

The Frequency of Managing Controlled Drugs and other Dangerous Drugs in Veterinary Practices

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Introduction

Controlled substances are an integral part of veterinary medicine and play a vital role in the treatment of various medical conditions in animals. However, their use is heavily regulated due to the potential for abuse and misuse, and it is important to understand the frequency and the volume of dispensing of these substances in veterinary medicine. This white paper aims to analyze and evaluate the number of times per month that veterinarians dispense controlled substances and dispense dangerous drugs, inclusive of controlled substances.

The safe handling of controlled drugs is crucial in veterinary practice, as it directly affects the **safety** of the **pet**, the **staff** handling the drugs, and the **community** surrounding the practice. Proper management of controlled substances ensure they are used appropriately, and not diverted for illicit purposes. It is important for all professionals managing controlled substances to take a **Safe Handling** approach to managing controlled drugs.

Human & Veterinary Medication Management

Although human and veterinary medicine may differ in some ways, the principles of safe handling of controlled drugs are similar. Just like in human health, controlled substances are subject to strict regulations and protocols in veterinary care to ensure their safe use. The use of controlled drugs requires adherence to regulations from the **Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)** and the **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**. These regulations include the proper **storage, handling, and dispensing** of controlled substances. The DEA also requires veterinarians to **maintain accurate records** of all controlled substances, including their **use, transfer, and disposal**.

Methodology

Data Sources

The study was conducted using data from practices leveraging ezyVet practice management system and a CUBEX Smart Cabinet over the period of 17 months. The data was collected from over 150 practices and segmented for further analysis.

Segmentation of Data

To evaluate the frequency that controlled drugs and drugs of concern are used in veterinary medicine, the study analyzed usage by segmenting the data as follows:

1. Controlled drug dispenses
2. Controlled drugs plus other dangerous drugs
3. Controlled Drugs plus other dangerous drugs by number of DVMs in a practice

Findings

Controlled Drug Dispenses

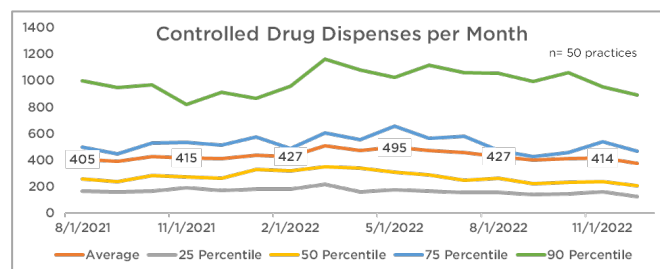


Exhibit A; n=50 practices

The results of the analysis showed that the average number of monthly controlled substances dispenses can range from 150 dispenses per month on the low end, or around four dispenses per day, to over 1,000 dispenses per month. We found the distribution was dependent on the size and type of practice.

Controlled Drug plus other Dangerous Drugs Dispenses

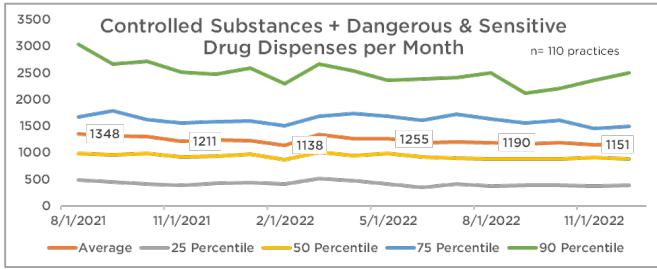


Exhibit B; n=110 practices

Controlled Substances are not the only drugs that pose a risk to the pet, staff, and community. Commonly, veterinary practices are managing both Controlled Substances and other Dangerous Drugs, or Drugs of Concern. The use of these drugs was analyzed in this study because when it comes to understanding what must be managed carefully versus what should be managed closely, we believe the line to be quite thin. We found that practices are dispensing, on average, 1,200 dangerous medications per month, or close to fifty per day. This data differs by size and type of the practice.

Controlled Substances

Buprenorphine
Butorphanol (Torb)
Fentanyl
Tramadol
Ketamine
Diazepam
Midazolam

Drugs of Concern (Dangerous Drugs)

Gabapentin
Proin/Phenylpropanolamine
Propofol*
Xylazine
Trazodone
Methocarbamol
Fluoxetine/ Prozac
Insulin
Prescription Drug pads
Zorfan

Exhibit C: List is not exhaustive of all controlled substances and/or drugs of concern dispensed in this study.

