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## CASE REPORT (6) – SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA

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Despite the preventability of rabies, the disease has progressively expanded in dog and other carnivore populations of sub-Saharan Africa over recent decades. Although rabies is a notifiable disease in the majority of African countries, it is easily neglected as it often oscillates in a disconnected fashion between authorities concerned with either human or animal health. Given a disconcerting lack of epidemiological surveillance and inconsistent reporting to regional and global structures, the objective of eradication will always be difficult to justify on national agendas or to global funding agencies.

On a continental level, the One Health approach has already been shown to be successful towards dog rabies control in at least one part of the developing world, when implemented by PAHO in Latin America. In contrast, there is no pan-African approach to rabies control, although small regional efforts present hope. The rabies control program in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) in South Africa, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, celebrated a year free of human rabies on 24 June 2011. That occasion constituted the first time in 20 years that KZN has not recorded a single human death from rabies in a full calendar year. This is, however, a very small victory in the face of the continent-wide challenge. We suggest that the road to an effective strategy for rabies control in Africa starts with a pan-African approach towards establishing sound surveillance and reporting structures. Clearly, only a sustained and reliable demonstration of the extent of the disease burden will allow for an elevated priority given to rabies on national and global agendas. The success of such a venture is certain to be conditional to the synchronized guidance and support of the OIE, WHO and other global partners in the One Health paradigm.

