

# With COMPLIMENTS

## COMPLEMENTARY VETERINARY MEDICINE BRANCH STREAM,

by Jacqui Snell



BARBARA FOUGERE

**BARBARA FOUGERE**, AN Australian veterinarian with an outstanding knowledge of integrative medicine, introduced herbal botanical medicine (HBM) and other adjuvant therapies such as acupuncture, nutrition and traditional Chinese medicine. This one-day stream provided the opportunity for veterinarians to gain an insight into an area of veterinary medicine that is growing exponentially, in both research and consumer demand.

The first lecture, 'Show Us the Evidence', gave veterinarians the confidence to use HBM in their practice, knowing that many herbs have contemporary, evidence-based research, in conjunction with the historical veterinary empirical base.

Barbara's presentation provided details on the factual information and research that has been undertaken on the use of HBM. There have been more than 3,000 studies published in mainstream veterinary aquaculture, poultry, dairy, swine, equid and small animal journals on herbal medicine in the past 10 years. In addition, there have been more than 30,000 studies on rabbits, rats, mice and guinea pigs. This is an astounding statistic, supporting the need for integrative medicine to be considered and embraced by the veterinary profession at large, especially in the face of issues such as AMR.

Examples were then discussed, such as challenging cases of atopic skin disease, the growing resistance of microbials to antibiotics and antifungal treatments, and the use of integrative medicine in chronic disease to achieve positive outcomes.

Barbara brought to our attention the fact that veterinary botanical medicine will be recognised as a specialty by the American Board of Veterinary Specialties within the next one or two years.

She covered how to find evidence-based research, with many of the published efficacy studies available on PubMed, MEDLINE, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez) and Google Scholar.

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Herbal efficacy can also be accessed in the Cochrane Reports, the Natural Standards Database and the European Scientific Cooperative on Phytotherapy.

Barbara provided an in-depth insight into how herbs work, covering some of the constituents, the actions of herbs and the scientific basis for their efficacy. An understanding of the herbs' actions, as well as the pathophysiology of a particular condition, allows the practitioner to strategise the selection and use of particular herbs to treat our animal patients.

The beauty and art of herbal medicine lie in the selection of herbs that have appropriate action and yet are tailored for the whole health of the individual patient.

The lectures covering feline diabetes, chronic renal failure and oncology support attracted a larger number of veterinarians. These topics provided informative, relevant and practical integrative support for the above-listed conditions. There were interactive discussions and positive feedback from the attending veterinarians about the evidence-based support for integrative therapies for common animal diseases.

## KEY MESSAGES

### FELINE DIABETES

- » It was noted that numerous herbs have demonstrated antidiabetic effects, including *Panax quinquefolius*, *Morus alba*, *Cinnamomum cassia* and *Gymnema sylvestre*.
  - » Of particular note, *Cannabis sativa* (where legally available) was mentioned due to unexpected effects when it was used in cats with diabetes mellitus for the treatment of comorbidities. Of the three case studies, two went into remission, and in the third cat the insulin dose was reduced significantly.
  - » Numerous studies have demonstrated that acupuncture can improve various metabolic disorders, such as diabetes mellitus.
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### CHRONIC RENAL FAILURE IN CATS

- » An integrative approach to the treatment of chronic renal failure in cats can provide benefits over and above conventional care.
- » Herbal medicine can optimise kidney cell function by decreasing oxidative stress, improving renal blood flow and mitigating fibrosis to maintain patients in early stages of renal failure for extended periods of time. (Examples include *Astragalus membranaceus*, *Rehmannia glutinosa*, *Angelica sinensis*, *Cordyceps sinensis*, *Ganoderma lucidium* and *Silybum marinarum*.)
- » Cats have moved from Stage II and Stage III IRIS, to Stage I and II, and remained there for years.

The benefits of nutrition and acupuncture were also discussed.

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### HERBAL ONCOLOGY

- » Herbal medicine may offer benefits for veterinary medicine in the integrative treatment of cancer to reduce toxicity of treatment, or to support the patient through surgery, chemotherapy or radiation, or as a palliative option where conventional treatment is declined.
- » Possible contraindications for adjunctive use of herbs in cancer treatment were discussed, ensuring that herb/drug interactions were acknowledged and understood.
- » Herbs have the potential to enhance cancer treatment and prevention, and to mitigate side effects to improve quality of life.
- » Ideally, herbs are prescribed according to the patient's vitality, constitution, signs, symptoms, concurrent treatment, prognosis and diagnosis.
- » Supporting the patient and improving vitality and immunity, as well as incorporating herbs with anticancer activity, are fundamental principles.
- » Simple herbal tools to have on hand to augment your cancer protocols safely and effectively were discussed.
- » Cases presented at this session demonstrated that herbal medicine can play a powerful role in supporting patients' wellbeing and extending longevity, even with the most malignant of cancers. 

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*The NZVA Complementary Veterinary Medicine Branch would like to extend its thanks to Barbara for giving us an insight into integrative veterinary medicine, and opening new doors for extending our knowledge base.*