VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS BOARD

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Responsible supply and use of antimicrobials

Policy

Veterinary practitioners should supply and use antimicrobials in a manner consistent with current Australian best practice guidelines and policies. They should maintain current knowledge of issues relating to the prevention of development of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Background

Global authorities recognise antimicrobial resistance as one of the key global health concerns of our time, and the veterinary profession is working alongside human health professionals to address the issue.

Antimicrobials include antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasiticides. Inappropriate use of antimicrobials can lead to the development of resistance of microorganisms and parasites to these drugs. This reduces the effectiveness of antimicrobials in the treatment of human and animal disease.

Poor stewardship of antimicrobials in veterinary medicine may have impacts beyond the health and welfare of an individual animal, for example impacting public health and trade in animals and their products. Antimicrobials may also contaminate the environment where improper disposal of excess or expired antimicrobials occurs.

Guidelines

Veterinarians should maintain current knowledge of issues relating to the prevention of development of antimicrobial resistance, and make use of published therapeutic guidelines.[1]

Veterinary practices should have written protocols describing prudent and responsible use of antimicrobials.

A veterinary practitioner should not supply, use or administer antimicrobials without the prior establishment of a veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR).

Before deciding to supply or use antimicrobials, a veterinary practitioner should satisfy themselves that this use aligns with best practice prescribing guidelines. Veterinarians should also:

- base antibiotic prescriptions on culture and sensitivity findings, where possible
- use first line antibiotics where appropriate
- limit the use of antibiotics ranked highly important to human health

Owners have an important role and share responsibility with the veterinary practitioner to minimise the development of antimicrobial resistance. An owner must administer antimicrobials only as directed by the veterinary practitioner in accordance with the written instructions. Disposal of antimicrobials should be as directed by the veterinary practitioner, or in accordance with written instructions provided by the medication manufacturer.

An owner must not use, administer or request the supply of antimicrobials if a valid VCPR has not been established.

Prescribing Guidelines and Fact Sheets

AIDAP Prescribing Guidelines 2nd edition (dogs and cats)
The University of Melbourne veterinary prescribing guidelines for companion animals, equines and bovines
Prescribing veterinary antibiotics
Safe handling of animals being treated with antibiotics
Veterinary use of antibiotics highly important to human health - fact sheet
AVA Guidelines for veterinary personal biosecurity - infection control guidelines
AIDAP Antibiotic prescribing guidelines for dogs and cats
AIDAP Infection Control Guidelines
Guidelines for Prescribing Authorising and Dispensing Veterinary Medicines
Agriculture Victoria
University of Melbourne - Australian Veterinary Prescribing Guidelines on Antimicrobial Stewardship
University of Minnesota Antimicrobial Resistance learning site
Australian government website on AMR
World Health Organization - Antimicrobial resistance
Australian Veterinary Antimicrobial Stewardship Timeline - 2021 Edition
GRAM book - Guidance for the rational use of antimicrobials
AVA-AMA Antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for pigs
AVA-AMA Antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for poultry
AVA-AMA Antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for sheep
AVA-AMA Antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for dairy cattle
Codex guidelines related to use of veterinary drugs and AMR risk analysis

Other Resources

Australian Government: https://www.amr.gov.au/

Australian Veterinary Association: https://www.ava.com.au/library-resources/other-resources/fighting-antimicrobial-resistance/amr-resources/

AMR Vet Collective: https://www.amrvetcollective.com/home/amr-vet-collective

OIE: https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-do/global-initiatives/antimicrobial-resistance/