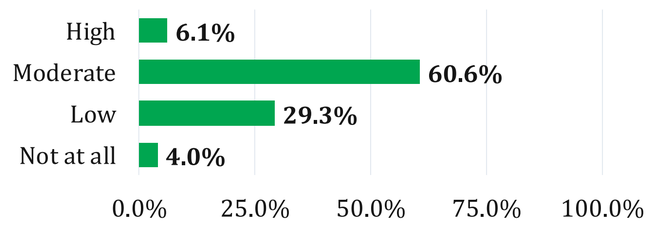
- Reporting an activity did not always coincide with perceived exposure. These answers describe perceptions, not documented pathogen contact (90 valid responses among activity participants).

Further training requested (n=99)



- Requests focused on exposure prevention, MRSA and hepatitis E. Students could select more than one topic; the denominator is 99 throughout.

Confidence explaining risks (n=99)

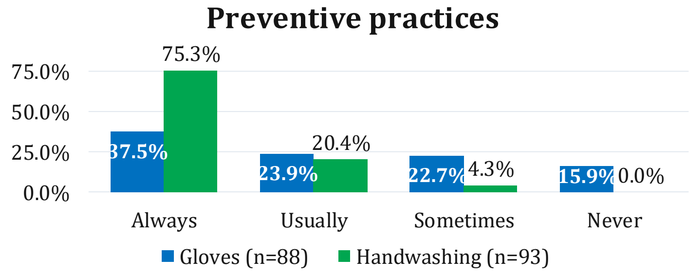


- Most respondents described moderate confidence in explaining risks.

Education beyond the university

- One written comment called for owner/breeder education about household pig keeping and slaughter. Another emphasised prevention and public information.

Preventive practices



- Reported glove use and handwashing differed. Their contexts were distinct, so percentages are not interchangeable measures of protection. Applicable responses only.

Conclusions

The findings identify priorities for case-based teaching on zoonotic hazards, task-specific exposure assessment and risk communication. Self-reported activities do not establish pathogen exposure, and results from one faculty do not measure overall professional competence.

Acknowledgements. We thank the participating final-year veterinary students at USAMV Cluj-Napoca.