

English Pharmacy Board 2 July 2008

PUBLIC BUSINESS

VPG Proposals for Undergraduate Curriculum

Purpose

To consider the Veterinary Pharmacists' Group proposals for the undergraduate curriculum.

Strategic objective domain

The public recognise and use pharmacists as the professionals with expertise in medicines

Action

- i. to note and discuss the report and to refer to Education Committee for consideration.

1. Background

A number of veterinary medicines have been reclassified. This enables pharmacies to be able to stock and supply such medicines in much the same way as P medicines are supplied to humans. It seems likely that this trend will continue and that the number of pet medicines available for supply through pharmacies will increase.

Currently, only a small proportion of community pharmacies stock pet medicines but a number of multiples are taking on this market and it is possible that, in the future, as more products become available, the majority of community pharmacies will hold such stock.

Not all community pharmacists have an understanding of pet medicines and pet health. Therefore, as this is an expanding market we would like to see a certain amount of veterinary medicines included in the undergraduate curriculum to ensure that all pharmacists have a sound and basic understanding of this topic area.

Community pharmacists, like all pharmacists, should only work within their competence. Most pharmacists currently do not have any training in relation to animal diseases; therefore, if they dispense a veterinary prescription, or supply a pet medicine, they are not working within their competence. The training provided also needs to be verifiably tested, so students would need to be examined on the veterinary aspects.

2. Undergraduate Curriculum

The VPG think that the undergraduate curriculum should include the following main topics:

- Zoonoses – both of food and animal origin. The EU has expressed concern at the poor levels of recording and reporting zoonoses. Community pharmacists in particular have a role to play and it is important that they have a basic understanding of the issues.
- Common ecto- and endo-parasitic infection, especially those requiring routine prophylactic control in companion animals (cats, dogs, horses and

acing pigeons). Pharmacists could be an accessible information source on the 'high street' with a general knowledge of parasitic life cycles.

Knowledge of when to signpost / refer pet owners.

- Quality and formulation of veterinary medicines and understanding of the requirements associated with distribution categories.
- Knowledge of what is required in order to dispense a veterinary prescription such as labelling and record keeping requirements.
- Pharmacology - a basic introduction to pharmacological differences between species with particular reference to sedatives, NSAIDs, antibiotics and anaesthetics.
- Legal and professional responsibilities and implications from veterinary medicine classifications, the 'cascade' and problems of supply by pharmacists. Supply via other routes such as SQPs
- Knowledge of the main bodies involved in veterinary medicines such as NOAH, AMTRA etc

These topics proposed would be best studied in either year 3 or optimally in year 4. It should be emphasised that specialist expertise by existing lecturers in schools of pharmacy is not necessarily required as the VPG committee and group members are able to offer assistance and guidance. Supportive literature and audio visual aids are also increasingly available.

It is suggested that the proposed topics could be covered in 6-10 hours as part of the core undergraduate curriculum.

3. Remit of English Pharmacy Board

Making recommendations on the content of the pharmacy core curriculum are outwith the remit of the Board. This report has been referred to the Board following the presentation by Rob Morris at the meeting on 16 April 2008 and it is suggested that the Board refer the report to the Education Committee for consideration.

Action

- i. to note and discuss the report and to refer to Education Committee for consideration.

Heidi Wright
Head of Practice