



Veterinary *Pharmacist*

March 2005

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader

Well here we are again, as the song goes. The *Veterinary Pharmacist* news letter has been published only twice since 2002; one was produced with the kind help of a sponsor and the other was placed on the web. We are delighted with the assistance given by *The Pharmaceutical Journal* to enable us to return to our original format. It is proposed to produce three editions per year circulated in *The Journal*.

This is a particularly appropriate time for the Veterinary Pharmacists Group's newsletter to return — opportunities for veterinary pharmacy have never been greater. In particular the emerging link with public health fits into our enhanced role in the community. The Marsh and Competition Commission reports have opened the supply chain to us. Although there is unlikely to be a flood of prescriptions for large animals, there may well be a demand for pet medicines. Who knows what might be possible in the future — supplementary (or even independent) prescribing?

The publicity surrounding the reports has certainly raised the profile of veterinary pharmacy and the VPG has been working hard to ensure that its voice is heard by the Government and that the tools of the trade are available for those who wish to take advantage of these new opportunities. For example, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's veterinary pharmacy teaching programme has been revamped into a convenient modular format (see pV3).

This edition of the newsletter brings together a mix of current news, educational items and features. I am always looking for material so please do not be shy and have your say! A big thank you to this issue's contributors, Michael Jepson and Andrew Cairns.

Steven Kayne

Getting involved in animal care

Two areas that provide important opportunities for pharmacists to become involved in veterinary issues are public health and reporting adverse drug reactions.

Public health

The pharmacist is probably the only person on the high street who has a general knowledge about parasite life cycles and the many associated health and hygiene issues. In recent times we have all seen increasing recognition and reference to the pharmacist's expected involvement in public health matters. However, much of this seems to relate only to the Department of Health's concerns with the NHS.

Let us not overlook the fact that many pharmacists are asked to advise on conditions with possible food or animal links. Examples include diarrhoea and some skin conditions, such as ringworm, especially in children.

At least 30 per cent of our clients are likely to have a cat or dog and present the opportunity to tackle various health and hygiene issues, such as advising pregnant women not to handle cat faeces and for them always to wear disposable gloves when dealing with pets.

Cats are the definitive host for the protozoa *Toxoplasma gondii*, which causes the infection toxoplasmosis. Clinical signs can be severe in intermediate hosts such as humans and sheep. A large proportion of the population have been exposed to toxoplasma, as blood tests demonstrate, albeit at sub-clinical levels.

There is much to be gained from making contact with one (or more) of your other local health professionals — the veterinarian. Many vets specialise in treating small animals. They should not be overlooked, just because they are not within the DoH and NHS frame.

Reporting ADRs

Reports by pharmacists of suspected adverse reactions in humans arising from veterinary medicines are always welcomed by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). Analysis of the reports sent in over the past five years show that pharmacists and GPs account for 5 per cent, vets for 7 per cent, the general public for 6 per cent, farmers for 16 per cent and authorised product holders for 55 per cent.

A considerable number of these reports relate to the misuse of flea sprays and the like, presumably often the result of a failure to read labels and not receiving proper advice at the



Some cats may be hosts for *Toxoplasma gondii*

point of supply. What is more, as with suspected adverse drug reactions from human medicines, there is considerable under reporting.

Reporting forms published by the National Office of Animal Health can be obtained from the VMD. The address is: VMD, Woodham Lane, New Haw, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 3NB (tel 01932 336911, fax 01932 336618). Forms are also available in the Veterinary Data Sheet Compendium.

MEETINGS

VPG conference: Paws for Thought

If you want to know more about veterinary pharmacy, attend this conference — veterinary pharmacists will talk about their work

Date: 24 July 2005

Venue: The Whitehouse Hotel, Telford

Contact: Lorraine.Fearon@rpsgb.org
(Tel: 020 7572 2409)



"Puff" the magic parrot

A couple have successfully stopped smoking because of their parrot. They took the parrot to the vet who deduced that a key factor in its unwellness was respiratory distress. After questioning the owners, it became apparent that this had to do with passive smoking. The couple's previous attempts to give up smoking had failed but being faced with the potential demise of their beloved parrot did the trick! How many other pets could motivate smoking cessation one wonders? — *Metro*

