



EXPERT CONSENSUS

All ten ABCD guidelines and fact sheets now published

Dubrovnik, 18 June – All guidelines by the Advisory Board on Cat Diseases (ABCD) on the ten major infectious diseases in cats have now been issued, and are available online (www.abcd-vets.org).

A comprehensive and illustrated synopsis of the guidelines was published in the July 2009 issue of the *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*. Pre-publication copies were distributed at the occasion of the “ABCD guidelines launch” ceremony, which took place on the occasion of the annual congress of the European Society of Feline Medicine, in Dubrovnik (Croatia), on 18 June.

In addition to making vaccination recommendations, the guidelines cover the pathogenesis, management and prevention of feline panleukopenia, feline herpesvirus and calicivirus infections, FeLV, FIV, rabies, feline infectious peritonitis, Chlamydia/Bordetella infections and H5N1 avian influenza in cats.

Milestone achievement – and next steps

“This is a milestone achievement of the entire team”, Marian C. Horzinek, ABCD chairman applauded, speaking at the occasion of the launch celebration. “These evidence-based guidelines are the result of a lengthy process leading to consensus opinion”. However, guidelines are not set in stone, he added. “Ultimately, the decision is up to the practitioner, who is expected to use the recommendations as a tool in risk assessment for each case, taking into consideration the local disease prevalence, age, lifestyle, vaccination history, health status and living environment of the cat concerned.”

He also thanked Merial for its unwavering commitment and its respect for the Board’s insistence on scientific independence. As a next step, the ABCD will be preparing guidelines into the lesser-known feline infectious diseases, again with sponsorship from Merial. The ABCD also intends to address other issues including feline lifestyle guidelines, educational material for veterinarians and undergraduates and the quality assurance of diagnostic tests.

Fact sheets: educating the owner

At the occasion of the guidelines launch, a complete set of so-called fact sheets were also made available: laminated, well illustrated, two-page abstracts highlighting the main data contained in the ABCD guidelines. Fact sheets are intended for use by veterinary practitioners for quick and easy reference during vaccination consultations or telephone queries. They contain illustrations to help educate the cat owner in disease prevention and management.

Fact sheets exist in several European languages, and copies can be downloaded from www.abcd-vets.org.

The vaccination interview

The launch reception in Dubrovnik was held immediately after an interactive forum organised by Merial entitled ‘The Vaccination Interview - from routine to customised vaccination’. During this event, actors played out various commonly encountered ‘vaccination issues’ in veterinary practice, including cat owners

questioning the practice's vaccination protocol, those that doubt the need for vaccination and how to handle 'overdue' boosters. Input from the audience was actively encouraged, and the day ended with an interactive session with the entire ABCD.

Notes to editors

- The European Advisory Board on Cat Diseases is an independent panel of 17 leading veterinarians from ten European countries, with an expertise in immunology, vaccinology and/or feline medicine. The ABCD was set up to compile guidelines for the prevention and management of major feline infectious diseases in Europe, based on current scientific knowledge.
- Please visit www.abcd-vets.org for detailed background information.
- Interviews, pictures (speakers, diseased cats...) and the ABCD logo are available upon request.
- The JFMS July 2009 issue can be viewed online at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/1098612X>
- Animal healthcare company Merial helped set up the European ABCD and supports this initiative through funding.
- Merial is a world-leading, innovation-driven animal health company, providing a comprehensive range of products to enhance the health, well-being and performance of a wide range of animals. Merial employs approximately 5,400 people and operates in more than 150 countries worldwide. Its 2008 sales were over \$2.6 billion. Merial Limited is a joint venture between Merck & Co., Inc. and sanofi-aventis. For more information, please see www.merial.com.

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