

# WHO, FAO, and OIE unite in the fight against rabies

# Rabies

## THE FACTS

### A fatal but preventable disease

Rabies is a viral disease that infects the central nervous system and ultimately leads to the death of people and animals. This disease can be prevented and managed.

**Yet, rabies still kills more than 60,000 people per year.**

### Children are falling victim

Four out of every ten people who have been bitten by suspect rabid animals are under the age of 15.

### Over 3 billion people in Asia and Africa at risk

Those most at risk live in rural areas where human vaccines and immunoglobulins are not readily available or affordable. The most startling fact is the lack of rabies awareness. Advocacy and public health systems need to unite to effectively combat this disease, and other zoonotic diseases.

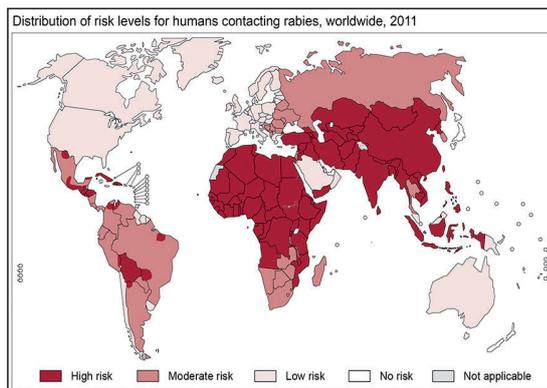
### Dog vaccination and PEP to be made more accessible

Dog vaccination is the most cost-effective single intervention to protect humans from contracting rabies. High quality vaccines are available. Vaccine coverage needs to reach at least

70% of the canine population to break transmission from dogs to humans. Safe, effective human vaccines are also available as pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis vaccines. Post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP, is a series of vaccines provided to people bitten by rabid animals including bats in order to prevent the disease from developing. The use of PEP intradermally is saving costs by approximately 60-80% in comparison to the intramuscular route, and is a more cost-effective option where the disease is highly present.



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**Vaccinating 70% of the canine population = breaking the cycle of transmission of rabies**



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## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

The World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) are united in a common goal to eliminate human and dog rabies. Together we provide strategic and technical guidance and build advocacy around rabies prevention and ensure more consistent and sustained commitment, underpinned by strong health and veterinary systems.

### The impact of specific activities thus far

- Coordinated collaboration, countries are embarking on comprehensive rabies control programmes.
- Increasing access to and strengthening health and veterinary services.
- Providing the proof of concept of different interventions for rabies elimination.
- Global and regional stocks of vaccines, also referred to as vaccine banks.
- Building partnerships between international partners, financing bodies, academic and research institutions, civil society and the private sector.

## KEY WORDS FOR SUCCESS:

**awareness-education, surveillance, collaboration and vaccination**

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Developing awareness and education**  
Community participation, education and public awareness are crucial elements of successful rabies control programmes.
- **Improving surveillance**  
It is an important pillar to understand trends and to guide action in rabies elimination.
- **Improving access and affordability of vaccines**  
Secured access to safe, efficacious and affordable dog vaccines and human post exposure prophylaxis vaccines through regional vaccine banks.
- **Encourage collaboration across sectors**  
The FAO, OIE and WHO will continue to work together to raise global and regional awareness.



[www.fao.org/ag/aga.html](http://www.fao.org/ag/aga.html)

**CONTACTS**  
[www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/rabies-portal/](http://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/rabies-portal/)

[www.who.int/rabies/en/](http://www.who.int/rabies/en/)