Less than 6% of dogs and cats that experience cardiopulmonary arrest (CPA) survive to hospital discharge, while the survival rate in people is over 20%. Until the advent of evidence-based guidelines and standardized training in human medicine, survival rates in people were similar to animals. No such standardized guidelines or training exist in veterinary medicine, which has led to extreme variability in the approach to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and has likely contributed to the poor outcomes in dogs and cats with CPA. The Reassessment Campaign on Veterinary Resuscitation (RECOVER) initiative, a collaborative project supported by the Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society (VECCS) and the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care (ACVECC) involving over 100 board-certified veterinary specialists from around the world, has spent the last 18 months addressing this problem. These volunteers systematically reviewed the experimental and clinical evidence in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) research and devised a series of evidence-based, consensus CPR guidelines for dogs and cats. This project represents a unique undertaking in veterinary medicine, and will serve as a model for future development of true evidence-based clinical guidelines for many important diseases and conditions of animals. The results of this massive undertaking will be published in a special issue of the Journal of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care in June of 2012 which is now available online. Click on the link below. Included in this special issue is an overview of the methods used to develop the guidelines, a summary of the over 1000 scientific papers reviewed in each of five domains (Preparedness and Prevention, Basic Life Support, Advanced Life Support, Monitoring, and Post-Cardiac Arrest Care), and a full description of the new clinical CPR guidelines, including new algorithm and drug dosing charts. In addition, the authors have highlighted the level of evidence supporting each guideline and have identified important knowledge gaps in the literature that will serve as a roadmap for future veterinary CPR research. It is the hope of the RECOVER initiative participants that this body of work will serve as a foundation for the development of training tools for veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and pet owners, ultimately leading to improved outcomes in dogs and cats that experience CPA.

CLICK HERE to read this special issue focusing on the RECOVER Initiative made possible through collaboration of ACVECC, VECCS, Pfizer Animal Health and VERITAS
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