



Rabid Bytes

The Newsletter of
The Global Alliance for Rabies Control

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Photo: Dr A H K Kwansah-Filson, Ghana

Editorial

This year we are looking forward to the fifth World Rabies Day! As I travel around the world to talk about rabies prevention, it is exciting and rewarding to see and hear about rabies prevention programs that have been initiated in association with the hosting of World Rabies Day events. Everywhere that I go, I find big and small events being hosted by a variety of individuals, all with the purpose of raising awareness, vaccinating dogs and other pets, and saving human lives. I have been so fortunate to be able to meet with people working tirelessly to make a difference in rabies control in their own neighborhood. I have learned a great deal in my travels over the last four years including the fact that although the tenants of rabies control and prevention are the same, the method by which they are implemented may be different in each country and region according to their own capabilities, resources and customs. I have been amazed to hear how ingenious program officers can be as they design and implement their own programs. The development of sustainable rabies programs are critical, and sustainability has been approached in various ways by individual projects. One of the most successful sustainable rabies programs in recent years is in its fourth year in the province of Bohol, Philippines. The team on Bohol, led by Dr Stella Lapiz, continues to work tirelessly to maintain their program. They have used a variety of methods to ensure their own program's sustainability, for example, the use of a small fee for registering dogs has enabled the program to generate enough funds to maintain the momentum of their efforts; they have included rabies education into the curriculum of the public school system so that every child will learn how to prevent rabies and be responsible pet owners; and they have built a huge army of 15,000 volunteers that work as part of the project team. Their approach has successfully and dramatically reduced the number of human deaths on the island province. Our congratulations goes out to Dr Lapiz and her incredible team on Bohol, they are setting an example for the world about how, with a relatively small amount of money, and a great deal of enthusiasm and dedication, life can be changed for the better.

Deborah Briggs, Executive Director, Alliance for Rabies Control

KZN Rabies Control Project Officially launched

The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation funded/WHO coordinated rabies control project in KwaZulu Natal (KZN), South Africa was officially launched on 22nd March 2011. The Richardsbay/Uthungulu area was chosen as the site for the project launch due to it long being the centre of rabies in KZN. Although the temperature was 40°C with 98% humidity, people came from far and wide on this special day to attend the event. Approximately 2-3,000 people packed into and around the tent for the occasion along with media, and many local dignitaries, including the Mayor of Umlhatuse, local political counsellors, tribal authorities, the minister of Agriculture (Member of the Executive Council (MEC), Mrs Lydia Johnson) and the Head of the Department of Agriculture. The event was a huge success and generously sponsored by the Department of Agriculture.



MEC Mrs Johnson vaccinates a dog

Over 150 dogs were vaccinated at a very well organized demonstration clinic, and Mrs Johnson, a nurse by profession, was very keen to join in and vaccinated two dogs very confidently. This was followed by media interviews where Mrs Johnson and guest speaker Prof Louis Nel of the University of Pretoria were interviewed for local radio and TV stations. A prepared media statement was made available to all press attending as well as being forwarded to other media outlets.



The Master of Ceremonies of the event was Dr Dumisane Mtshali (Manager of Veterinary Services) who began the day with a video presentation of "If Only I Knew" (A locally produced rabies video of a dramatized rabies scenario which includes all aspects of the disease and its prevention). This set the stage for the actual launch of the project. Mr Le Roux the project manager then introduced the project and the reasons for its establishment, including

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Three Year Rabies Immunization Project in Ghana

In Ghana rabies occurs mainly in dogs, cats and ruminants, with approximately 2 human rabies deaths a year. Obuasi is a cosmopolitan city in Ghana with a population of 226,707, and lots of pets. Obuasi Municipal Veterinary Services mounted an active search for rabies in pets from July 2007 to May 2008. Reported cases of bites from pets in the municipality were monitored in close collaboration with health facilities and the Regional Veterinary Laboratory at Kumasi.

Information was gathered on the victims of bites and the owners of the pets which had bitten them. All pets that had bitten people were closely monitored for fourteen days from the day of the bite. Pets that survived the monitoring period were deemed to be free from the rabies disease. Where the pet died within the mandatory period, it was decapitated and the head specimen sent to the Regional Veterinary Laboratory for confirmation of the rabies status. In cases where the affected pet could not be traced for laboratory diagnosis the victims were directed to health facilities for the human anti-rabies vaccine.

