



**PROFILE:**

Meghan Lawlor



Meghan is currently a second-year veterinary medical student at University of Missouri-Columbia College of Veterinary Medicine. In addition, she received her bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences at the University in May 2021 following completion of her capstone thesis titled "Spermatozoan Metabolism as a Non-Traditional Model for the Study of Huntington's Disease." Meghan hopes to graduate as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in May 2025 and pursue a career in biomedical research.

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## A Chat in the Collaboration Café

### One Medicine, Many Minds – Meghan Lawlor

In fall of 2019, a local veterinarian revealed the incredibly heartbreaking news- "I'm not sure how much longer he'll last. There's not much more we can do for him." As I later carried my dog's near lifeless body up the stairs, I held back tears. He was a valued member of our family - a brother, a son, a friend to many. Months later during the COVID19 outbreak, I found myself serving as an at-home caregiver for elderly patients, caught in a scenario that was all too familiar. "I'm not sure how much longer she'll last. There's not much more we can do for her" said a woman's niece with utmost sorrow. As I later carried her near lifeless body from her wheelchair to her bed, I, again, held back tears. She, too, was a valued member of someone's family - a sister, a daughter, a friend to many.

After reflecting on my own experience losing both my own pet and an elderly patient, I have come to recognize the importance of establishing a strong relationship with clients and their families to walk closely with them throughout their loved ones' lives, until their time has come. This particular phenomenon is just one of many foundational assets to both human and animal healthcare.

It wasn't until my first year of veterinary school this year that I truly came to recognize the breadth and depth of the countless parallels between human and veterinary medicine. Following the loss of my geriatric dog and elderly client, I began to reflect on their cognitive declines that ultimately led to their passing – from urinary incontinence, to muscle wasting – the aging process looked nearly identical. Through this reflection, I came to realize the same pattern of neurodegeneration between elderly human and animal patients.

Inspired by these experiences, I became intrigued by the many intersections between human and animal medicine in biomedical fields including organ transplantation, neurodegenerative disease, cancer, and infectious disease. I found myself partaking in routine conversations with colleagues in the medical, public health, and biomedical research fields regarding our experiences and knowledge within our unique professions. The common thread among every conversation was the obligation to save human and animal lives through collaborative efforts utilizing biomedical research and technology. It was this common thread that ignited my passion for comparative medicine and collaboration among physicians and veterinarians.

Soon thereafter, I decided to create a podcast to facilitate collaboration among human and animal healthcare professionals across the United States, and worldwide. Titled, "One Medicine, Many Minds," the podcast aims to provide insights on the many intersections between professionals in the veterinary, medical, and public health fields through discussion with a variety of special guests. Topics explored thus far include intersections between veterinary medicine and public health, physical therapy, dentistry, and much more. If you or someone you know would be an excellent candidate to participate in future episodes, feel free to contact me at [mmlk5g@umsystem.edu](mailto:mmlk5g@umsystem.edu) with inquiries.

Special thanks to Humanimal Trust for providing the means and resources to promote collaborative efforts among healthcare professionals!



## News and Updates

### Humanimal Trust seminar: One Medicine in action: awareness, collaboration and change – 6th May 2022

Huge thanks to everyone who attended our seminar back in May, and to our wonderful Humanimal Trust volunteers, held on the occasion of Humanimal Trust's 8th birthday. We had four fantastic speakers: Dr Doug Brown, Dr Simon Doherty, Miss Anna Radford and Dr Deborah Thomson, who gave insightful and thought-provoking presentations, followed by a stimulating panel discussion chaired by Dr Ben Marshall. If you missed the seminar, the full seminar report and recording of the talks are available on Humanimal Trust's webpage here: <https://www.humanimaltrust.org.uk/medical-professionals/one-medicine-day-6-may/one-medicine-day-seminar-6-may-2022>

### Eight ways to be more One Medicine

There were some great messages that came out of our seminar, so we've put together below eight suggestions on how everyone can be more One Medicine – every action, no matter how small, on the One Medicine journey, really does have the potential for huge impact. If you've got any further suggestions on how we can incorporate the principles of One Medicine and reciprocity in our everyday and working lives, contact us via [Hub@Humanimaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Hub@Humanimaltrust.org.uk)

- I care about One Medicine because..... Dr Deborah Thomson gave a great tip during her seminar talk that if a conversation doesn't exist, then create one. Can you think of a conversation you can have with your family, friends, colleagues, fellow commuters etc on why you care about One Medicine? If 250 Hub members have just one conversation with one person, that's 250 more people who are aware of One Medicine and that's amazing!



Ripple effects are so powerful and transformative so tell someone "I care about One Medicine because....."

- Food and drink – Paws for a Picnic – food and drink are a great way of bringing people (and animals) together, but they're also a great way of raising funds for Humanimal Trust. How about holding a cake sale, bake off, dinner party, bring your own dish etc and take a paws for a picnic.
- One Medicine – saving two lives instead of one – we love what Miss Anna Radford said at the end of her seminar presentation, so what steps can we take towards the phasing out of experimental animal testing and eventually making it obsolete? Let's start raising awareness of preventing duplication of animal research in human and veterinary medicine as a first step and that if we took a One Medicine approach, such duplication would occur much less.

- A picture paints a thousand words – get creative, we've met Hub members who are talented artists, musicians, storytellers so how about painting a picture on what One Medicine means to you, sing a song about One Medicine (or just find a suitable song and substitute One Medicine into the lyrics somewhere!), form a One Medicine quartet/band/orchestra, book club, art club and use the arts to help spread the message about One Medicine.



- Find your tribe – we loved a comment that Dr Darryn Knobel made at our 2021 symposium on how he had found his One Medicine tribe on the Hub. If you're in research on a human medicine project, find out who your veterinary counterpart is and ask for their opinion, similarly if you are working on a veterinary research project, who is your human medical counterpart? Why not reach out to them and seek their opinion – there is nothing to lose and potentially so much to gain.
- I'd like to teach the world about One Medicine – do it – you'll be amazing and a One Medicine ambassador! You don't have to be a teacher, we all have the potential to share our gift on explaining the benefits of One Medicine. Do you know a local youth club, after-school club, Scouts/Guides group, are you a School Governor, a budding YouTube influencer, great with TikTok? Do you want to set up a One Medicine club or society – fantastic! We can help you with ideas so just get in contact with Hub Admin.
- March for One Medicine – we've probably all heard of park runs, couch to 5K etc and those of us who share our lives with animals are likely to take them out for a walk, run, ride, hack etc. So how about organising a group activity on Humanimal Trust One Medicine Day (6th May) to get out there and raise awareness of the power of One Medicine when we are stronger together and move with a common purpose.

- Be you – you're part of our One Medicine family and you are awesome, you are passionate about One Medicine and want to make a difference to improve the lives of both humans and animals. You are sharing this One Medicine journey with us and we love being your travelling companion. We know that there are others out there who want to share this journey with us so if you can help us find them, we'd be very grateful.

**Want to contribute an article, blog, comments, photos to our next edition of Collaboration Café – just contact us via [Hub@Humanimaltrust.org.uk](mailto:Hub@Humanimaltrust.org.uk) and we will take care of the rest. Look out for our next edition in the autumn when we have some very exciting news to share with you.**