



#44: The-C word, with Dr Penny Thomas.

Dr Penny Thomas is a specialist veterinary Oncologist. She is a member of the Veterinary Cancer Society and has obtained her Memberships of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists in small animal medicine. Penny regularly participates in continuing education talks to general practitioners. She has a keen interest in haematological cancers and has published papers on multiple myeloma, anal sac cancer in cats and chemotherapy for T cell lymphoma in dogs.

In our conversation with Penny we cover **decision-making around internships**, like whether doing an internship is for you, **what to look for in a good internship programme**, and how to choose the right internship programme. We also talk about **masochistic work cultures**, where working crazy hours is worn like a badge of honour, about helping your clients make **end of life decisions** for their animals, about the risk of having pre-conceived ideas around what is best for our patients without giving our clients ALL of the options and making decisions for them. And of course we have to dig into **what it's like being a veterinary oncologist** - all the good and all the bad and all the stuff that I bet you didn't know.

“You start to really see the end-point in the treatment algorithm. You know exactly where that's going to end, right? There's a certain number of things you can do treatment-wise, and after that there's nothing left. And I really didn't like having to go to people and tell them: There's nothing else I can do for you.”

TIPS ON CHOOSING A GOOD INTERNSHIP

1. **Try to go to a multidisciplinary hospital.** That is more likely to provide you with a well-rounded experience.
2. **Ask what sort of program is on offer.** Don't assume that just because they offer internships that they have a structured programme.
3. **Ask what that programme looks like.** Two reasons for this - first - if they can't answer the question it means that they probably don't have a

good programme in place. (See number 2...), and second - it will help you decide if that programme is for you.

4. Check what the expectations for your roster would be. We know that working 80, 90 hour weeks is just not conducive to a learning environment and it's not conducive to a happy person.

5. Ensure that you'll actually be supervised by a specialist if your ultimate goal is to specialise. If not, your programme might not provide the correct pathway towards specialising.

About Penny and her work: <https://sashvets.com/our-team/dr-penny-thomas/> Chris O'Brian Lifehouse: <https://www.mylifehouse.org.au>

The Delta therapy dog programme: <https://www.deltasociety.com.au/delta-therapy-dogs>

Penny on The Gram: <https://www.instagram.com/pjbbrownsports/>

Shameless podcast: <https://shamelessmediaco.com>

A famous pet with a bucket list: (You have to scroll back to the early days of the feed...) <https://www.instagram.com/lfernwatt/>