In all, 131 pet bite cases were reported in the Obuasi Municipality, with between 5 and 24 each month. From July to December 2007, there were 57 bite cases investigated. Three pets died during the observation period and two of these were confirmed positive for rabies (3.5% of all the biting pets). From January to May 2008, 74 bite cases were investigated, 15 pets died during the observation period and 13 of these were confirmed positive (17.6% of all the biting pets, with one being a goat). As a result of this testing, 2 bite victims were administered human anti rabies vaccine (ARV) during the first part of the study, and 19 during the second part. There were also 4 and 12 victims of bites from stray animals (those not traced) for the two parts, who also received ARV.

The alarming increase in rabies in pets from 3.5 to 17.6% as portrayed in the study compelled the Municipal Veterinary Officer to prepare a project proposal for a 3 year rabies immunization campaign. The three objectives were: to protect the pet population against rabies; to reduce substantially the number of rabid animals and to protect residents and visitors from contracting rabies. The project included creating publicity and awareness (via radio and community meeting), and providing the necessary supplies and personnel costs to vaccinate dogs and monitor the campaign. The first year's campaign was partially funded by corporate sponsorship from AngloGold Ashanti (Ghana) Limited and the Obuasi Municipal Assembly.



A pet dog during the observation period.

The first dog immunization campaign was conducted from 27th May 2008 to 15th June, 2008 in the Obuasi Municipality, with all 30 electoral areas covered. Pet owners enthusiastically presented their animals at the vaccination centers for free rabies immunization, and as a result the targeted pet population of 2,000 was exceeded by 157.8%. In total, 3,156 pets were vaccinated, at a cost of 3,032 Ghana cedis (\$3,032 US). Obuasi Municipal Veterinary Services then requested that the Assembly budget for the cost of 2009 and 2010 campaigns, expected to cover 5,000 and 8,000 pets respectively. A scheme where pet owners pay for vaccination was incorporated into the plan.

In the 2009 campaign 3,270 pets were vaccinated in the municipality, with some funding from AngloGold Ashanti (Ghana) limited, and pet owners paying for the vaccination. However, only 1,703 pets could be vaccinated in 2010. The low figure can be attributed to the inability of the Assembly to release funds for the campaign and also some pet owners' refusal to pay for the vaccination.

Despite vaccination rates being lower than hoped, reported pet bites and rabies have reduced considerably. In 2009, 30 pet bite cases were reported at the clinic (3 positive for rabies). In 2010, 27 pet bite cases were reported (1 positive), and in the first quarter of 2011, 10 pet bite cases (0 positive).

Contributed by: Dr. A. H. K. Kwansah-Filson, Municipal Veterinary Officer, Obuasi, Ghana.

KZN...continued from page 1

the role of the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation, the achievements and the future of the project.

Prof Louis Nel then gave an excellent presentation on the role of the World Health Organization and the global perspective of the project. This helped solidify the importance of the project and its effects were later demonstrated by the response of the politicians in recognizing the importance of the project, not only to the victims of the disease but to the image of the department and the province.

MEC Lydia Johnson followed up with a talk on the departmental support for the project and importance of all role players in the fight against the disease. She is an enthusiastic supporter of the project as she has previously nursed rabid patients and understands the gravity of the situation. She is also a strong supporter of responsible pet ownership which is a key component in the future of the control program.

Contributed by the Communication Office of the Provincial (Kwa Zulu Natal) Agriculture/Veterinary Services Department and Dr François Meslin of the WHO on behalf of the KZN Rabies Control Project.

Rabies reduced by first round of vaccinations on Bali

The first phase of the anti-rabies vaccination campaign on Bali has been completed, with approximately 210,000 dogs (70% of the estimated total dog population), in 4,126 villages across Bali vaccinated over the last year. According to the latest statistics, the months Dec 2010 to March 2011 showed a 48% decrease in human rabies cases and a 45% decrease in canine rabies compared to the same period a year earlier. Programs that educate the Balinese people about rabies, including prevention measures and post-bite procedures are also being conducted.

The humane rabies control programme is being led by the Government's provincial and regency livestock departments, with operational support from the Bali Animal Welfare Association (BAWA), Yudisthira Animal Welfare and Indonesian Animal Welfare (InAW). Funding came from the Australian Government, the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). The programme employed more than 400 Balinese people, with all field staff having been pre-vaccinated to ensure their health and safety.

