



EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY  
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

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Veterinary Medicines Division

## Union Product Database user research

### Insights on user needs

### Introduction

EMA is required to establish a 'Union Product Database' (UPD) under the [Veterinary Medicines Regulation](#) (EU) 2019/6, by 28 January 2022. From 21 September to 4 November 2020, the Agency conducted user research on the future public portal of the Union Product Database (UPD), to help ensure that the new website to provide information on all veterinary medicines in the EU is as user-friendly as possible.

The purpose of this website is to enable everyone with an interest in veterinary medicines to:

- search and view information on all authorised veterinary medicines in the EU, irrespective of the authorisation route;
- find out in which Member State a specific veterinary medicine is available;
- consider potential treatment alternatives.

In total, 363 respondents participated in the survey that formed an important element of the user research.

The respondents identified themselves as:

- veterinary healthcare professionals (318 responses – 88%);
- researchers/academics (111 responses – 31%);
- pet owners (38 responses – 10%)

Please note that multiple selections on this question were possible, and that no participants identified exclusively as a pet owner.

In addition, in-depth interviews were carried out with five EMA experts and eight selected external users. The interviews with internal and external stakeholders and the survey reinforced each other in terms of identifying users' priority needs as well as desired functionalities, features and content presentation.

Veterinarians and academic researchers demonstrated the most variety in terms of the purposes they would use a website like the Union Product Database (UPD) for, followed by farmers, and the general public, who tend to have fewer requirements, focusing on finding the product information (and information contained in the SPC) for a particular medicine and its availability in their own country.

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**Official address** Domenico Scarlattilaan 6 • 1083 HS Amsterdam • The Netherlands

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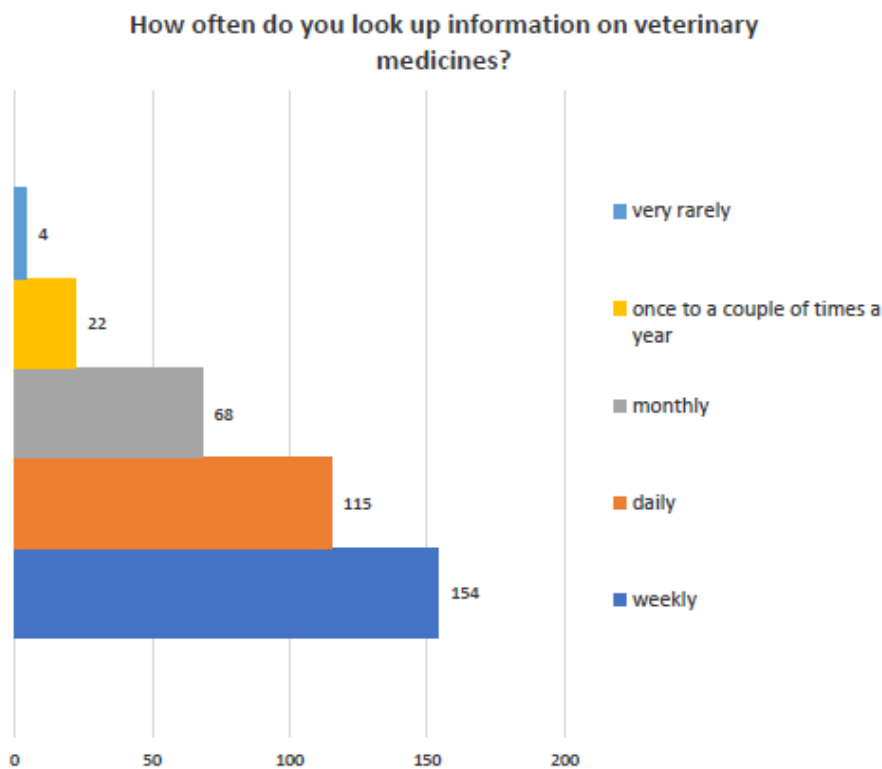
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Users emphasised that it would be very helpful to be able to find complete information on medicines in one place, covering the whole EU. Users find that currently existing websites do not provide this full overview and they need to check several websites, some of which are behind a paywall.

