Diclofenac toxicity has seriously impacted vultures from three genera, and Europe’s most abundant species, the Eurasian griffon (Gyps fulvus), is known to be susceptible. In the light of the speed with which south Asian governments withdrew diclofenac products when presented with the evidence, it is alarming that European nations are able to license similar products in full knowledge of the environmental implications. In my view, these decisions directly conflict with the EU’s Birds Directive, and must surely contravene veterinary drug legislation designed to prevent environmental impacts.

These decisions are particularly hard to comprehend given the availability of an alternative NSAID in the form of off-patent meloxicam, which is perfectly safe for vultures at therapeutic doses and has been successfully introduced as a replacement in the Indian subcontinent. A petition calling on the EU to withdraw these licences has been launched at http://tinyurl.com/kzqxd96, and colleagues who are concerned about the issue may also want to voice their professional concern by contacting their MEPs.

Veterinarians were unwittingly responsible for the declines of vultures in Asia, but we were also critical to identifying and responding to their source. It is our duty to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

Martin Gilbert, Boyd Orr Centre for Population and Ecosystem Health, College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, University of Glasgow, Lanarkshire G12 8QQ
e-mail: mgilbert@wcs.org

doi: 10.1136/vr.g3570
Diclofenac and vulture populations: Veterinary medicines

Martin Gilbert

Veterinary Record 2014 174: 562
doi: 10.1136/vr.g3570

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/174/22/562.2.full.html

These include:

Email alerting service
Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

Notes

To request permissions go to:
http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to:
http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to:
http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/