

PHARMACOLOGY CURRICULUM RENEWAL

It was an enormous pleasure to attend the CVE weekend devoted to “Pharmacology. Logical Evidence Based Medicine” on 6 - 7 December 2008. Seven world-class clinicians (Drs Aitor Arteaga, Jody Braddock, Georgina Child, Linda Fleeman, Graham Swinney, Adam Toyer and Sanaa Zaki) presented highly practical approaches to the evidence impacting the use of more than 150 veterinary medicines. The weekend certainly underlined in my mind the central importance of not only a broad knowledge of pharmacology but the essential pharmacological and clinical characteristics of selected drugs. In fact I was present at the weekend representing the ACVSc Chapter of Pharmacology and at the generous invitation of the CVE. I have been working as a pharmacologist for several decades and have a special interest in pharmacology teaching and learning. The Chapter of Pharmacology is working closely with each of the teachers of pharmacology at the 7 (soon to be 8) veterinary schools in Australia and New Zealand to explore what would constitute a pharmacology curriculum for the 21st century.

There were around 150 participants at the CVE weekend on Pharmacology and I took advantage of this clearly (but positively) biased group to conduct a survey focused on what was perceived as the greatest strengths of undergraduate pharmacology courses and the most important needs of veterinary practitioners. In summary there were 62 respondents to the survey from 10 universities in countries on 3 continents. Most respondents were small animal practitioners but there were also academics, wildlife specialists and a number in mixed practice or in industry.

The survey provided a wealth of experiences and recommendations. One strong theme was the need to improve the interface between basic and clinical pharmacology.

Judging from the discussions at each break and the high attendance at every session the pharmacology course captivated extreme interest and provided innumerable practical messages.

Back to curriculum renewal. If you have any thoughts or recommendations on what you feel is needed in a cutting edge pharmacology curriculum or for pharmacology continuing veterinary education I would be very pleased to receive them. 2009 promises to be a key year in advancing developments in curriculum refinement.

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