ROLE OF VETERINARY PROFESSION IN ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE PREVENTION

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The veterinarians offer in relation to the prevention of antimicrobial resistance their knowledge and understanding of Good Veterinary Practice. A valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship is important. Client education is important in preventing unnecessary use of antibacterial agents the veterinarian should be proactive in the education of their clients. If the animal owner is involved in the treatment regimen, it is essential, that the veterinarian provides written instructions on e.g. the dosage, duration of treatment or withdrawal period.

In Austria the Animal Health Service (AHS) is a private public partnership initiative. It guarantees timely stock supervision. The veterinarian and farmer jointly assess the health of the animals and their husbandry. The use of veterinary medicines and the involvement of farmers in the treatment is checked and assessed. This system is adapted to the very small structured livestock husbandry in Austria.

The consumption of veterinary antibiotics in 2011 amounted to 53.4 tonnes. This is equivalent to a decrease of approximately 15% compared with 2010, in Austria. It is important to understand this development in order to avoid misinterpretation of this information. An official surveillance programme regarding the development of antimicrobial resistance in livestock related microorganisms as well as consumption and application data, which are linked to diagnoses, are essential for interpretation of the antimicrobial resistance development in a country. There are three main questions

1. Does antibiotic treatment change with time?
2. Are there ‘special’ premises which use markedly more or less antibiotic substances?
3. Are there differences between vets concerning diagnoses and use of antibiotics?

Antibiotic treatment data of the period 2008 to 2011 of approximately 95% of the Austrian poultry production is collected in the Poultry Health Database (PHD) of the AHS. By means of these data the three questions will be answered and an outlook towards the further data collection and analyses systems will be presented. The involvement of the private veterinarians is vital in such a system. This means that on the one hand veterinarians have to fulfil further obligations but on the other hand you concede the right of prescription from and the right to sell antimicrobials to veterinarians.