The immune status of at least 70% of the island's estimated population of 300,000 dogs needs to be maintained by subsequent rounds of vaccination. Speaking on behalf of the Bali government, Ir. Putu Sumantra, the Head of the Bali Animal Husbandry Agency said, "The first phase of the mass vaccination program showed a good result. We are going to continue the mass vaccination program - being more effective and targeted in 2011, to ensure Bali will be free of rabies in 2012."

The campaign includes humane euthanasia of rabid and incurably sick dogs, as well as unvaccinated dogs that are bitten by a suspect dog - in accordance with animal welfare principles. Ray Mitchell, Campaigns Director for WSPA said, "This is a real achievement in the fight against rabies in Bali, and one that proves that a humane approach to rabies control works to benefit both human health and animal welfare. The success of the campaign is, in no small part, due to the fact that it is in keeping with Balinese culture, and has therefore enjoyed mass support from top regency officials to village headmen and small family units too."

The director of BAWA, Janice Girardi, said, "If the mass vaccination and other supporting program is continued in 2011 we will see a continued decline in human deaths, but people must still remain vigilant, reporting each bite and seeking medical treatment after first washing the wound with soap and water."

Adapted from a [WSPA press release](#)



A vaccination team working in Bali. Photo credit: WSPA

WSPA and the FAO call for global dog population body

Experts on dog population management have urged the creation of a technical forum to tackle knowledge gaps and create more informed policy on the world's canine population. Delegates proposed the creation of the technical forum at a recent meeting on dog population management in Banna, Italy, jointly hosted by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the Italian organisation, the Istituto G. Caporale Teramo, with technical support from the World Health Organisation (WHO). The meeting hosted international experts from different disciplines and contributions from the European Commission, ICAM, OIE, and PAHO to address the challenges of dog population management, both domestic and stray, in a holistic way. The meeting followed an FAO e-consultation held at the end of 2010 that reviewed the state of knowledge of dog population management worldwide.



Stray Dog in Jodhpur India. Photo: WSPA

One of the significant meeting outcomes is that participants identified the need for a permanent international technical forum on dog population management. This forum will be coordinated by FAO and open to all relevant players. The need for such a body becomes ever more essential as dogs become more popular as pets. There are an estimated 500 million dogs worldwide, whilst ownership is on the rise in developing nations. For example, Vietnam saw a 47% increase in dog ownership between 2003 and 2007. If these trends are not accompanied by a shift to a more responsible attitude towards animals, this will inevitably lead to animal abandonment and mistreatment.

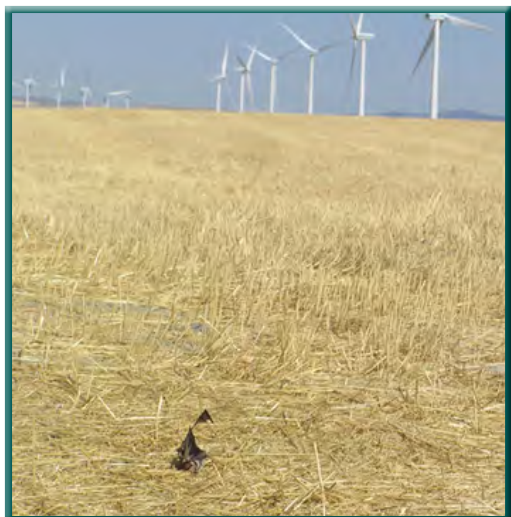
The call for improved dog population management is driven by the need to ensure the welfare of animals, while reducing the health and safety risks that dogs may present to people from dog bites and zoonoses. To achieve this, it is necessary to address the whole population and not only stray animals. Recent civil unrests, environmental challenges and natural disasters can all have an impact on dog populations and urbanization, waste disposal, changing dog keeping practices, disposability of dogs, social, cultural and religious differences all need to be taken into account. It is also vital to integrate dog population management into a comprehensive public health global strategy, delegates said.

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Bat rabies not as prevalent as many estimates suggest

Estimating the prevalence of rabies in wildlife is usually accomplished by sampling those animals that come into contact with humans or pets. A new study on bats, by Brandon Klug from the University of Calgary, Canada and others suggests that these methods can overestimate prevalence by an order of magnitude.

