Published minutes

Veterinary Products Committee

PUBLISHED MINUTES

A summary of the minutes of the Veterinary Products Committee Meeting held on 3 February 2022 by video conference.

Chairman – Professor Malcolm Bennett BVSc, PhD, MRCVS, FRCPath, FHEA

Secretary – Chris Abbott

Members

Mrs H Ballantyne
Dr R Bennett
Dr M Bowen
Mr M Clark
Dr K Ganapathy
Mr M Jelley
Mrs F Kidd
Dr D Killick
Dr E Kubiak
Dr D Mackay
Mr R Soutar
Mr J Statham
Ms A Tarr
Mr E Vega
Prof J Weeks
Mr M White

Officials: may be present for all or part of the meeting or for specific agenda items.

VMD

Mr G Hall
Dr M Bos
Mr M Escribano
Dr G Clarke
Dr R Cooney

Published minutes

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2. Declaration of interests

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2021

4. Matters arising from the minutes
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5. UK Pharmacovigilance Report for August to November 2021

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9. Horizon scanning

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Published minutes

1. Announcements and apologies for absence

1.1. The Chairman reminded Members and Officials that all papers, unless otherwise indicated, and discussions of the Committee are confidential. No information relating to the proceedings of the Committee or papers presented to the Committee may be divulged to any third party.

1.2. The Chairman welcomed four new members to the Committee: Dr Mark Bowen, Michael Clark, Dr Kannan Ganapathy and Fiona Kidd.

1.3. Apologies for absence had been received from Dr Burnett and Dr Chang.

2. Declaration of interests

2.1. The Chairman reminded Members of the procedure for declaring interests at VPC meetings. The interests declared were noted.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2021

3.1. The Committee had cleared the minutes of the May meeting by correspondence and the summary minutes were available on the VPC website (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterinary-products-committee/about/membership).

4. Matters arising from the minutes

4.1. Minute 5.1.1: Working group on ectoparasiticides

4.1.1 It was noted that the Environment Agency's report on their findings in regards to the sources of pollution of waterways is due to be published soon and academic research into contamination by substances found in ectoparasiticides is ongoing. The pharmaceutical industry is also doing a lot of work in this area and it is clear that they and regulators have responsibility for finding solutions together.

4.2. Minute 5.1.2: Unauthorised use of medicines on horses

4.2.1 VMD is looking into several reports they have received on the unauthorised use of small animal products on horses and asked that members pass on any further evidence they find.

4.3. Minute 5.3.1: Anthelmintic resistance

4.3.1 Members had criticised a widely published article by the pharmaceutical industry which they felt had encouraged the excessive use of anthelmintics for dogs. The Chairman would draft a response to NOAH for VMD to review.

4.4. Minute 12.4: Relationship with Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs)

4.4.1 Following a question raised at the last meeting, VMD confirmed that it maintains strong relationships with the CVOs in the UK and that it actively engages with them on issues of specific interest.

5. The UK Pharmacovigilance report for August to November 2021

5.1. **Introduction**

5.1.1 The Committee considered and commented upon the Pharmacovigilance Report for August to November, which was presented by the head of the VMD's Pharmacovigilance Unit, Miguel Escribano.

5.1.2 He explained that the format of these reports might change in the future because of the implementation of a new IT system in the VMD, which might allow for different types of analysis of the data; and also, to accommodate changes on the way pharmacovigilance signals are registered in the EU. Any suggestions to improve the format of these reports is welcome.

5.1.3 Dr Kubiak asked if it was possible to add for how long the medicines concerned in the adverse events have been available in the market.

5.1.4 Mr Bowen asked if the species of the animal(s) affected by the adverse reaction could be included in the reports.

5.1.5 Dr Killick questioned what is the meaning of products that are highlighted as being monitored and for how long these are monitored. Mr Escribano clarified that products that are monitored are effectively being put "on alert" on the database, because we have identified a concern with the use of this product. This is not sufficiently important to take immediate action, but it is important that we continue to monitor this issue so we can include this concern on our next benefit:risk assessment for that particular product. Alerts that are ongoing for a period of 12 months and for which no similar signal has been detected during this period are removed from our signal log. It was explained that the pharmacovigilance team keeps a log of both the products that are being monitored and of the regulatory outcomes such as variations to the product literature that derive from pharmacovigilance activities.

