



KETAMINE USE IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

General

Ketamine

Members

Austria
Belgium
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
FYROM
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom
Yugoslavia

Ketamine is very widely used for anaesthesia and analgesia by the veterinary profession. It is an essential anaesthetic for veterinary use because it is the only injectable anaesthetic that is safe and well tested in the full range of species that the veterinarian must treat. This includes both large and small domestic animals, childrens' pets and laboratory animals, large, wild and zoo animals as well as birds and reptiles. It is safely used by virtually every veterinary practice throughout Europe and the rest of the world. It has been used safely under POM conditions for many years.

Opioid analgesics

The veterinary profession uses pure μ -opioid analgesics. These are kept in most countries under controlled conditions where they are locked in a dedicated cupboard with only veterinary access, and their use is recorded precisely. Synthetic partial agonist or mixed agonist opioids (buprenorphine and butorphanol) are even more widely used by the profession. These are usually slightly less stringently controlled, but record of storage and use is more rigid than pure POM.

Both ketamine and the opioids constitute essential medicines for the veterinary profession. Modern day anaesthesia and analgesia depend on their use. On welfare grounds alone it is essential that the veterinary profession is able to use these agents easily on a daily basis and in emergency. There is no doubt that pure μ -agonists are not used as often as good anaesthetic and analgesic practice would indicate because they are under controlled drug restrictions. **It could therefore be detrimental to good veterinary practice if all opioids and ketamine were to be under the same stringent restrictions.**

Sections

Practitioners
State Officers
Industry and Research
Hygienists

Furthermore, FVE is not aware of serious public health problems being reported because of the use of ketamine in veterinary medicine and is therefore questioning the need of more stringent controlled measures in the veterinary field.

President

Dr K. Simon

Vice-Presidents

Dr O. Bro-Jorgensen
Dr C. Mir
Dr A. W Udo
Dr R. Zilli

ANNEX

Austria

Veterinarians in Austria use ketamine and receive these products as any other drugs. Only morphine is subject to controlled dispensing measures. It would be difficult for vets to have ketamine only available through these controlled dispensing measures.

Belgium

In Belgium, ketamine is already and since 20 years considered as a psychotropic drug. It can thus only be ordered by means of a special prescription.

Veterinary surgeons also need to register every use of the product (identification of the animal, owner, amount used,...) and have also the obligation to store the product in a special cabinet (with the key only available to the veterinary surgeon responsible for controlled drugs).

Denmark

Ketamine is licensed for veterinary use in Denmark where it is widely used, without specific control measures.

France

Ketamine is licensed in France, where it is widely used, without specific control measures.

The consequences of a classification as a psychotrop drug would be as follows:

- ?? Specific order would have to be placed to the laboratories or distributors, by use of a special order book, independent from the one used for general orders.
- ?? The delivery of the drug would have to be separated from the other drugs and upon receipt it would have to be handled by the veterinary surgeon.
- ?? The drug would have to be stored in a locked cabinet sealed to the wall in a locked room. As ketamine must be stored at +4°C, a locked refrigerator sealed at the wall would be required. Also, when anaesthesia needs to be performed outside the practice, this would create difficulties as the drug would have to be stored during transport in a specific place, away from the other non-controlled drugs.
- ?? Quantities used will have to be recorded, which could prove tedious as the practitioner would have to record the least mm³ of a drug, which is routinely used.

Germany

Ketamine is licensed for veterinary use in Germany where it is widely used. It is an essential drug for the veterinary practitioner.

Ketamine is not subject to any particular restriction in Germany.

Drugs, such as psychotropic drugs, can only be used by those veterinary surgeons who have obtained permission from the Bundesopiumstelle. Veterinary surgeons have to keep a record of all the quantities ordered and used. Psychotropic drugs can be ordered directly from the

manufacturer by those veterinary surgeons, who have obtained permission from the Bundesopiumstelle.

Spain

Ketamine is authorised for use in veterinary medicine, where it is widely used either alone or in combination. Although the drug is classified as a psychotrop drug, no special conditions apply.

UK

Ketamine is not a Scheduled drug in the UK.

Ketamine injection is used as part of an anaesthetic regime in cats, dogs, horses and donkeys. It is not authorised for the "mainstream" food producing species in the UK.

The medicine is kept in circumstances to comply with the labelling and in many practices is probably securely kept in the same circumstances as pethidine etc.

If ketamine became a Scheduled drug then further record requirements and increased security regarding storage would be required. Additional space in the Scheduled drugs storage facility would also clearly be required.