Given the nocturnal and elusive nature of many bats, especially migratory or tree roosting ones, human contact with healthy bats is a rare phenomenon, and studying rabies epidemiology in these hosts is difficult. Rabies prevalence estimates have been highly variable among species and across years within species. The authors set out to test whether some of this variation could be due to fluctuations in the frequency of human contact with infected individuals, rather than the prevalence of the virus.



A hoary bat carcass found by wind turbines.
Photo: Erin Baerwald

Instead of sampling from near human habitation, in this new study, populations migrating past wind farms in Southern Alberta, Canada were sampled. The migratory tree-roosting hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*) and silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*) comprise over 90% of bat fatalities at these sites, and both have previously shown high rabies prevalences. Almost 1,000 bat carcasses of 5 species were collected, and 121 *L. cinereus* and 96 *L. noctivagans* specimens were in a suitable state to be tested for rabies. Carcasses were tested at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, USA using the direct fluorescent antibody (DFA) method. Only one bat carcass (of *L. noctivagans*) tested positive.

A total of 33 previously published studies on rabies prevalence in 37 species of bats were also compiled to give one estimate of rabies prevalence based on all passive surveillance data (usually individual bats found near humans) and one prevalence based on active surveillance data (attempts to randomly sample bat populations) for each species. The new wind farm data showed rabies prevalences significantly lower than previous passive surveillance studies (23.7% and 8.0% for *L. cinereus* and *L. noctivagans*, respectively), but similar to previous active surveillance studies (1.1% and 1.0%). Across all of the species sampled in the published studies, passive surveillance methods generated significantly higher prevalences (6.0% of over 50,000 bats) than active surveillance methods (0.8% of almost 15,000 bats). This demonstrates a difference which has often been discussed, but not previously tested statistically.

The authors also compared prevalences of rabies in bats differing in their roosting behaviour. Nonsynanthropic bat species prefer natural roosts such as trees, caves, and rock crevices, whereas synanthropic species have adapted to roost in man-made structures such as buildings and bridges. Overall, nonsynanthropic bat species had a higher rabies prevalence (7.8%) than synanthropic species (4.2%), and again, passive surveillance produced higher prevalences than active methods for both groups. Nonsynanthropic bat species comprised only 19.7% of bats tested, but formed a disproportionately high proportion (30.1%) of those found positive. This is in agreement with a previous observation that when sample sizes are smaller, the prevalence of rabies is often higher. In other words, when individual bats that would rarely encounter humans do come into contact, they are more often sick individuals.

The authors suggest that the type of surveillance used and the roosting behaviour of the species need to be taken into account in interpreting bat rabies prevalences. Although passive surveillance clearly has an important role in assessing threats to human health, it may not provide an accurate population-wide prevalence of rabies. Results from this survey and others of natural populations of bats suggest rabies prevalence around or below 1% across all bat species, regardless of roosting ecology. Despite the confirmation of a lower prevalence of rabies than previously thought, handling live bats by the general public is discouraged, as bats that uncharacteristically come in contact with humans are more likely to be sick.

Summarised by Louise Taylor from [Klug et al \(2011\) Journal of Wildlife Diseases, vol 47, p64-77.](#)

Dog Population Management...continued from page 3

“In this meeting we have found a particularly close link between animal welfare and human wellbeing. There is an increasing acceptance that animal suffering is not a necessary cost to achieve benefits for people”, says Elly Hiby, Scientific Advisor at WSPA.

“This international meeting has shown the value of proper dog population management for society: not only to control zoonotic diseases and dog-bites, but ultimately to contribute to human wellbeing and animal welfare. In order to attain the highest standards and sustainability, we need a multifaceted, and all-inclusive approach”, said Daniela Battaglia, FAO Livestock Production Officer in charge of Animal Welfare.

Based on reports from the [WSPA](#) and [FAO](#) websites.

Mapping neglected diseases in Latin America

In Latin America and the Caribbean, around 195 million people live in poverty. As neglected diseases often cause chronic long term disease, they can be considered both a cause and a consequence of poverty. In 2009, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) received a mandate to support the countries in the Region in eliminating neglected diseases and other poverty-related infections.

Schneider and colleagues from the Pan American Health Organization, Washington, USA have just published a study mapping the presence of selected diseases. This is the first time that several diseases have been mapped together across the whole region.