5.1.6 Dr Killick also asked if some summary statistics could be provided with the human adverse event reports to have a better overview of the number of cases that are affecting users of animal medicines.

5.1.7 VMD welcomed all the suggestions to improve the pharmacovigilance reports that are sent to VPC and will try to improve them for the next meeting.

5.2. **Suspected adverse event reports in humans**

5.2.1 No particular comments or questions were raised regarding suspected adverse event reports in humans.

5.3. **Suspected adverse event reports in animals**

5.3.1 No particular comments or questions were raised regarding suspected adverse event reports in animals.

5.4. **Environmental incidents**

5.4.1 No particular comments or questions were raised regarding environmental incidents.

6. Evaluation of VMD assessment reports: results

6.1. The Committee reviewed the summary of members' evaluation of four products selected at the last meeting for its annual quality exercise and agreed to give the VMD's assessments an overall substantial rating, finding that they had been carried out to an adequate and effective standard. It particularly congratulated VMD on the work it had done dealing with new technologies. VMD will respond in writing after the meeting to comments and questions raised by members.

Action Point 3

6.2. VMD reported that it aims to become a global centre for product assessment and has established working relationships with Canada and New Zealand to jointly look at applications.

7. Legislation update

7.1. VMD will be holding informal workshops with stakeholders to set out its current thinking regarding changes to the Veterinary Medicines Regulations before the public consultation is held later this year and will invite members to attend. The new EU regulations for veterinary medicines and medicated feed do now apply in the EU.

7.2. Mr Soutar noted that products used under the cascade for fish require long withdrawal periods and asked if any amendments to the legislation in this area will be made. VMD agreed to consider further.

7.3. Mr Statham highlighted concerns about maintaining the supply of analgesics and anaesthetics in the livestock sector and Mr White noted that obstacles to availability of products for pigs will have a big impact and could lead to some products being withdrawn. VMD confirmed it is looking into a number of issues which can adversely affect supply of medicines with the aim of maintaining availability.

8. Items for information

8.1. The following items for information are publicly available:

8.1.1 The Veterinary Medicines Directorate Product Information Database (http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/).

8.2. The following items for information are not publicly available:

8.2.1 Report to the VPC on new ATC applications.

8.2.2 Review of Special Import activity.

8.2.2.1. Members queried the large amount of several products that were being imported, including products for cats, wildlife and cattle. VMD said that unusual requests for large amounts are picked up at monthly review meetings and could be due to a need to tackle emergency issues or possibly an error by the applicant in which case the certificate is reissued. Overall responsibility remains with the prescribing vet.

8.2.2.2. Members noted that the quantities of vaccine stated in the reports were expressed in number of doses and also in millimetres. VMD will look into whether it is possible to standardise this information and will report back on all the issues raised at the next meeting.

8.2.3 Report to the VPC on new MA applications granted.

8.2.4 Report from the Scientific Secretariat and the Biological Committee.

9. Horizon scanning: issues for consideration

9.1. A number of topics were suggested for consideration at future meetings, including medicines which reduce environmental impact, emergency readiness, interactions with big data sources, food security in a global market and borderline medicinal products. VMD also said that it may need to refer more issues to VPC, such as how to deal with novel products and problems which arise with existing products, as it could no longer seek advice from EU bodies.

9.2. There was now an opportunity to review what value VPC can bring to VMD and it was agreed to hold a planning session during the May meeting for re-evaluating the Committee's remit. Members were encouraged to attend at the VMD's offices if possible although it was recognised that the option to join remotely by video was appreciated by some members. The secretariat would circulate the Committee's current terms of reference for information.

9.3. An induction meeting for the new members would be held at VMD after the May meeting.

10. Any other business

10.1. It was noted that VMD has been providing several useful training courses for stakeholders and that a course for veterinary dispensing managers will be held in May.

10.2. VMD reported that a recent enforcement case involving the illegal import of large amounts of unauthorised amoxicillin in Northern Ireland had resulted in a successful prosecution.

11. Date of next meeting

11.1. The next meeting of the VPC will be on 26 May 2022 at the VMD, Woodham Lane, New Haw, Addlestone, Surrey.