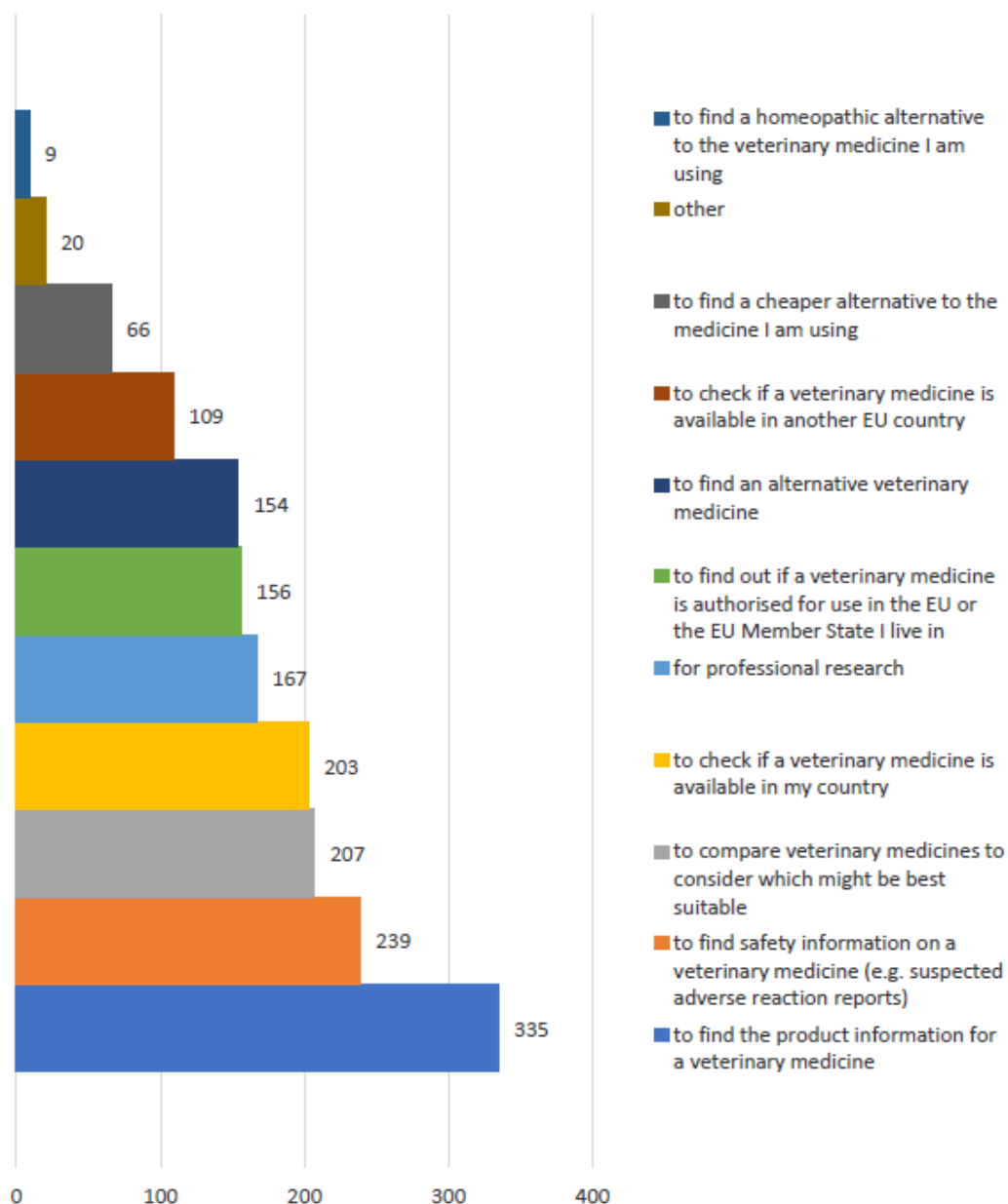
## Overview of main findings

74% of survey respondents indicated that they look for information on veterinary medicines weekly or daily.



