

COVID-19 - An update for WSAVA Members

Week ending March 27, 2020

We recognize the additional strain that the COVID-19 pandemic is putting on our members and hope that this e-shot will be helpful in updating you on new developments and highlighting useful information.

The COVID-19 emergency gives us, as veterinarians and as a global community, a unique responsibility to uphold animal welfare and to support our medical colleagues. Let's work together to share our knowledge and skills for the betterment of both human and animal health.

Dear Member Representatives

We are living through an extraordinary event impacting the lives of people and their pets globally. In many countries across the world, life is changing daily as governments combat the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognized the potential impact on veterinary practices, pets and pet owners early on and our One Health, Scientific, Vaccination and Animal Wellness and Welfare Committees have been working hard to keep you informed via our Advisory and the creation of our COVID-19 Resource Hub – details below. We have also communicated with the media globally, reinforcing the message that there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be caught from our pets. Going forward we will also provide updates via e-shot when there is important news to share.

This week, a key issue faced by our members has been achieving recognition that our services fall into the category of essential medical care. Colleagues around the world report that they are delivering only emergency care under protocols for client and pet access to veterinary premises. In countries under 'lock down' it is vital that veterinary practices remain accessible for urgent medical care and we have joined other veterinary bodies in calling for governmental recognition of the essential service that we provide.

The science of COVID-19 progresses with the publication of papers describing the virus and its receptor and hypothesizing on the likely animal origin of SARS-COV-2 into the human population. In Hong Kong, where pets belonging to owners diagnosed with COVID-19 have been precautionarily quarantined, information has been released on the second dog diagnosed as positive after contact with an infected human owner. In an excellent response by Professor Malik Peiris, Chair in Virology, Hong Kong University, it has become clear that the second dog has also now tested negative for the virus by PCR. Professor Peiris has emphasized that although these two dogs might have been infected by the virus, neither had COVID-19 disease or was clinically ill. Professor Peiris has re-iterated the advice given previously that there is currently no evidence that dogs can transmit the virus to other dogs or to humans.

In response to questions from many of our colleagues, the Vaccination Guidelines Group has released a document giving advice the implications of not being able to access routine vaccination.

For colleagues in Brazil, where there has been confusion over the canine enteric coronavirus vaccine, Co-chair of our Scientific Committee and VGG member, Professor Mary Marcondes, has produced a short video in Portuguese, explaining the differences between coronaviruses and why it is inappropriate to consider that the enteric coronavirus vaccine might be relevant to SARS-COV-2.

Both of these resources are available in the COVID-19 Resource Hub.

To end on a positive note, this week has also seen stories emerging of the veterinary profession co-ordinating the transfer of ventilators from veterinary to human hospitals to increase their capacity to deal with COVID-19 patients. This heart-warming response is an excellent example of the One Health philosophy that is so strongly supported by WSAVA.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their hard work in preparing the Advisory and COVID-19 Resource Hub and we hope they are useful to you in these challenging times.

*Emeritus Professor Michael J. Day
Chairman, WSAVA Vaccination Guidelines Group
Executive Board Liaison, WSAVA One Health Committee
WSAVA Honorary Treasurer*

STOP PRESS

The WSAVA One Health and Scientific Committees are collecting more information about the cat in Belgium living with a person with COVID-19 that was reported to be RT-PCR positive and clinically ill. Please look out for a more detailed update on this next week. To date, we confirm that there is still no information proving that SARS-CoV-2 infection in a dog or cat can be passed on to other animals or to humans.

COVID-19 - Resources to help you

Advice and educational content are available to download in a variety of languages

Our COVID-19 resource hub contains a wealth of resources to help you and your clients. We encourage you to check back often because we are updating it regularly.

[Visit the WSAVA COVID-19 resource hub here](#)

COVID-19- Share your story

We want to know how it is affecting your practice

If you have a COVID-19 story you'd like to share – perhaps an example of One Health in action or of how your practice is adapting to the crisis - or if you'd like to explain how the virus is affecting veterinary practice in your country, please tell us.

Please contact [Emma van Rooijen](#) with your story.

On behalf of the WSAVA Secretariat,

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Vision Statement: All companion animals worldwide receive veterinary care that ensures their optimal health and welfare

Mission Statement: To advance the health and welfare of companion animals worldwide through an educated, committed and collaborative global community of veterinary peers



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