

Book Review

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BOOK REVIEW . . .

The Veterinary Formulary—Handbook of Medicines Used in Veterinary Practice, First Edition, Yolande M. Debuf, editor. The Pharmaceutical Press, 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN, England. 1991. 448 pp. £37.50 U.K.

As stated in the preface, *The Veterinary Formulary* "is intended as a text for rapid reference primarily for veterinarians but will also be valuable for pharmacists and others involved with animal health-care." The purpose of reviewing this text for the *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* relates to information contained on fish, rabbits, rodents, and non-domestic species such as birds, reptiles, and deer with which wildlife veterinarians, pathologists, and biologists may be involved.

Information in the text is classified under a body system, disease or condition. Generic and proprietary drug information includes mechanisms of action, therapeutic indications, side-effects, dosages, withdrawal periods and drug incompatibilities for some species in addition to an introductory section on general guidance for "prescribing" for various species. There are also notes on prescribing for neonates, pregnant animals, hepatic impairment, renal impairment, and lactating domestic animals. The sections on exotic species include some common clinical conditions, methods of drug administration, and tabular data on drug dosages including antimicrobial drugs, parasiticides, and anesthetics. In a section on emergency treatment of poisoning, there is information on initial management of acute poisoning, symptomatic therapy, and specific antidotes for more frequently encountered toxic compounds. The final chapter covers vaccines and immunological preparations for common domestic species as well as birds, rabbits and fish. The appendices and indices include Drug Interactions and Drug Incompatibilities, in addition to useful conversions of mass, volume, and temperature from imperial to metric units, and an explanation of terms such as tonicity.

It is stated in the preface that the book contains "information on fish, rabbits and rodents, and non-domestic species such as exotic birds and reptiles" which is correct. The subsequent statement that the book "includes extensive tables of antimicrobial, parasiticide, and anaesthetic dosage together with notes on diseases and conditions commonly treated in these species and methods of drug administration" is only partially correct. In reality, these tables are rather

limited in their coverage of the available published information. As an example the recommendation for use of the aminoglycoside antibiotic amikacin for reptiles is "2.5–5.0 mg i.m. every 3 days." This dose, which is based on several pharmacokinetic studies, is limited to snakes. There is no mention that the dosage for tortoises, again based on a pharmacokinetic study, is 5 mg/kg i.m. every 48 hr and for crocodilians is 2.25 mg/kg every 96 hr. This reinforces a general concern relative to this text in that there are no references or other type of documentation for the dosages or treatment regimens provided for any of the drugs described. The reader is left with accepting the statement in the preface that "the majority of the text for *The Veterinary Formulary* was written by expert authors and reviewed by the Advisory Committee."

A second problem with the text, which limits its usefulness by wildlife professionals in the United States (and likely other countries), lies in the fact that many of the drugs listed for all species are only available in the United Kingdom and possibly a few other countries in western Europe. A specific example relates to recommendations for the use of various drugs in fish, only a few of which have labeling for use in the United States. Thus the reader should be alerted to specific state or governmental regulations that apply to the use of drugs in food animals, such as fish, when referring to this formulary. Additionally, there are compounds mentioned, such as dichlorvos (an organophosphate), that have been removed from the market by the Food and Drug Administration in the United States because of its low therapeutic index and the secondary effects dichlorvos has when it is ingested by free-living birds, mammals and fish following fecal excretion by domestic animals, or through direct ingestion when the granular form is used as a fly bait.

As mentioned at the beginning of this review, the *Veterinary Formulary* provides a "rapid reference source primarily for veterinarians, pharmacists, and others involved in animal health-care" with certain implicit limitations. The wildlife professional who is seeking information relative to the use of drugs and biologics in free-living and captive wildlife would be advised to consult other currently available texts and related publications which cover individual species in greater depth.

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