

How Covid Misinformation Created a Run on Ivermectin | The New York Times

By Erin Woo

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Emerson Animal Hospital was down to its last 10 milliliters of ivermectin.

For months, the veterinary center in West Point, Miss., had watched its supplies of the drug dwindle. Dr. Karen Emerson, the veterinarian who owns the hospital, started the year with one 500-milliliter bottle of ivermectin, which she uses to kill parasites in dogs, chickens and other patients. But as the bottle emptied and her staff tried to find more, they were able to obtain only a 50-milliliter vial. Everyone else told them: None available.

So Dr. Emerson began rationing the medicine to give to snakes and other exotic animals for which she had no other deworming treatment. She told dog owners to pay for a more available replacement drug that can cost seven times as much.

Dr. Emerson was surprised by ivermectin's scarcity because it had always been plentiful. But she put two and two together after people started streaming into her clinic to ask about using the drug to treat Covid-19.

"I really think that's why we have a shortage, because so many people are using it," she said.

[...]

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