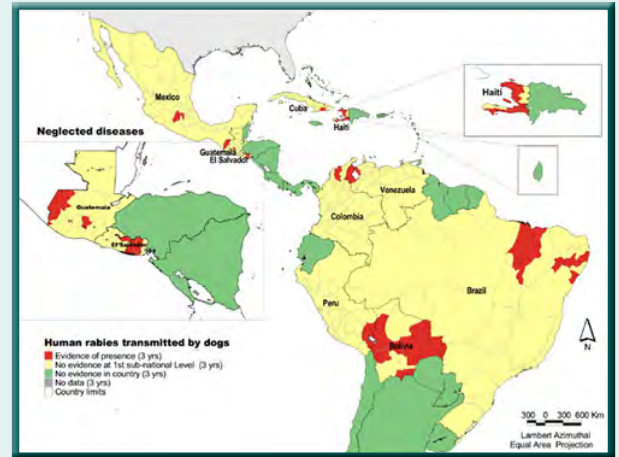
Maps of five diseases where information was available at the State level were mapped: lymphatic filariasis; onchocerciasis; schistosomiasis; trachoma and human rabies transmitted by dogs. Over the 45 countries/territories of the Region there are approximately 570 states. None of the mapped diseases are present in more than 39 states (rabies is present in 20), indicating that the majority of the states did not present evidence of the selected diseases during the period of the study. This suggests that these neglected diseases are not widespread and that elimination should be achievable.

Cases of human and canine rabies have been reduced by nearly 90% over the past 20 years since the inception of a Regional elimination program, but despite these achievements, the diseases still persists and even though human cases are low (14 cases in 2007), the number of people who live in risk areas is still high. In Bolivia and Haiti, rabies is present in almost half of the states. Even with good surveillance systems in place and rapid responses to canine rabies cases, the achievement of the elimination goal will require continued support of vaccination and surveillance strategies.

Other diseases of poverty (such as soil-transmitted helminthiasis, Chagas Diseases, congenital syphilis, and plague) were not mapped due to insufficiently detailed data. Considering all diseases of poverty together, and focusing integrated disease surveillance and management on 'hotspots' where several diseases co-occur should have the biggest impact on diseases burden.

Neglected diseases are one of the greatest challenges to achieving the Millennium Development Goals related to reducing infectious diseases (MDG 6) and reducing poverty (MDG 1). Global donor support has recently increased to fight neglected diseases and this should re-energise countries' efforts. Tools exist to combat these diseases, and multi-sectoral, integrated planning ensuring access to existing diagnostic and treatment methods, could have a major impact. The most important challenge will be continued good surveillance and continued advocacy to sustain the political commitment.

Summarised by Louise Taylor from Schneider MC, et al. (2011) Elimination of Neglected Diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Mapping of Selected Diseases. PLoS Negl Trop Dis 5(2): e964. The full paper is available free from the [PloS website](#), or on the Alliance's [scientific literature page](#).



The map for rabies transmitted from dogs

The International Dog Bite Prevention Challenge

Be a Tree



doggone safe

Did you know that half of all kids are bitten by a dog and most often by their own dog? This information is reported in published studies and is easily verified. Just ask around and you will find that half the people you talk to will have been bitten as a child. Dog bites can leave children frightened of dogs and sometimes scarred physically and emotionally. The dog may lose his home, his family or even his life. However, experts agree that dog bites are preventable through education.

Non-profit Doggone Safe provides education to help children learn to act safely around dogs, and recently announced the International Dog Bite Prevention Challenge with a goal of educating 50,000 children during Dog Bite Prevention Week (May 15-21).

Happy dogs are much less likely to bite than are anxious dogs. Parents need to teach children to recognize the difference and to interact only with happy dogs. A happy dog wags his tail loosely and pants. He shows interest in interacting with the child. An anxious dog may lick his lips, yawn, turn his head away or show a half moon of white in his eye. By learning to read dog body language and understanding that dogs have feelings, children will develop empathy for dogs.

Children must know what to do if they meet a strange dog or if any dog is bothering them. We need to empower them

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Cost Effectiveness of PEP Regimens

A recent paper by Hampson *et al.* from the University of Glasgow evaluates a new method to determine the cost effectiveness of alternative Post exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) regimens.