The reasons driving their search are detailed in the graph below:

## What drives you to look up information on veterinary medicines?



The main existing websites and online databases used to find relevant information on veterinary medicines include:

- National authority sites (with VMD cited quite often)
- NOAH
- Search engines e.g. Google, Google Scholar, articles in the media
- European Commission, EMA, EFSA
- Pharmaceutical company sites
- Research publications e.g. PubMed, ResearchGate
- Private services such as Plumb's

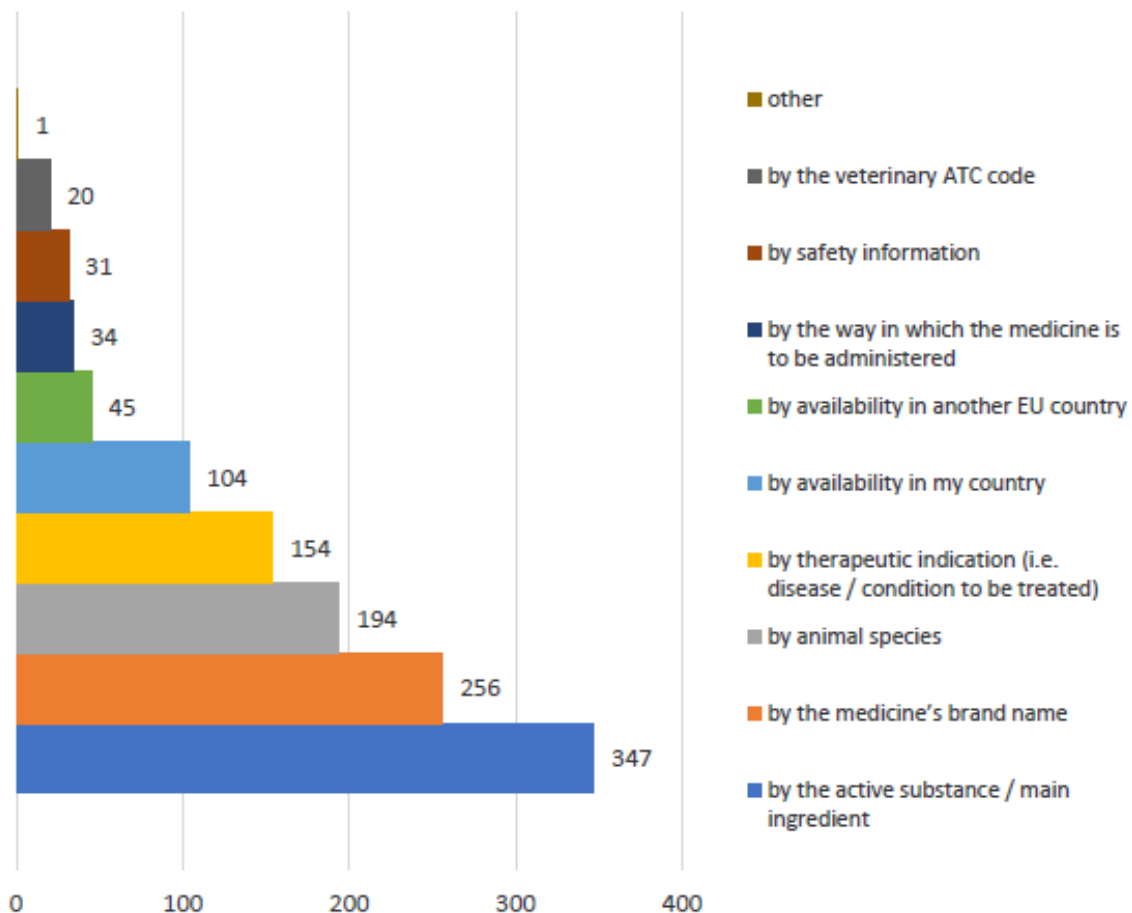
- Associations such as AISA
- International sites such WikiVet
- HMA (Heads of Medicines Agencies), OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health).

