

## Introduction to Guidelines for Safety in Veterinary Anaesthesia

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### 1. Introduction

This initiative has been prompted by a common need to obtain simple and clear directions about the minimal advisable requirements in small animal veterinary anaesthesia. To this end, we thought that re-elaborating other existing documents issued by similar scientific societies would have been easier and more effective than creating new ones, thus we took inspiration from the SIAARTI Guidelines (SIAARTI stands for Italian Society of Anaesthesia, Analgesia, Resuscitation and Intensive Care). These Guidelines have been suitably modified to adapt them to multiform world of veterinary medicine.

### 2. The Document

The result of all this has been a work consisting of four different papers.

The main document is titled 'Minimal structural, technological and organisational requisites for veterinary operating theatres'. It contains general directions and three enclosed papers which more specifically deal with three crucial points like pre-anaesthetic evaluation, intra-operative monitoring and post-anaesthesia care.

The drafting of the documents is very detailed and it employs technical terms which may sometimes sound exaggerate for some veterinary practices; however, we should not forget that these details have to meet very different situations, ranging from the referral veterinary practice to the general practice, the last just carrying out occasional sedations for low-invasive procedures. Therefore, descriptions should envisage any kind of situation and have to be clear and exhaustive.

A close reading of the text will show that we have adhered to essential requisites, considering only oxygen, ET (endotracheal) tube, suction,

pulseoxymeter, thermometer, an expert veterinarian taking care of the patient, and few other essential equipment.

We would also like these documents to represent the essence of the knowledge and experiences of most colleagues who daily practice high standard companion animal anaesthesia in Italy and abroad. Hence, we think these papers may be an authoritative and reliable source of advice for all those who are devoted to or need to administer anaesthesia.

### 3. Aims

As for the validity of directions from scientific Societies and Orders in the legal contentious, we would like to refer to a leading article which has recently appeared on *Minerva anesthesiologica*, a journal edited by Professor Salvatore Montanini, President of SIAARTI. This script, which quotes an article written by an authoritative specialist in professional responsibilities, claims that the aim of guidelines is to promote and advise a physician's work, not to be an instrument of judgement to evaluate a doctor's deeds in a law court. Therefore, guidelines are of value as professional refreshers, since they define what expertise and diligence are meant to be for a doctor. However, their application can never omit to take into consideration respect for the uniqueness of the patient, his physical conditions and the situation he is experiencing.

In the above mentioned specialist's words, Guidelines, if ever, may contribute to define the concepts of negligence and inexperience in case a physician leaves them out of consideration, even if we know that they are temporary by their nature and subject to be updated over the years. All this highlights the discretion of so called "intellectual" professions, among which the veterinary doctor can be classified.

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