Minutes of closed inaugural VetCAST meeting 27/4-15, 15.00-17.00, ECCMID, Copenhagen.


1. **Opening.** Dik introduced to the group how and why VetCAST has been established, the remits of VetCAST and the relation to the recently established ESCMID Study Group for Veterinary Microbiology (ESGVM), which is chaired by Luca Guardabassi. It was underlined that everything produced by VetCAST should be publically available on the website, which is currently a webpage Veterinary AST, on www.EUCAST.org.

2. **Election of Steering Committee.** It was agreed that VetCAST should have a small Steering Committee composed by a Chair, a Scientific Secretary, a Data Manager, and a Pharmacologist. Previously Dik Mevius and Peter Damborg had been elected as Chair and Scientific Secretary, respectively. At this meeting Kees Veldman and Pierre-Louis Toutain were elected as Data Manager and Pharmacologist, respectively. Gunnar recommended not to elect a VetCAST webmaster for now – may be relevant once a lot of data/documents are produced.

3. **Vacancies.** Annet Heuvelink (microbiologist at GD Animal Health Laboratory, NL), Lisbeth Rem Jessen (small animal practitioner, DK), and Christophe Hugnet (small/large animal practitioner, Fr) were proposed and elected as members of VetCAST. Welcome to all three!

4. **Liaison with EU agencies:** Dik explained the contacts established to EMA (including the CVMP and AWP), EFSA and DG Sanco. All agencies support the remits of VetCAST and the independent and transparent role as advisory body for breakpoint setting. Representatives from EMA have expressed concern about potentially increasing data requirements for the industry, however it appears that very little extra data needs to be produced and made available for VetCAST in order for us to establish clinical BPs (Peter Lees and P. Toutain have informed what could be changed in the industry guideline currently being prepared by EMA)

5. **Collaboration with CLSI.** Peter explained that both CLSI VAST and VetCAST have the same overall goal (to optimize and harmonize AST) and ideally would like to collaborate. Nevertheless, there have been some obstacles and misunderstandings in the beginning, one reason being that the operational structure for VetCAST hasn’t been clear from the beginning. At the present meeting both parties expressed again their mutual interest in collaboration, and it was clear that generics would be the ideal starting point. It was pointed out that both groups have a limited budget and therefore should ensure that work doesn’t overlap. If possible, VetCAST should be represented as observers also at CLSI meetings. Further:
   a. CLSI observers can advise VetCAST but not be part of the decision-making process.
   b. Shabbir raised the question on how data can be accessed from the industry. It was pointed out by EUCAST representatives that usually a confidentiality agreement is signed followed by pharmaceutical companies providing access to data necessary for BP determination.
   c. It was pointed out that from next year industry representatives will not be part of the voting process when BPs are determined at CLSI-VAST.
   d. Gunnar found no need to fear that the limited expertise in this field is diluted into two groups (VetCAST and CLSI-VAST), since more visibility and more work on veterinary BPs will create more interest in this area.

6. **Presentation by Pierre-Louis Toutain on BP determination.** PL provided an overview on the different steps and data required for BP and dosage determination of drugs. Further:
   a. Gunnar agreed on the approach suggested by PL and reminded the group that we need to standardize MIC data collection somehow.
b. ECOFFs are not always easily determined as up to 4 methods are used for that in EUCAST.

7. **Presentation by Kees Veldman on existing and missing veterinary clinical breakpoints.**
   KV showed tables highlighting antibiotics for which we have no veterinary or human breakpoints.

8. **Discussion of initial tasks.** Five different tasks have been proposed, and leaders representing 4 of these groups were elected at the meeting (NB: leaders should coordinate the work and identify who should be affiliated to each group):
   a. Data collection/MIC distributions (leader: Kees Veldman)
   b. BPs for new veterinary antibiotics (leader Pierre-Louis Toutain)
   c. BPs for generic drugs (leader: Ludovic Pelligand)
   d. Expert rules (leader: Luca Guardabassi)

