

Opinion Paris, June 8, 2021

One Health - One World, One single Health

The necessary decompartmentalization of human and animal health

Notice: this opinion is only a small part of the broad concept of "One Health". It is only a first but necessary step towards the concrete application of its content in our country. Several other aspects will be later on considered without forgetting environment.

The recurrent health crises that we have just experienced (AIDS, BSE, SARS, MERS, influenza, SARS-CoV-2) all have an animal origin, which should lead to a rapprochement of the human and veterinary medical sectors. This has already been the subject of a joint recommendation by major international organizations (WHO, FAO, OIE, UNICEF, World Bank, Unisic) since 2008, which published a document entitled: "One World, One Health: a strategic plan to reduce the risks of infectious diseases at the interface of human-animal ecosystems". This plan was adopted by the inter-ministerial conference on avian influenza in Sharm El-Sheikh in October 2008.

Unfortunately, we have to admit that the proposition is not progressing or very little in France. The partitions between human and veterinary medicine remain, with a few exceptions, unchanged, whether in terms of recruitment or training of students that are not under the same ministry. Moreover, researchers in human and veterinary medicine generally belong to different research institutes. While this is understandable, it is regrettable that there is no greater interaction between them, few joint programs, no or very few joint doctoral schools or laboratories, and no budgetary envelopes open to each other. The last year errors and controversy, when the Covid-19 screening was introduced, are a concrete example of the need to open up veterinary and human medicine. Bringing the two sectors closer would have meant less time wasted before the easy use of the PCR diagnostic equipment made available by veterinary laboratories and would have avoided the need for a regional health agency to request an audit of the veterinary laboratories in its region, showing the existence of watertight partitions between the two systems.

While underlining the hope born from a number of initiatives, in particular PREZODE, announced at the OnePlanet Summit on January 11 in Paris, the French Academy of Sciences, the French National Academy of Medicine, the French National Academy of Pharmacy and the French Veterinary Academy, wish by this notice to draw the attention of the authorities in our country, the media and the general public to the need of taking the necessary measures to

bring closer the two professional sectors in human and animal health. These academies are at the disposal of authorities to study with them all the concrete improvements that could be made in this aim.

Some of these applications depend on a political will only, starting with the opening up of major funding lines for jointing doctoral schools and jointing research projects, the rapprochement of the scientific training paths for future human health and animal health professionals, and the management of these training paths by a single ministerial authority.