

Leading Veterinary organizations issue joint statement on antimicrobial resistance: Asian NMOs should join

Dr KK Aggarwal, 09 December 2018

Veterinary organizations in North America and Europe have teamed up to combat antimicrobial resistance.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) issued a **“Joint Statement on Continuous Monitoring of Antimicrobial Use & Antimicrobial Resistance”** on Thursday, Dec. 6 that describes broad steps and strategies veterinarians around the world can take to preserve the effectiveness and availability of antimicrobial drugs while safeguarding animal, public and environmental health.

In its guideline published last year, the WHO had strongly recommended *“an overall reduction in the use of all classes of medically important antibiotics in food-producing animals, including complete restriction of these antibiotics for growth promotion and disease prevention without diagnosis. Healthy animals should only receive antibiotics to prevent disease if it has been diagnosed in other animals in the same flock, herd, or fish population. And, where possible, sick animals should be tested to determine the most effective and prudent antibiotic to treat their specific infection. Antibiotics used in animals should be selected from those WHO has listed as being “least important” to human health, and not from those classified as “highest priority critically important”. These antibiotics are often the last line, or one of limited treatments, available to treat serious bacterial infections in humans”*.

The major recommendations made by the veterinary organizations are as follows:

1. All countries shall have a robust regulatory system in place in respect to the authorization and manufacture of human and veterinary medicines including antimicrobials.
2. A legislative system shall be in place to regulate the distribution and sales of these medicinal products.
3. Illegal manufacture, distribution or sales of medicines shall be prosecuted.

4. Medically or critically important antimicrobials shall be administered to animals only with the oversight
5. A robust global network of surveillance and monitoring systems for antimicrobial use and resistance development shall be established.
6. Antimicrobial use shall be monitored both in the human and animal health sectors and any other sector in which antimicrobials are used.
7. The levels of antimicrobial resistance shall be monitored in people, animals, food products and the environment.
8. Easily available, effective, rapid and standardized diagnostic tests shall be available in order to carry out susceptibility testing.
9. The use of modern techniques such as genomics, which trace the origin and circulation of bacterial strains, should be promoted as appropriate in accordance with available resources. Sufficient funding shall be available for further research and development of rapid and affordable diagnostic tests.
10. Veterinarians must retain access to effective antimicrobials for therapeutic purposes for animals suffering from a bacterial disease in order to safeguard animal health and welfare and public health; therefore, antimicrobials must not be unilaterally limited for use in humans only

Antimicrobial resistance does not recognize borders, which means that only a concerted effort could curtail its spread and prevent its evolution.

As President-Elect of CMAAO, the Confederation of Medical Associations of Asia and Oceania, it shall be my endeavor that all National Medical Associations under CMAAO attempt joining hands with the campaign and make it a success.

India should take the lead in this movement.

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