Read the rest of the interview with the vet. Match questions a–i with answers 1–9. The referents may help you.

a How much do you earn, then?
b So how do you treat that? Can you treat it?
c What's the worst?
d Is that a real thing?
e Why did you become a vet?
f What's the best thing about the job?
g What is the biggest problem for pets that you see these days?
h What would your advice be for anyone thinking of becoming a vet?
i I'm guessing those training courses aren't cheap. How do you feel when you see media comments about rising vet fees?

A vet's life

Continuing our series on medical careers, we interview vet Celine Swartz, and find there's no escaping the people.

1 Well, I was shy as a kid and my family life was complicated. The pets I had offered easier relationships, which is why I prefer the phrase 'animal friends' to 'pets'. Anyway, because of that, I decided this was what I wanted to do.

2 Be prepared for the people. I probably spend 70 percent of my time with the owners. I have to make them feel better when pets die, argue with them, train them. It's difficult sometimes. The other thing I'd advise them to do is take seriously any business training at college. It's a big part of the job.

3 Well, to be honest, it's the owners! We see a lot of cats and dogs that are overweight because they're fed too much. People are under pressure at work and in a way, they need their pets more than ever, but they don't know how best to show their love. You know, they'll give their dog a biscuit without thinking that it's actually like us eating a whole packet! And with long work hours, dogs especially don't get enough exercise. This leads to obesity, which can then cause heart disease, breathing difficulties, problems with knees and even psychological issues like depression.

4 Depression in dogs? Of course! There's an enormous amount of evidence that animals experience emotions. Why wouldn't they? Take elephants – they live in close family groups all their lives. Mothers and daughters may stay together for 40 years. When a family member dies, they suffer sadness as we would – obviously! We also know animals suffer stress and pain and that can cause very strange behaviour.



5 Well, there are sprays that can help calm pets and also drugs similar to Prozac that can treat symptoms, but I think they avoid the real issues and can sometimes cause other problems, too. My partner is a pet psychologist and she runs courses to actually change behaviour. We also have to train owners, which can be hard. They often don't want to accept that their own behaviour isn't helping their pet. In some ways, they'd rather see it as a medical problem.

6 Well, they're not very helpful. I mean, of course training is more expensive than drugs in the short term, but it actually solves problems, so is cheaper in the end. Sure, vet bills have gone up, but that's not because we're greedy. We used to earn extra from people buying food and pet toys and so on, but big superstores and the internet have taken away a lot of that income. We've had to replace it by increasing fees. The other thing is, as medicine develops, there's a lot more we can do. In the past, if a dog lost a leg in an accident or had cancer, then we would put it down – which costs $100. These days, we can build a plastic leg and cure some cancers, so if owners have the money or insurance, $10,000 for a treatment is not unusual.

7 Well, we are a business so it varies from year to year, but $60,000–100,000 is fairly typical, which isn't that much when you think of all the training we have to do. Most vets leave college with a $100,000+ debt. Then there are the hours we work and the risks of having a business.

8 The animals, of course!

9 Early in my career I would've said the people, but I've learnt to enjoy that side of things. I'd say it's money – worrying about it, talking about it, getting

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