Currently, there are a variety of WHO approved post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) regimens for rabies prevention, all of which are safe and effective if completed according to WHO recommendations. Determining which regimen is the most cost effective in a given situation is critical to deliver vaccine to bite victims as inexpensively as possible while maintaining safety and avoiding vaccine shortages. One of the most important considerations is whether the vaccine should be delivered via the intra-muscular (IM) or intra-dermal (ID) route. The latter requires less vaccine, and a single vial can therefore be used to vaccinate more than one patient. However the use of ID PEP requires more complex cost sharing calculations, and opened vials containing unused vaccine must be discarded after 6-8 hours, making vaccine wastage a real possibility in clinics serving a low number of low bite victim each day.

The authors simulated vaccine usage at clinics using a model that allowed different regimens and clinic scenarios to be compared. Variables included: the PEP regimens (number of doses required, number of clinic visits required); number of new bite victims per day visiting the clinic; number of doses per vial of vaccine; proportion of patients likely to complete the full course of vaccines. The direct costs (vaccine and clinic administration costs) were included in the further comparison of the cost effectiveness (for the clinic) of different regimen under different patient scenarios. Because of the scarcity of clinics that have an available supply of rabies immunoglobulin (RIG) in Africa and Asia, it was not included in the model. Indirect costs (patient travel, loss of income) were estimated from published studies, and higher direct and indirect costs assumed to result in lower completion rates for the vaccine course and therefore a higher risk of death after a rabies exposure.

The model allowed the authors to measure possible savings in vaccine use, human rabies cases averted and the cost-effectiveness (dollars per rabies death averted) of preventing human rabies deaths for real clinics settings. Their findings showed that ID regimens are considerably more cost-effective than IM regimens in terms of averting rabies cases and saving lives. This is increasingly so with high patient numbers, where 80% less vaccine can be used, but even clinics with 10 new patients/month could reduce vaccine vial use by 25% by switching from IM to ID, reducing the possibility of vaccine shortages. Vaccine use is always reduced when using equivalently priced 1 mL rather than 0.5 mL vials, especially in high throughput clinics because of greater vial sharing. Innovative pricing strategies could even be utilized in high throughput clinics to help subsidize PEP for poorer patients, or smaller rural clinics to help those most at risk of dying from rabies. In cases where indirect costs are more of an obstacle for seeking PEP than are direct costs (for example when PEP is given free), the regimens requiring fewer clinic visits are preferable to patients, and wider distribution of vaccine across a country should be considered to allow more equitable access to treatment.

The authors conclude that the worst-case scenario for PEP cost-effectiveness is around \$200/death averted (for IM regimens) and in high throughput clinics use of ID regimens can reduce costs to just \$60/death averted. This compares favourably with childhood immunization through the Expanded Program on Immunization (USD\$205/death averted in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia), considered one of the most cost effective health interventions available.

Summarised by Louise Taylor from [Hampson et al. \(2011\)](#) Evaluation of Cost-Effective Strategies for Rabies Post-Exposure Vaccination in Low-Income Countries. PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases vol 5(3): e982.

Dog Bite Prevention Challenge...continued from page 6

with the knowledge they need to keep themselves safe. Doggone Safe teaches children to 'Be and Tree' – to stand still, fold your branches (hands folded in front), watch your roots grow (look at your feet) and count in your head over and over to the biggest number you know until help comes or the dog goes away. This is the skill that is going to save a life or prevent a serious mauling if a child ever meets that rare and truly aggressive or predatory dog. We recently received an e-mail from a mother who said "[My 3-year old daughter] was standing in a tree pose as well as she could, shivering while being surrounded by two of the dogs barking and growling at her. We would like to thank you for your campaign and online information. We are convinced that it saved our daughter's life."

You can help by becoming a Be a Tree presenter, sponsoring a Be a Tree session through your business, donating a Be a Tree teacher kit to a school or an animal shelter, inviting a Be a Tree presenter to your school and spread the word about the International Dog Bite Prevention Challenge. Visit www.doggonesafe.com and learn about dog body language and teach your kids. Watch your own dog for signs of anxiety. Supervise and intervene before the dog gets to the point of growling or biting because all of his other stress signals have been ignored. Teach a child – save a dog.

Contributed by Joan Orr M.Sc. President of Doggone Safe, a non-profit based in Ontario, Canada. Doggone Safe's mission is to promote education initiatives for the purpose of dog bite prevention and increased child safety around dogs and to provide support for dog bite victims.

