

**Library & Information Services**

**Journal Club Checklist**

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| **Title** | **Evaluation of prescribing practices for gabapentin as an analgesic among veterinary professionals**  Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia, 48 (5), pp. 775-781 |
| **What are the aims or objectives of the study?** | The objective of the study is stated in the abstract as  *To describe the prescribing practices for gabapentin as an analgesic within the veterinary community.*  The authors expand on this at the end of the introduction stating the study will determine if prescribing practices in veterinary medicine (multiple practice settings) mirror those described in human medicine. |
| **Is there a specific research question or hypothesis?** | The paper includes three hypotheses:     1. that the use of gabapentin would be widespread, and that prescribing practices would vary among different specialties, with veterinary anesthesiologists less likely to use gabapentin as a first-line analgesic   2) that most clinicians would be unaware of the proposed mechanism of action of gabapentin and effects on the pain pathway  3) that few respondents would be aware that gabapentin has potential for diversion and abuse |
| **How might the hypotheses discussed in this paper be relevant to your own practice?** |  |
| **Who carried out the research?** | Clinical staff at Cummings Veterinary Centre (Tufts University) and a data analyst from the University of Massachusetts Medical School. |
| **What methods did the researchers use?** | The research was carried out using a 20-question anonymous online voluntary survey, to gather information about individual prescribing practices for gabapentin including frequency of use, reasons for prescribing and procedures for authorising repeat prescriptions.  The full questionnaire is provided in the supplementary material to the paper. |
| **Are the types of participants clearly described?** | A total of 718 veterinarians within the United States and Canada responded to the survey but only 528 (73.5%) answered all the questions.  Table 1 gives more detail about the respondents. |
| **How were the participants recruited?** | The authors state that they recruited participants through email lists, including four speciality colleges, online message boards and social media. They also gave participants the option to enter their e-mail address to be included in a drawing for a $100 gift card to an online retail store. |
| **How do think the method of recruitment will have affected the response?** |  |
| **Do you think that a questionnaire is the best method of evaluating prescribing practices? What other methods could be used?** | A questionnaire is an appropriate method of collecting people’s perceptions and opinions, but their responses may be biased.  More objective data on prescribing practices could be collected from computer records, but while this is appropriate within a practice for clinical audit purposes, sharing this data for the purpose of research raises a number of ethical and data protection issues. |
| **What are the limitations of this study?** | The authors mention several potential limitations in the final paragraph of the discussion. Can you think of any others? |
| **Is the data analysis described clearly enough to enable you to follow what was done?** | This study starts with descriptive statistics to describe the results of the survey using statistical analysis to compare responses between groups. |
| **What are the main findings of the study, and how do they compare with gabapentin prescribing in your practice?** | The results are given under 5 headings:   * Frequency of use (Table 2) * Reasons for prescribing (Table 3) * Intended use of gabapentin * Mechanism of action * Abuse potential |
| **Do the results published answer the research questions?** |  |
| **What are the main reasons given for the use of gabapentin in this study?** |  |
| **What are the potential side effects of gabapentin listed in the discussion?** |  |
| **What differences might there be if the study was carried out in the UK rather than US/Canada?** | Possible factors that may differ between the countries include the regulations around controlled drugs and the level of abuse.  It should be noted that there is evidence of potential abuse of gabapentin in the UK as well as in the US.  Smith, B. H. et al (2012) Substance misuse of gabapentin. *British Journal of General Practice*, 62 (601), pp. 406-407. <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp12X653516>  Evoy, K.E. et al (2021) Abuse and misuse of pregabalin and gabapentin: A systematic review update. *Systematic Review,* 81, pp. 125-156. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40265-020-01432-7> |
| **Do the findings support or alter your current knowledge?** |  |
| **Do you think you would get similar results in your own practice?** | **What are the most frequent reasons for prescribing gabapentin in your practice?**  **What measures do you have in place to prevent gabapentin abuse?** |
| **Having read this article would you change anything about the way that you prescribe gabapentin in your practice?** |  |
| **Having read the article would you change anything about the way you dispense gabapentin in your practice?** |  |