

Asking The Questions: What Works For Implementing Antimicrobial Stewardship

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Introduction: Antimicrobial stewardship programs (ASPs) are important to support appropriate prescribing of antimicrobials across human and animal health. Evaluation of a large-scale implementation trial across 135 companion animal veterinary practices has been undertaken by quantitative analysis (1) and survey (2) and found a positive response. Qualitative research allows a greater depth of understanding of the different considerations to successful implementation.

Methods: Semi-structured Interviews were conducted with 16 participants from across the practice group. Purposive recruitment allowed for a wide range of experience to be explored. Inductive, thematic analysis was used to derive themes.

Results: Four major themes emerged from the data, individual veterinarian response to the program, practice culture, the role of nurses and corporate responsibility and structure. Veterinarians tended to be intrinsically motivated. Younger veterinarians were more likely to be aware of appropriate prescribing and older veterinarians relied more on experience and habit. Practice culture represented a strong driver for implementation and when a positive working environment, with good communication, there was more consistent uptake of the ASP. The role of nurses in prescribing behaviour showed varied responses ranging from a hinderance to an integral part of the workflow. Being part of a corporate was seen to support good governance and allow substantial changes to be implemented.

Conclusion: ASP implementation is strongly impacted by the individuals involved. More education focused on nurse education and promoting nurse involvement is needed. Supporting a positive practice culture will allow more successful uptake. Corporate ethos and structure supported implementation.

References

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