

Veterinary Acupuncture

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Introduction

In recent years, the public, the veterinary profession, and other non-veterinary animal care providers have expressed an increased interest in the provision of veterinary acupuncture. As this interest increases, ensuring ongoing safety and quality surrounding this activity remains paramount to animal welfare and the public interest.

This Position Statement serves to communicate Council's position on the performance of veterinary acupuncture on animals in Ontario.

Definition

Veterinary Acupuncture: Veterinary acupuncture is defined as the insertion of needles into specific points on the body to produce a healing response.¹

¹ International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS)



Background

Council acknowledges that there are many non-conventional therapies that are currently employed in the treatment and/or care of animals. The College's existing *Position Statement: Use of Non-Conventional Therapies in the Practice of Veterinary Medicine* recognizes that these therapies exist on a wide and evolving spectrum that ranges from higher to lower risk in relation to their safety, efficacy, evidence base, and acceptance within conventional veterinary medicine. Some of these non-conventional therapies fall under the practice of veterinary medicine and can only be offered by veterinarians. Others are in the public domain and can be offered by both veterinarians and non-veterinary animal care providers.

When determining whether a particular therapy falls under the practice of veterinary medicine, Council aims to maintain positions and policies that are relevant to current practice and ensure that safe and quality treatment and/or care is provided to animals. Council conducts a thorough risk-based review before determining any policy direction and remains focused on ensuring that public protection and animal welfare are thoroughly considered before any action is taken.

Council acknowledges the importance of the public having access to and choice in selecting providers for animal care. It is also Council's ongoing responsibility, however, to ensure that higher risk activities remain the practice of veterinary medicine in order to maintain safety and accountability.

Position

Veterinary acupuncture when performed on animals is considered the practice of veterinary medicine in Ontario.

Based on extensive research and analysis, it is the position of Council that veterinary acupuncture is a higher risk activity when performed on an animal which necessitates its ongoing classification as the practice of veterinary medicine.

Given these characteristics, veterinary acupuncture is only to be performed by a veterinarian licensed with the College. The performance of veterinary acupuncture is not delegable to auxiliaries.

Legislative Authority

Veterinarians Act R.S.O. 1990, c. V.3 s. 3

Ontario Regulation 1093 R.S.O 1990 s. 18(1)



Resources

The following can be found at the College's website at cvo.org:

1. *Position Statement: Use of Non-Conventional Therapies in the Practice of Veterinary Medicine*

References

A full list of reference materials is available upon request.

College publications contain practice parameters and standards which should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients and in the practice of the profession. College publications are developed in consultation with the profession and describe current professional expectations. It is important to note that these College publications may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained. The College encourages you to refer to the website (www.cvo.org) to ensure you are referring to the most recent version of any document.