Pesticide penalties

Eight poisons used to kill endangered birds of prey, including the buzzard, golden eagle and red kite, will be outlawed in Scotland from March. Under The Possession of Pesticides (Scotland) Order 2005, any person caught with the banned substances will face six months' imprisonment and fines of up to £5,000 unless they can show that they have the chemicals for "legitimate reasons". The poisons are also dangerous to humans and pets and the measures should provide a safeguard against accidental poisoning too.— *Glasgow Herald*

Dogs and accidents

Labradors in Surrey should watch out. Pet insurers PetPartners PLC analysed their most recent 3,000 claims to identify the breeds and regions that appear most often. Labradors and golden retrievers (well known to guzzle things they should not) head the list with alsatians and boxers also featuring in the top 10. Spaniels, often skittish and adventurous, are also prominent with three varieties in the top 10. The research also identified the regions that see the most claims with home county hounds in pole position. — www.petplanet.co.uk/petplanet/news/

Drunk as a . . . cat

Cats do not necessarily prefer milk! A publican was worried when his cat was unable to stand up or walk straight. The cat had become an alcoholic as a result of supping beer from the bar's drip trays and is undergoing detox at a vet's surgery.

Comments on the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005 consultation document

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has called for consultation on its implementation of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005, published in draft form on 5 January. The proposals will create new medicines regulations in line with the latest EU Directive (2004/28/EC) and have been drafted to enable the UK Government to implement the Marsh Report and the findings of the Competition Commission inquiry into the supply of veterinary medicines. The Government accepted both of these reports.

The proposed classifications of medicines for veterinary use are:

- Prescription Only Medicine — Veterinarian (POM-V)
- Prescription Only Medicine — Veterinarian, Pharmacist, Merchant (POM-VPM)
- Non Food Animal Medicine — Veterinarian, Pharmacist, Merchant (NFA-VPM)
- Authorised Veterinary Medicine — General Sales List (AVM-GSL)

Professional issues

The draft document uses familiar terms and also introduces some new ones. The term "under their care" is being retained for animals for which veterinarians can prescribe medicines. The term "clinical assessment" has been introduced in circumstances where we may have expected to see the word "diagnosis", but no definition is offered. Elsewhere in the document the term "precise prior diagnosis" is used.

Definitions for these are important for pharmacists who wish to carry out diagnostic tests to determine, for example, the nature of parasite burdens in flocks or herds of food chain animals.

Records

The draft regulations include recording practices. For example, details (including the batch number) of any medicine supplied on prescription, including those medicines supplied for pets, must be kept for at least five years. In addition, at least once a year, retailers will be required to carry out a detailed audit in which incoming and outgoing veterinary medicinal products should be reconciled with products currently held in stock and any discrepancies recorded.

Supply issues

In terms of supply issues, the draft regulations abolish the supply of some veterinary medicines (POM-V and POM-VPM) by post. These medicines must be supplied in person to the person who intends to use it or his representative. Supply must be by a suitably qualified person and the regulations state: "The sale must take place in premises approved by the Secretary of State as being suitable for the storage and supply of veterinary medicinal products."

Thoughts

Each of the headings above contains issues that require interpretation or at least an understanding of the intention of the legislators. For example, in the case of stock audits a requirement is made that the stock shall be "reconciled" with sales.

Does this mean that, in the face of many thousands of transactions, the pharmacist will be criminalised for clerical errors that cannot be traced except at considerable cost?

The Government is continuing its consultation on the document until 5 May. The consultation document can be accessed at www.vmd.gov.uk/consultations/vmlconsultation/vmldraftregs.pdf

Emergency aid under way for tsunami animals

Disaster relief teams from the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), an international United Nations recognised charity representing nearly 500 member societies worldwide, are co-ordinating emergency aid efforts for the animal victims of tsunami-struck parts of South East Asia.

WSPA veterinarians and animal care experts are working with local animal groups in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand to help abandoned livestock and companion animals, by supporting efforts to provide food and veterinary treatment and to establish temporary shelters.

In addition, an experienced WSPA veterinarian has recently been dispatched to India.

Veterinary facilities have been destroyed in affected areas and animal populations practically decimated. Animal refugee camps to take in surviving animals in need of care are being set up and mobile veterinary clinics are already operational in the region. In Sri Lanka, hundreds of dogs have already been vaccinated against diseases that can spread in the aftermath of disasters.