One Health Course in North Carolina Features Rabies Discussion

An innovative course titled “One Health: From Philosophy to Practical Integration of Human, Animal and Environmental Health”, is currently underway in North Carolina. Offered spring semesters and cross-listed by Duke University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina State University, the course was created by the newly formed Triangle Global Health Consortium One Health Collaborative. This interdisciplinary discussion series aims to promote and improve the health and well-being of all species by enhancing collaboration between physicians, veterinarians, researchers and other local / global health professionals, and by fostering public awareness of the interconnectedness of people, animals and the environment.

The Collaborative and unique course are part of an integrated approach to health referred to as ‘One Health’. This multidisciplinary perspective gained wide national attention in 2008 when the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and American Medical Association (AMA) and many other organizations joined together in an effort to ‘reintegrate’ the increasing fragmentation of our health care thinking and practices which occur as a result of advancing technology and emphasis on focused areas of research and medical specializations. Coming together in the spirit of ‘One Health’ provides a forum for health care professionals to directly explore emerging information and to develop creative ideas at the interface of their specialties.

Created in response to student demand, the course and discussion series is participatory in nature and attracts public- and private-sector professionals and students to inform health policy and improve local / global health care awareness, training, and delivery. In weekly public sessions held at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center in Research Triangle Park, the course brings together individuals from public/ human health, environmental science, veterinary medicine, nursing, etc. to learn ‘big picture’ perspectives on topical issues, such as climate change and health, mosquito and tick borne diseases, antibiotic resistance concerns, food safety, bio-preparedness, wildlife impacts on humans (and vice versa), plus use of animals as models of disease and as sentinels of both human health and environmental hazards. It stimulates participants to think about health in an entirely new (out of the box) way.

Zoonotic and emerging diseases are a major focus of discussion. For example, on February 8, forty eight participants were enlightened when a panel of four leading experts on rabies was featured. Drs Charles Rupprecht, Chief of the CDC Rabies Control Program; Bob Weedon, Veterinary Outreach Coordinator for the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC); Carl Williams, North Carolina’s Public Health Veterinarian in the NC Department of Health and Human Services, and Mr. Peter Costa, GARC Director of Communications and Coordinator of World Rabies Day, each shared information and led discussions on this devastating disease which kills tens of thousands of people around the world each year. (see photo)



From left to right: Charles Rupprecht, VMD, PhD; Peter Costa, MPH, MCHES; Bob Weedon, DVM, MPH; and Carl Williams, DVM, DACVPM shared thoughts and led discussions on rabies in the TGHC One Health Collaborative course, ‘One Health: From Philosophy to Practical Integration of Human, Animal and Environmental Health.’

Contributed by Dr Cheryl Stroud, Adjunct Assistant Professor at North Carolina State College of Veterinary Medicine, and Chair of the TGHC One Health Collaborative Steering Committee. More information, including a full schedule for the course, a course blog and ‘One Health News’ briefs are available [online](#). Additional information about the One Health discipline can be found at the [National One Health Commission](#) and the [One Health Initiative](#).

Dr. Abdul Rahman Elected President of Commonwealth Veterinary Association



Dr. S. Abdul Rahman, a board member of the Alliance, will become the first Indian and the first person from Asia to serve as the President of the Commonwealth Veterinary Association (CVA). He previously served as Secretary, but from January 2012 will head the organisation which has a membership of 54 Commonwealth countries of the world.

Dr. Rahman holds a bachelor’s degree in Veterinary Science from Mysore Veterinary College, Bangalore, a Masters from University of Madras, and a PhD in Veterinary Parasitology from University of Queensland, Australia.

He has served as a member and official of several Veterinary Associations, both in India and internationally. He has contributed to World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) working groups on animal welfare and stray dog management, and was responsible for the OIE guidelines on Dog population management.

Dr Rahman has published more than 100 scientific papers and has authored a book on Veterinary Parasitology. His current interests include Veterinary Public Health especially involving Zoonosis to include control programmes for Rabies, Hydatidosis, Cysticercosis and the Epidemiology and Control of Emerging Diseases, and Animal Welfare.

The Alliance congratulates him on his new position.

World Rabies Day Hits 5-Year Mark



2011 marks the fifth anniversary of World Rabies Day! The annual WRD campaign has truly changed the face of rabies by bringing the world together to fight this preventable disease through improved education and vaccination programs that are active throughout the year. Over the last four years, more than 1,200 local events in 135 countries have helped vaccinate 4.6 million dogs and educate over 150 million people about how to prevent rabies.

