The Editor
The Australian Veterinary Journal
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re: Standards of Care: Anaesthesia Guidelines for dogs and cats
LN Warne, SH Bauquier, J Pengelly, D Neck & G Swinney
AVJ 96 (11) pages 413-427

Dear Editor

We would like to thank Drs Musk and Dunlop from the Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia chapter of the ANZCVS for their commendation of the Standards of Care: Anaesthesia Guidelines for Dogs and Cats. The authors would also like to acknowledge the vision of the ASAV who recognised a longstanding need for these guidelines and ensured this project came to fruition.

The ANZCVS chapter identified the great level of detail in these guidelines, which we acknowledge and believe promotes the aspirational yet workable nature of the document.

As mentioned in the title, this document focusing on anaesthesia consists of **guidelines** that are part of a wider multidiscipline series titled "Standards of Care" (SOC) by the ASAV. As authors, our primary goal was to contextualise current scientific literature to help the veterinary community by providing guidance as to what could be considered appropriate veterinary anaesthesia care at a general practice level.

The members of the working group (i.e. authors of the SOC document) were selected based on their diversity of expertise to achieve validation of content within the purpose and scope outlined and to ensure relevance to the general practice setting. It is common for guidelines to be published in scientific journals having not undergone peer review. The intervention of a peer reviewer at the final stage would interfere with the integrity and context of the document. Rather, the well-established Delphi methodology process was utilised to achieve consensus among the working group and subsequently achieve validation of content. Other well recognised guidelines which were not peer reviewed when published include the following examples:

- Acierno, MJ, Brown, S, Coleman, AE, et al. **ACVIM consensus statement: Guidelines for the identification, evaluation, and management of systemic hypertension in dogs and cats.** *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine* 2018; 32: 1803– 1822. doi:10.1111/jvim.15331
- Fletcher, DJ, Boller, M, Brainard, BM, et al. **RECOVER evidence and knowledge gap analysis on veterinary CPR. Part 7: Clinical guidelines.** *Journal of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care* 2012; 22: S102-S131. doi:10.1111/j.1476-4431.2012.00757.x

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When the authors were confronted with a lack of clear published evidence from peer reviewed articles, the default process was to refer to the latest edition of the main veterinary anaesthesia and analgesia textbook; *Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia: The Fifth Edition of Lumb and Jones*. The recommendation around fasting¹ and fresh gas/oxygen flow rates² are sourced from this well recognised reference.

In regards to the surgical checklist we tried to make it clear in the text that the example provided should be considered a guide; *“An example of such a checklist can be found in Appendix 3. Development of a surgical safety checklist is strongly recommended and should be tailored to individual needs and work practices. The development of such a surgical safety checklist should involve all members of the perioperative team in order to ensure engagement and compliance”*.

These Standards of Care Guidelines are a living or dynamic document. Furthermore the ASAV is committed and invested to maintaining these guidelines into the future. These guidelines will be reviewed and updated based on feedback from veterinarians and the publication of relevant new research. There will be a minor review of the guidelines every 12 months specifically to respond to feedback communicated to the corresponding author and the ASAV regarding content. In addition every 5 years a major review will re-evaluate and update the content to remain current with the scientific literature and consensus. We welcome comment and constructive feedback from the veterinary community at large so that this work can continue to evolve and maintain relevance.

Yours sincerely,

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1. Bednarski RM. Dogs and cats. In: Grimm KA, Lamont LA, Tranquilli WJ, et al., editors. Lumb & Jones' Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia. 5th edn. Wiley-Blackwell, Ames, 2015:821.
2. Mosley CA. Anesthesia equipment. In: Grimm KA, Lamont LA, Tranquilli WJ, et al., editors. Lumb & Jones' Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia. 5th edn. Wiley-Blackwell, Ames, 2015:52–60.

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