The WSPA is concerned that the effects of this disaster could have serious long-term consequences for a region with an emerging animal welfare movement that was already struggling to contain the illegal trade in wildlife and diseases like rabies. — www.petplanet.co.uk/petplanet/news

How to get a qualification in veterinary pharmacy

Did you notice the photograph in *The Pharmaceutical Journal* (18 September 2004, p400), of a group of remarkably relaxed and smiling pharmacists, all of whom were studying various elements of pet health care and public health? They were part of the 2004 cohort of pharmacists signed up for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's postgraduate programme in veterinary pharmacy.

Options

For pharmacists interested in taking advantage of this programme, there is the choice of either going for the two module Certificate in Companion Animal Healthcare or the more demanding Diploma in Veterinary Pharmacy. Both involve self-study but are perfectly feasible while in full-time employment. In addition, the diploma can be extended over more than one year where necessary. The modular components build naturally on the pharmacy qualifying courses and those who qualified some years ago should not be deterred.

If you are interested, now is the time to consider joining this year's group who will benefit from this interesting field (pardon the pun) of study, which has some relevance to



Michael Jepson (left) and Steven Kayne, joint directors of the veterinary pharmacy teaching programme

most areas of pharmacy practice, especially community.

For CPD purposes, the Society's veterinary pharmacy programme is flexible and modest in cost. Two modules are designed to be studied by distance learning, supported by a new 600-page textbook entitled 'Veterinary pharmacy' and by an 86-page workbook. These two modules are designed to meet the needs of community pharmacists who are likely to have the opportunity of being more involved with the distribution of authorised veterinary medicines and the fulfilling of veterinary prescriptions when the new legislative opportunities are taken.

Satisfactorily completing the assessed assignments and workbook for the two distance learning modules will lead to the award of the certificate. To ensure that any changes since publication of the textbook are adequately covered, a daytime workshop on a Saturday is arranged for pharmacists based in Britain, while an appropriate alternative is available for overseas participants.

For those wishing to embrace the wider elements of veterinary pharmacy and gain the Society's Diploma in Veterinary Pharmacy (which grants use of the suffix DVetPharm), it is necessary to study two further modules, which focus on livestock health and husbandry and various other aspects of veterinary pharmacy, including zoonoses, wound management and economics and business management.

An intensive residential week at Harper Adams University College in Newport, Shropshire, one of Britain's leading agricultural colleges with its own range of livestock units, forms the foundation for the study of these two modules. A dissertation and evidence of practical experience are also required. In addition to the dissertation,

assessment is by written examination and a practice oriented oral examination.

The diploma has acquired considerable standing and there are over 100 holders in the UK, Canada, Ireland, Kenya, Malawi and New Zealand. Many are able to maintain their interest in community pharmacy while others are employed in specialised rural pharmacy practice, industry and regulatory affairs.

Costs

What does each course cost? A big advantage in 2005 is that the course fees are frozen at the 2004 level. If you wish to study modules 1 and 2 for the certificate, the fee is £500. There is a modest charge of about £27 for food etc on the workshop day. If you register for the diploma (all four modules) the fee is £800 and the six-nights full-board residential week cost is £370.

Resources

- A four-page leaflet about the courses is available on the RPSGB web site: (www.rpsgb.org) and several informative articles providing further background information have been published in *The Pharmaceutical Journal* (13 March 2004, pp320-2, 326-7). These can be found at www.pharmj.com/cgi-bin/empower
- The textbook, Kayne SB, Jepson M. *Veterinary Pharmacy*. London: Pharmaceutical Press; 2004 is available from the Pharmaceutical Press and online booksellers.
- Further details of the course programme are available from Ms Lorraine Fearon, secretary to the Veterinary Pharmacists' Group, RPSGB, 1 Lambeth High Street London SE1 7JN (tel 0207 572 2409, fax 0207 572 2501, e-mail lorraine.fearon@rpsgb.org)

What the modules cover

Module 1: Companion animals and public health Pet health care overview, related public health issues and inter-professional communication; insect and vermin control; role of the Food Standards Agency etc; zoonoses (monitoring, recording and prevention); introduction to notifiable diseases, animal movement and relevant legislation.

Module 2: Companion animal health care Ectoparasite and endoparasite control, nutrition and obesity, skin conditions and grooming; cat and dog infectious diseases and vaccines; equine health; health care in birds (including racing and show pigeons), small and exotic animals; management of veterinary wounds; market and supply.