World Rabies Day now has over 500,000 committed supporters and advocates throughout the world, and since 2007, the campaign website has received 340,000 visits from 200+ countries. In 2010, the WRD Team launched web pages in Spanish, Portuguese and French that will become a year-round focus for multi-language educational resources and a platform for publicizing events and successes in these languages.

On September 28, 2010, over 2,000 listeners from 34 countries participated in the first-ever intercontinental rabies webinar. 24 speakers shared information and discussed their own experiences on best practices in rabies prevention during 4 three-hour sessions that connected the rabies community in real time across the globe. It was a great success, and the WRD Team plans to expand the use of this new communication tool and will be releasing a call for abstracts for the 2011 webinar in the coming weeks.

Events in 2010 have confirmed that partnerships between governments, local communities, volunteers and the private sector are pivotal to successful vaccination campaigns and sustainable rabies prevention programs and have proven that rabies education really does save lives. The World Rabies Day team has built an extensive library of freely downloadable [educational materials](#) in over 20 languages. This has become an essential resource in providing life-saving information for everyone seeking life-saving information. Our educational material also includes modules for children so they can become the future of rabies prevention. Over 96% of the respondents to our 2010 survey indicated that rabies education is saving lives in their community. The outcomes of WRD 2010 are summarized in a brochure available in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#).

You have told us overwhelmingly that World Rabies Day is making a difference. Help us make the fifth anniversary on September 28, 2011 the best ever World Rabies Day, and please keep sending us information and photos for our websites all year round!

Essay Winner Competition Winner to Intern at CDC

Cassie Wedd, a veterinary student at the [Virginia Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine](#) has won the 2010 World Rabies Day Essay Competition organized by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control for the Student American Veterinary Medical Association (SAVMA). This August, Cassie will spend two weeks at the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) in Atlanta, Georgia where she'll participate in activities of the Rabies Laboratory and the Division of Global Migration and Quarantine including rabies research, diagnosis, epidemiological analysis and public health policy. Cassie focused [her essay](#) on the ever increasing and diverse responsibilities of public health veterinarians and the vital role they play in ensuring the success and wellbeing of society. Cassie is from Richmond, Virginia. After receiving her BSN degree from the University of Virginia, she worked as an ICU nurse in Washington D.C. for two years before pursuing a career in veterinary medicine. Her background in human health, combined with a track in public/corporate veterinary medicine and joint DVM/MPH degree, will prepare her for a future in public health. The Alliance would like to congratulate Cassie and wishes her an enjoyable time at CDC this August!



Iowa State University Wins Fourth-Annual Rabies Symposium!



With great pleasure, the Alliance has awarded the 2011 Merial Rabies Symposium to Iowa State University, College of Veterinary Medicine. A full-day rabies symposium, sponsored by Merial, with talks from local and international experts will be held at Iowa State University and we hope that students in their veterinary, biomedical, and public health sciences programs will all participate to help spread the One-Health message. Iowa State University won by having the highest percentage of students participate in their 2010 World Rabies Day event. Congratulations! [Click here](#) for more information.

Upcoming Conferences

- The 13th National Conference of the Association for Prevention and Control of Rabies in India (APCRICON 2011) will be held in Chennai from 9-10 July, 2011. For further information please contact, Dr. Thomas Mathew the organizing secretary at apcricon2011@gmail.com
- The International Society for Infectious Diseases - Neglected Tropical Diseases Meeting will take place in Boston on July 8-10, 2011. For updated information, go to NTD.ISID.org
- The OIE's "Global conference on rabies control: Towards sustainable prevention at the source" will be held 7-9 September 2011 in Seoul, Korea. Further information is available [here](#).
- The Rabies in the Americas (RITA) 2011 meeting will be from October 16-21 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The meeting website is www.ritaxxii.org
- The International Congress on Canine Practice will be held in Bikaner, Rajasthan, India in February 2012. Further details can be obtained from Dr Anil Ahuja at isacp2012@mail.com.

The editor of the Alliance newsletter is Louise Taylor, you can contact her at louise.taylor@rabiescontrol.net
Design and layout is by Pete Else. For further information on the Alliance's work see www.rabiescontrol.net