

WSAVA List of Essential Medicines for Dogs and Cats

In a [survey](#) we conducted in 2016, more than 75% of our members said that a lack of access to veterinary drugs adversely affected their ability to address the needs of their patients. 20% cited it as a 'serious restriction' on their ability to provide adequate veterinary care. As a global association representing more than 200,000 companion veterinarians, we are campaigning to resolve this long-standing and complex issue, which affects thousands of companion animal veterinarians around the world, as well as veterinarians working with production animals and medical doctors.

The obstacles our members face in accessing veterinary medicines have far-reaching implications, not just for their patients whose welfare can be jeopardised, but also for the members themselves and their colleagues, who suffer huge frustration as they are unable to provide the standard of veterinary care they have been trained to deliver. For a profession, already facing serious mental health problems, this is an unnecessary additional challenge.

Our campaign has included a number of elements:

- In 2016, we lobbied against the re-scheduling of [ketamine](#) and are pleased to note that this is off the agenda – for now at least. We keep the situation under review
- In 2016, our Global Pain Council published a [Position Statement](#) outlining what we consider to be the minimum pharmacological needs to effectively manage pain in dogs and cats
- In 2018, we created the [Therapeutics Guidelines Group](#) (TGG). Its mission is to ensure best practices for the selection and use of medicines including their quality, availability and their responsible use in companion animals under the concept of One Health
- During 2019, the WSAVA published two Position Statements. The first set out the issues underlying inequalities in access to veterinary medicines globally and the [second](#) highlighted the importance of regulatory convergence and harmonization as a contributing solution. These Position Statements have been co-signed by virtually every other international veterinary association, including those working with production animals, as well as by HealthforAnimals, the animal health trade association.

As the next step in our campaign, the TGG is proud to present the first global List of Essential Medicines for Dogs and Cats. We hope that it will facilitate veterinarians in providing effective preventive care and treatment of the most frequent and important diseases in these animals, leading to an improvement in animal health and welfare. It should also facilitate the regulatory oversight of veterinary pharmaceuticals by supporting the availability of the basic drugs a veterinarian requires in clinical practice. Finally, we hope that it will support pharmacovigilance while mitigating the growing market for counterfeit products.

The WSAVA List of Essential Medicines for Dogs and Cats has undergone extensive peer-review by global experts and stakeholders and includes core and complementary essential





medicines, listed alphabetically either by drug category or organ system/specialty. The definitions and criteria for inclusion/exclusion are based on a similar list of essential medicines for human medicine by the World Health Organization¹.

We invite comments and feedback to the WSAVA Secretariat at yourwsava@wsava.org. As part of its remit, the TGG will revise the contents every three years to ensure that it is fully up to date.

Guidelines for using the WSAVA List of Essential Medicines for Dogs and Cats

The WSAVA List of Essential Medicines for Dogs and Cats is based on the following definition: **Essential medicines are those that satisfy the primary health care and welfare needs of the small animal population.** It focuses primarily on the needs of dogs and cats.

Medicines are presented in alphabetical order, divided by either drug category (anesthetics, analgesics, immunomodulators, oncology drugs, sedatives, vaccines, antiparasitics and antimicrobials, including antibacterial, antifungal, antiprotozoal and antiviral drugs) or organ system/specialty (cardiorespiratory and renal, endocrinology, gastrointestinal, neurology, ophthalmology or reproduction). Cross-reference between a drug category and an organ system is acknowledged where appropriate.

The WSAVA List of Essential Medicines for Dogs and Cats should be adapted in accordance to specific regional or national needs and conditions. Individuals should be also aware of potential different concentrations and formulations of each compound/medicine, and possible drug combinations present in a commercial product.

It should not be used as a reference for dosage regimens, drug interactions, indications or contra-indications, adverse effects or description of pharmacologic effects. It does not describe what medicines require monitoring, specific means of disposal/elimination/record keeping or follow-up consultations and should not be used as guidance for therapy.

¹ <https://www.who.int/medicines/publications/essentialmedicines/en/>