   - Due to resources limited it was decided not to start yet a fifth group on infection-specific BPs.
   - Concern was expressed about possible exclusion of zone diameter BPs for disk diffusion. It was agreed that reference MIC BPs are first priority as they will be produced by a standard ISO procedure. These reference BPs can be used to validate interpretive criteria for disk diffusion. Other BPs may be developed subsequently, and this will be much easier if strains for MIC determination are stored.
   - It was stressed by Johan that pharmacologists should not decide on BPs alone, even if they are in charge of the 2 BP groups.
   - Possible selection criteria for prioritizing drugs were proposed by Dik: antibiotic usage, public health importance, data availability, costs for establishing a BP.
   - A debate was started on how to prioritize new and generic drugs. It was argued that defining BPs for critically-important drugs may justify their use in clinical practice. However EUCAST, nor VetCAST should distinguish between broad/narrow-spectrum drugs or target their activities on public health concerns. The debate about restrictive and prudent use of certain antimicrobials is not part of the remits of VetCAST. In the end it was decided to focus on cephalosporins as a class (likely cefovecin depending in which data we can get access to + our relation with Zoetis) in the group working on new antibiotics, and on tetracyclines in the group working on generics. Before making a final decision on drugs and indications the group should collect data on available cephalosporins and tetracyclines in EU MS (Ludo has started this work shortly after ECCMID)
   - Colistin for enteritis in pigs was discussed as a potential future project. After ECCMID Peter Lees has circulated a paper on colistin MIC data.

9. **Any other business**
   a. Symposium / workshop at ECCMID: it is possible to make a VetCAST satellite symposium next to ECCMID but the deadline for applying to ESCMID is short (May 20th). The Steering Group will follow up after ECCMID.
   b. Position paper: Luca and Pierre-Louis will take the lead in making a position paper on VetCAST.
   c. Funding: a few ideas for funding options were mentioned but not further discussed due to limited time (ESGVM, PatVet EU application, ESCMID research grants).
Minutes of open VetCAST stakeholder meeting 27/4-15, 17.00-18.00, ECCMID, Copenhagen.

Attending: aside from those attending the closed meeting the following persons signed up for the open meeting: Radu Botgros (EMA), Jacques Acar (OIE), Dominique Monnet (ECDC), Marc Struelens (ECDC), Hilde Moyaert (IFAH/Zoetis), Pierre-Alexander Beloeil (EFSA), Peter Boriello (VetPath, VMD), Ida Tingman Møller (FVE), Jan Dahl (Danish Agriculture and Food Council), Peter Kopp (Idexx), Anno de Jong and Sonja-Marie Tennagels (Bayer), Maureen Mansfield, Sam Cain and Sally Maysent (ThermoFisher Scientific), Gilles Zambardi (BioMerieux), Farid El Garch (Vetoquinol), Ralf Warrass, Gitte Blach Nielsen and Markus Rose (MSD), Josef Szancer (Elanco).

1. Opening and summary of VetCAST strategy and liaison with EU-agencies. Dik Mevius summarized how VetCAST was established (from idea to reality), the relation to ESGVM, the remits of VetCAST. The newly elected steering committee was presented, and the current status on liaison and collaboration with EU agencies was mentioned.

2. Presentation by Pierre-Louis Toutain on BP determination. PL gave a short version of his talk at the closed meeting (see above).

3. Presentation by Kees Veldman on existing and missing veterinary clinical breakpoints. KV gave a short version of his talk at the closed meeting (see above).

4. Prioritized tasks. Dik introduced the 4 prioritized tasks for upcoming work in VetCAST (see above)

5. Roundtable discussion with input from stakeholders. Main points from the discussion:
   a. It was questioned by Josef Szanser why we will start up analysing relatively broad-spectrum antibiotics (cephalosporins and tetracyclines) when these are phased out in some countries. Luca Guardabassi and Dik Mevius replied these drugs are widely available and will continue to be used in the EU for many years to come.
   b. Hilde Moyaert mentioned that it was not clear if the proposed confidentiality agreement for exchange of data will be between VetCAST and EMA or between VetCAST and pharmaceutical companies. This has not been defined yet but will be clarified in the near future.
   c. It was emphasized by Dik Mevius that VetCAST will not be authorized to make final decisions on BPs but will advise CVMP.
   d. Hilde Moyaert expressed concern as to whether VetCAST will take into account the expert knowledge provided by pharmaceutical companies when determining BPs. Dik Mevius replied that VetCAST will always listen to the opinion of pharmaceutical companies. Constanca Pomba added that VetCAST will give an independent view of BPs proposed by companies.
   e. It was mentioned by Dik Mevius that providing BPs to EMA will probably not be a requirement when companies want to license new animal drugs.
   f. It was mentioned by Peter Boriello that methodology for AST of several veterinary pathogens is lacking, and that this could be an important focus for VetCAST.
   g. It was mentioned by Peter Boriello that whoever will pay for the work of BP determination will not necessarily affect the outcome (note: VetCAST cannot be paid directly from the industry and needs funding from elsewhere to retain independence)

6. Any other business. No points were raised.