

## World Small Animal Veterinary Association

### Pain Committee

### Terms of Reference

#### **Context**

The ability to experience pain is universally shared by all mammals, including companion animals, and as members of the veterinary healthcare team it is our moral and ethical duty to mitigate this suffering to the best of our ability. This begins by evaluating for pain at every patient contact. However, and despite advances in the recognition and treatment of pain, there remains a gap between its occurrence and its successful management; the inability to accurately diagnose pain and limitations in, and/or comfort with, the analgesic modalities available remain root causes.

#### **Vision**

An empowered, motivated, and globally unified veterinary profession that effectively recognizes and minimizes pain prevalence and impact.

#### **Mission**

To raise global awareness and provide a call to action based upon the understanding that all animals are sentient and can, therefore, feel pain and suffer from it. The Pain Committee (PC) strives to elevate the level of confidence and competence in recognising and managing pain in small animals.

#### **Goals**

- i) develop pain assessment and treatment guidelines having universal relevance and maintain their currency.
- ii) develop programs of education that promote improved awareness of animal pain and its management, taking into account regional differences in attitude, education and available analgesic modalities.
- lii) build capability and capacity in assessing and managing animal pain internationally, through the supported development of talent.

#### **Pain Committee Membership**

The core committee will be comprised of individuals with expertise in the area of pain assessment and management, ideally representing the different regions reflected in the WSAVA membership, as well as the different species encompassed by the association's "small animals" designation. The membership of the PC will be comprised largely of individuals with a predominant clinical background. Membership numbers are to be

determined by the committee based on need, informed by budgeting realities. The committee shall not be less than 5 members at any time.

The WSAVA Executive Board (EB) will appoint one of its members to be a liaison with the PC. The committee chair will be one of the PC members, elected by the committee, and ideally should have served on the committee for at least 2 years. The chair shall hold the position for a maximum of 3 years, to be voted in each year by the rest of the committee.

Nominations for membership must comply with the Nominations and Selection Process for Membership of WSAVA Committees, Working Groups and Specialist Committees. Member terms will be for 3 years with the ability to be re-appointed once. This 3 year period will include a probation period of 6 months whereby committee members who do not attend and contribute to the monthly meetings as judged by the chair will be asked to step down from the committee.

The PC recognizes that employment in the veterinary pharmaceutical industry could be a potential conflict of interest for members of the committee and this will be taken into consideration when choosing new members.

#### Obligations of the Pain Committee

- a. To develop Pain Assessment and Management Guidelines for all small animals, beginning with the dog and cat, but then expanded to other domesticated small animals, including small mammals, birds, and reptiles.
- b. To ensure these Guidelines take into account regional variation in availability and access to various analgesic modalities.
- c. To work towards broad dissemination and acceptance of the Guidelines throughout the world.
- d. To revisit the protocols from time to time to ensure they reflect current pain assessment and treatment knowledge, including information about pain assessment and emerging therapeutic modalities.
- e. To promote the enshrinement of pain assessment as the 4<sup>th</sup> vital sign and part of every patient assessment.
- f. To develop continuing education lectures/programs that are targeted and relevant to a range of audiences and stakeholders, based on a and b above
- g. To develop a speaker bank of individuals with expertise in the field of clinical pain assessment and management who ascribe to the principles set out in the Guidelines and associated tools.
- h. To promote valid clinical tools of relevance and utility for veterinary practitioners in clinical practice throughout the world.

- i. To work towards broad translation of both the Guidelines and associated protocols.
- j. To assist with the development and/or implementation of WSAVA position statements and/or lobbying efforts with respect to proper pain assessment and management globally.
- k. To act as an advisory body to the WSAVA Executive Board where issues of pain assessment and management arise.
- l. To contemplate and/or forward to the WSAVA leadership other ways of accomplishing the PC Vision and Mission statement.
- m. To consider liaising with other WSAVA committees and/or standardization projects where issues related to pain assessment and management are of mutual interest.
- n. To ensure PC members fulfill the duties listed above. Should a member fail in their responsibilities, the PC will work in concert with the EB to rectify, including the possibility of member replacement.

#### 5. Other Rights and Obligations of the Committee

An annual report will be provided. Reports on the activities and recommendations or suggestions of the PC will be provided to the WSAVA EB by way of minutes and additional written and oral reports as appropriate. The committee will provide an annual budget, and will assist the WSAVA Secretariat with identifying potential PC sponsors.

#### 6. Arrangements for meetings

- a. The PC shall meet as needed by teleconference, but at least once a year. If WSAVA funding permits, and such a meeting is deemed desirable, the committee will meet in person, ideally at the WSAVA World Congress, but other venues that better reflect the needs of the PC will also be considered. At least one member of the PC, preferably the chair, must be present at committee events held at the World Congress.
- b. Minutes of the meeting shall be recorded and agreed upon by the committee prior to presentation to the WSAVA EB.
- c. Minutes of the final decisions reached after presentation to the EB shall be presented as a written report to the General Assembly annually.
- d. A majority of PC members present during a teleconference or face-to-face meeting shall constitute a committee quorum.