

Dear Readers,

COVID 19: Veterinary Connections and Concerns

The world is still reeling and continuing to suffer due to the Corona COVID-19 Pandemic. At this stage, we really do not seem to see the end of this contagion. In this Editorial I would like to restate to our readers, two veterinary associated aspects of the crisis, we are going through now.

The first is to remember that COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease. The exact means of how it arrived in humans is not clear however, the original source is likely to have been bats. However, before it jumped to humans, an intermediate host needed to be involved. In this regard, it may have been a pangolin. The latter is commonly used in traditional medicine.

COVID-19 is the latest of such diseases, originating in animals and then spreading to humans. This includes SARS, H₅N₁ avian 'flu, H₁N₁ swine 'flu, and now COVID-19. The background to all these diseases is the overcrowding of farm animals with humans sometimes living in the same dwelling, along with the increased trade and consumption of wildlife, many for traditional medical purposes.

Now with our interconnected world, these diseases spread rapidly resulting in global pandemics. An interesting aspect is the need of humans, now to travel as much and as far as possible. Airports remain open to all. Thousands are travelling, dispersing variants of the virus from country to country.

However, the beginning of this pandemic is in essence a veterinary concern and one, which can be harnessed. We as veterinarians should try and attempt to deal with the source the problems within the realm of our profession. These are essentially an animal welfare concern with ramifications regarding animal preservation. This crisis is largely due to the ever-growing illegal wildlife trade especially involving exotics.

Wishing all good health,

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Trevor (Tuvia) Waner

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