Module 3: Veterinary pharmacy UK agriculture, influences, changes and environmental issues; dairy hygiene and mastitis; legislation and veterinary medicines; economics and business management; farm management plans; veterinary farm instruments; veterinary wound care.

Module 4: Livestock health and husbandry (primarily cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry) Ecto- and endo- parasites and control; notifiable diseases, zoonoses, infectious diseases; livestock vaccines and programmes; nutrition, metabolic and deficiency diseases.



Back row, from left: Michael Jepson, Gordon Appelbe (vice-chairman), Rob Morris, Sue Kilby, Steven Kayne, Graham Phillips
Front row, from left: Carey Halls, Sarah Cockbill, Douglas Davidson, Andrew Cairns (chairman), Phil Jobson

VPG committee members

Mr Andrew Cairns (chairman)
Dr Gordon Appelbe (vice-chairman)
Dr Sarah Cockbill
Mr Douglas Davidson
Mrs Carey Halls (NPA observer)
Dr Michael Jepson
Dr Steven Kayne
Professor Bob Michell (Council member)
Mr John Millward (RPSGB observer)
Mr Rob Morris
Mr Graham Phillips (Council member)

IN BRIEF

The dangers of Teflon

A housewife inadvertently killed her four pet birds by baking a meat pie for dinner. The probably overheated non-stick surface of the Teflon baking tray emitted fumes that irreversibly damaged the respiratory systems of Charlie the parrot, Molly the cockatiel and budgies Billy and Greg. Advice: keep birds out of the kitchen!

Current knowledge

The Veterinary Record (8 March 2003) reports a case of probable raisin toxicity in a five-year old Hungarian vizsla after it had apparently ingested about 450g of raisins. Symptoms included vomiting and diarrhoea. Unfortunately, following acute renal failure, the dog had to be put down. Related reports of acute renal failure following raisin and grape ingestion have been reported in the US. Conclusion: keep the dog out of the kitchen, too!

Chairman's report on recent VPG activities

The past few months have seen much activity by the Veterinary Pharmacists' Group (VPG). Two quadripartite meetings of professional organisations were hosted by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society in December 2004 and January 2005. They were attended by representatives of the VPG, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the National Office of Animal Health (NOAH). The director of policy of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) also attended.

The discussions covered broad agenda, were found to be valuable to all parties and were useful in achieving an understanding of ways in which pharmacists and vets might work together to the benefit of animal health and welfare.

Classification of medicines for animals

The Society invited the chief executive and the director of policy of the VMD to a meeting at Lambeth on 21 December. Nick Wood, President of the Society, David Pruce, director of practice and quality improvement, Sue Kilby, head of practice, and two members of the VPG attended this. The concern of the Society at the omission of a pharmacy-only category for veterinary medicines was expressed. The Society also made a request for clarity on the standards for training to be applied for prescribers of POM-VPM (Veterinarian/Pharmacist/Merchant) medicines. (See notes on the new Regulations on pS2.)

Mrs Kilby and I met with a representative of the Animal Health Distributors Association (AHDA) to discuss the potential reclassifications of medicines from POM-V to POM-VPM. The VMD is now inviting requests for reclassifications. AHDA's main in-

terest is in food chain medicines. It is keen that we align ourselves with it on these and it will support us in any requests we might make for reclassifications of pet medicines.

Pet Health Council

In December, I also attended a meeting of the Pet Health Council (PHC). The PHC is keen to promote pharmacy as a source of supply for pet medicines as well as a source of advice on animal welfare and how to reduce zoonotic risk.

Schools of pharmacy

Michael Jepson, VPG committee member, has corresponded with Alison Ewing, Council member, about the inclusion of veterinary pharmacy in the outline indicative core syllabus for the MPharm course. There is concern that not enough schools of pharmacy are including veterinary pharmacy in their core teaching syllabuses.

Other meetings

Other activities of VPG members:

- Mrs Kilby and I represented the Society at the two stakeholders meetings held by the VMD in November and December 2004
- Dr Jepson attended a meeting of the Central Mastitis Review Group in October 2004
- Phil Jobson represented the Society at meetings of the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture group (RUMA)
- Gordon Appelbe and I have represented the Society on the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs Working Group on Farm Health Planning during 2004 and will continue to do so this year — *Andrew Cairns*