## Search

All user groups focused on an effective search functionality as the most important tool for the future UPD. In particular, users want to be able to search veterinary medicines by:

- Active substance name;
- Medicine name;
- Species;
- Indication;
- Medicine's availability in EU countries (particularly their own).

### How would you typically search for information on veterinary medicines?



The search functionality should be easy to use and understand, with clear filtering options and a comprehensive overview of the results that is easy to navigate. Users noted that the search functionality of many sites is complicated to use.

Additionally, users would like to find comprehensive information on a medicine on one page.

## **Safety data**

Finding comprehensive safety data information on medicines, including their possible side effects, contraindications and suspected adverse reaction reports, is important for users. Only some of this information is covered in the SPC.

## **Tracking changes**

The ability to monitor changes on a specific medicine, including information on the medicines' safety, is important for many users.

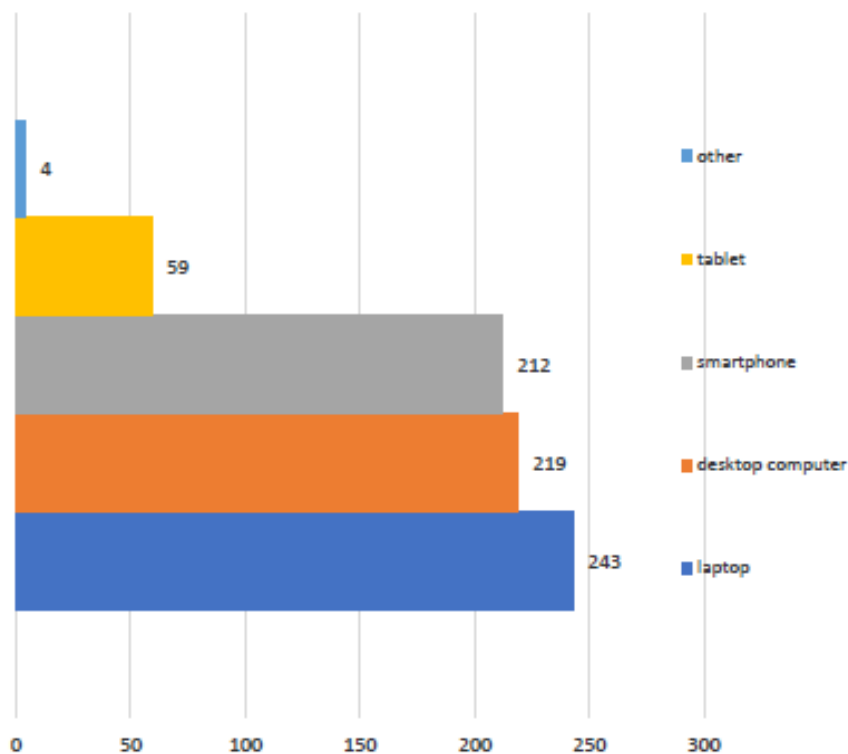
## **Downloading data**

Many users indicated that they would like to be able to download the content from the UPD for offline use, particularly in PDF format. Excel was considered desirable by a limited number of users, particularly by researchers.

## **Devices used**

While most users indicated that they are likely to use a desktop or a laptop when looking for information on veterinary medicines, this is very closely followed by smartphones. This is expected to increase in the next years.

**What device do you typically use when looking up information on medicines online?**



## Language

Most users search for content in English, although the number of those who search for information in their native language or who would like to be able to do so is significant.

### In what language do you typically look up information on veterinary medicines?