Factors Influencing Dispensing Frequency

The study found that several factors can influence the frequency of controlled substance dispensing by veterinarians. These factors include the type of practice, the equipment on-hand to track dispensing of controlled medication, the location of the practice, the number of doctors in the practice, the type of regulations mandated by local and state agencies, and the type of animals treated in the practice.

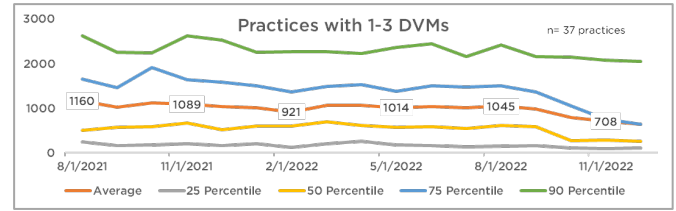


Exhibit D; n=37 practices

Size of practice, as defined by the number of veterinarians on staff, was the most significant variable impacting the dispensing volume of controlled substance and drugs of concern. As one would expect, the larger the practice, the more frequently medications are used, with smaller practicing dispensing, on average, 1,000 dangerous medications per month to the larger practices in the study dispensing over 4,500 dangerous medications per month.

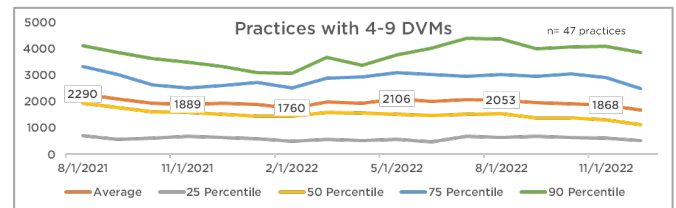


Exhibit E; n=47 practices

Therefore, it became clear that across all veterinary practices, the risk associated with the Safe Handling of Controlled Drugs and Drugs of Concern significantly increases as the practice size grows. The base-level risk remains constant, with even the smallest practices dispensing hundreds of dangerous drugs per month.

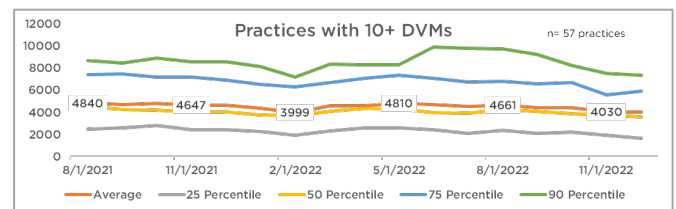


Exhibit F; n=57 practices

Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the frequency of controlled substance dispensing in the veterinary field and highlights the importance of understanding the factors that can influence dispensing practices. The results of this study will be useful for veterinarians, regulatory agencies, and stakeholders involved in the management of controlled substances. By gaining a better understanding of the frequency and volume of controlled substance dispensing, these stakeholders can work to ensure the safe and responsible use of these substances in the treatment of animals.

Actions to Take

It is important that veterinarians and their staff undergo training to ensure they understand the regulations and protocols involved in the use of controlled drugs. This training must include the proper handling and disposal of controlled substances and the monitoring of their use to prevent their diversion into the community. The ultimate goal is to ensure the safety of the staff and to provide the best care possible to the patient.

This study found that practices with as few as three veterinarians average one thousand dispenses per month. Veterinary staff must use controlled substances regularly to provide the best treatment, whether its pain management or other medical procedures, to their patients. Therefore, it is critical that veterinary practices leverage the right technology to safely manage these products.

Just as in human health, the Safe Handling of controlled drugs is of utmost importance amongst veterinary practices. By following strict regulations and protocols for the management of controlled substances, veterinary professionals can ensure their safe use for the benefit of the patient, the staff, and the community. Investing in the proper technology to support the Safe Handling of controlled substances may seem costly, but many practices have found approaches such as imposing Safe Handling Fees to be effective in covering the costs of such investment.

Learn more about what you can do to ensure you are a Safe Handling practice.