**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

**Methods**

***Interviews***

Sentinel veterinarians were contacted by telephone and asked for their willingness to participate in an interview of approximately fifteen minutes duration. A script including primarily open question was prepared (Supplementary Table S1). Depending on the individual responses, specific wording as well as choice and order of questions varied between interviews.

Each veterinarian was asked for permission to record the conversation at the beginning of the interview. The software Audacity was used for recording. Audio files were stored on a password-protected computer after removal of personal identifiers to ensure anonymity of participants. Verbatim protocols were generated for all but two interviews. In one case, we refrained to record the conversation due to time constraints whereas in the other case, the participant refused to give permission for recording. Notes were taken during both interviews and protocols were instantaneously written after the phone call to document as much information as possible.



**Supplementary Figure S1.** The Equinella smartphone (ToughShield R500+, picture adapted from http://www.tough-shield.com/device/r500-2/) with snapshots of the Equinella welcome page. The list of reportable diseases and clinical symptoms is shown in the password-protected area of the website. The use of a responsive design allows the adjustment of the website presentation onto small displays.

**Supplementary Table S1** List of clinical symptoms and diseases that can be reported to Equinella.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Symptoms | Diseases |
| Abortion | *Viral diseases* |
| Anaemia of unknown origin | Borna disease |
| CNS symptoms | EHV-1 |
| Death of unknown origin | EHV-2 |
| Diarrhoea | EHV-3 |
| Fever of unknown origin | EHV-4 |
| Pruritus | EHV-5 |
| Respiratory tract symptoms | Equine influenza |
| Weight loss of unknown origin | Rotavirus infection |
| Other *[free text]* | Other *[free text]* |
|  |  |
|  | *Bacterial diseases* |
|  | Borreliosis |
|  | Clostridia |
|  | Strangles |
|  | Lawsonia intracellularis infection |
|  | Rhodococcus infection |
|  | Other *[free text]* |
|  |  |
|  | *Parasitic diseases* |
|  | Ehrlichiosis |
|  | Mites |
|  | Piroplasmosis |
|  | Other *[free text]* |
|  |  |
|  | *Other diseases* |
|  | Atypical myopathy |
|  | Botulism |
|  | Grass sickness |
|  | Tetanus |
|  | Other *[free text]* |

**Supplementary Table S2** Questions asked during telephone interviews.

|  |
| --- |
| Please tell me of your experiences made with Equinella so far. |
| Have you already made a report? |
| ***If no:*** |
| Can you give any reasons why you have not yet made any reports? |
| How familiar are you with the list of diseases and symptoms that can be reported? |
| ***If yes:*** |
| Did you have any difficulties during reporting? ***If yes:*** What kind of difficulties? |
| How much time did it take? |
| Did you already have a chance to access the information available for sentinel veterinarians in the secured area of the Equinella platform? |
| Generally, we have observed a relatively low reporting frequency so far. What might be a reason from your point of view? |
| What was your motivation to register as a sentinel veterinarian with Equinella?  What is your personal benefit in taking part in Equinella? |
| Did you already report anything using the Equinella smartphone or any other mobile device, e.g. tablet or laptop? |
| ***If no:*** Can you give any reasons why not? |
| ***If yes:*** What were your experiences? |
| Do you consider the possibility to submit reports immediately “on the road” useful? |
| Why have you been interested in getting an Equinella smartphone?  What were your experiences with the Equinella smartphone? |
| How do you think about the possibility to submit reports using a mobile device? Do you consider it as being practical? |

**Supplementary Table S3** Overview of 11 interview participants.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Set** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| **Canton** | A | B | C | B | D | E | F | A | E | C | B |
| **Sex** | F | M | F | F | M | M | M | F | F | F | M |
| **Equine specialisation** | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | Unknown |
| **% of equids in practice** | 40 | 25 | 100 | 70 | 60 | 20 | 50 | 50 | 25 | 100 | Unknown |
| **Participation at practitioner-level** | 100% | 60% | 80% | 50% | 80% | 67% | 90% | 100% | 100% | 87% | 89% |
| **No of reports submitted prior to the interview** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| **Equinella smartphone** | No | No | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **Device used for reporting** | Desktop computer | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | ESP | Desktop computer | Desktop computer | Desktop computer | NA |

Set refers to the time when the interview took place (set 1: May-June 2014, set 2: Nov 2014). F, female; M, male. ESP, Equinella smartphone.