

Summary of Discipline Committee Hearing



DR. NABEEL AL-AZAWI

Hearing Date: October 18, 2019

ALLEGATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT

- prescribed and/or dispensed an excessive amount of Meloxicam
- prescribed a human formulation of Meloxicam
- prescribed Diazepam in the circumstances of the case
- prescribed and/or dispensed an excessive amount of Diazepam
- failed to obtain the client's informed consent to treatment in respect of the Meloxicam prescribed.
- failed to maintain the standard of practice of the profession

BRIEF SUMMARY

The member saw a kitten for a spay. The client declined pre-anesthetic blood work and a viral screen. The spay proceeded uneventfully and the member documented a smooth recovery. The kitten was discharged with Tramadol, Diazepam and Meloxicam with instruction for one 7.5 mg Meloxicam tablet to be quartered and given to the kitten every other day. The one 50 mg Tramadol tablet was quartered and given to the kitten twice daily. The client was instructed to give the kitten a quarter of the six 10 mg Diazepam tablets twice a day.

Meloxicam and Tramadol were prescribed for pain. The member stated Diazepam was prescribed to circumvent the possibility of spasticity, as the kitten exhibited mild extensor muscle rigidity during recovery.

The member prescribed Meloxicam as an off-label medication to ensure the kitten has post-surgical pain management. The member indicated the on-label feline form of the drug was too expensive for the client who had expressed a concern about money and refused various tests due to cost.

The client indicated the kitten was lethargic and vomited when the medications were given. The client discontinued the medications two days after surgery.

A few days after surgery, the client noticed the kitten's incision appeared to be open. The client took the kitten to an emergency clinic where a surgical correction of the wound was recommended. The client declined this suggestion for financial reasons and indicated she intended to follow up with her regular clinic. The next day, the kitten was examined at another animal hospital and the surgical site was repaired. The kitten recovered uneventfully.

DECISION

The member pleaded and was found guilty with respect to the allegations. The College and the member had negotiated an Agreed Statement of Facts, including an admission of professional misconduct.

PENALTY

- Reprimand
- Suspension of the member's licence to practise veterinary medicine for one month.
- Completion of an assessment of the member's baseline understanding of pain management and the use of Meloxicam and Diazepam in cats, the use of a human formulation of Meloxicam in cats, and obtaining informed consent for the use of Meloxicam in cats.
- Completion of a course in pain management.
- A one day mentorship regarding pain management and the use of Meloxicam and Diazepam in cats, the use of a human formulation of Meloxicam in cats, and obtaining informed consent for the use of Meloxicam in cats.

- A follow-up half day assessment to review what the member learned in the course and mentorship and assess whether and how the member will change his practice with regard to the issues identified in this case.
- The member will pay costs to the College of \$3,000
- Pursuant to legislation, this matter is published including the member's name

PANEL'S REASONING

The panel considered all documentation presented and accepted the joint submission as sufficient to meet the guiding principles of public protection, general deterrence, specific deterrence and rehabilitation for the member.

As part of their deliberations the panel also took the following into consideration:

Both the College and member agreed to the joint Submission as to penalty and costs;

The member was cooperative during the discipline process and acknowledged professional misconduct thereby saving the College the expense of a contested hearing;

As of the hearing date the member had started remediation by implementing the use of a veterinary approved formulation of meloxicam which illustrated an interest in rehabilitation on the part of the member;

The Book of Authorities presented by the legal counsel for the College provided relevant cases from the College of Veterinarians of Ontario to inform the panel that the proposed penalty and costs were in keeping with similar cases and took into account the member's previous history with the Discipline Committee.

The panel accepted the proposed joint submission as to penalty and costs, regarding it to be fair and reasonable given the actions of the member.