On 26 May, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) published a draft for consultation updating advice on the use of colistin products in animals in the European Union, the development of colistin resistance and the possible impact on human and animal health [1]. The consultation ends on 26 June 2016.

Following the recent discovery of the \textit{mcr-1} gene which causes bacteria to become resistant to colistin, the European Commission requested the EMA to update its previous 2013 advice on the use of colistin in animals. The draft updated advice published on 26 May provides an analysis of colistin toxicity, susceptibility testing, activity and resistance mechanisms, risk profile, and risk management options.

As reported by Skov et al., ‘the \textit{mcr-1} gene (i) has spread to most continents (ii) has been found in bacteria isolated from various food animals, from the environment including river water, from various types of meat and vegetables, and from infected patients and asymptomatic human carriers including international travellers, (iii) has been found in various bacterial species, mostly \textit{E. coli}, and on several different plasmids, and (iv) is highly transferrable with in vitro transfer rates as high as 10^{-1}’ [2].

As antimicrobial resistance is generally on the increase the recent developments are especially alarming as colistin is a drug of last resort in the treatment against multidrug-resistant \textit{Pseudomonas aeruginosa}, \textit{Acinetobacter baumannii} and Enterobacteriaceae such as \textit{Escherichia coli} and \textit{Klebsiella pneumoniae}.

Comments on the draft can be submitted to the following address vet-guidelines@ema.europa.eu.

References


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