



# RABIES FACTS

Did you know that...

- Rabies is a viral disease which infects domestic and wild animals, as well as humans.
- Rabies is transmitted through close contact with saliva from infected animals (i.e. bites, scratches, licks on broken skin and mucous membranes).
- Once symptoms of the disease develop, rabies is fatal to both animals and humans.

## The symptoms

The first symptoms of rabies are usually non-specific. In the acute stage of the disease, signs of hyperactivity (furious rabies) or paralysis (dumb rabies) predominate. In both furious and dumb rabies, paralysis eventually progresses to complete paralysis followed by coma and death in all cases, usually due to respiratory failure.

Without intensive care, death occurs during the first seven days of illness.



*IPAN anti-rabies vaccination program*



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## Did you know that...

- The aim of the Animal Birth Control program is to bring down the number of human rabies cases.
- Dog destruction alone is not effective in rabies control.
- **There is no evidence that removal of dogs alone has ever had a significant impact on dog population densities or the spread of rabies anywhere in the world.**
- The principal challenge is effective delivery of vaccines to ensure adequate (70%) vaccination coverage in the reservoir dog population.

### Success!

Help-In-Suffering, in Jaipur has been doing extensive ABC program since 1995 and their success in stabilizing or even reducing the dog population and **significantly reducing the number of rabies post-exposure treatments for humans** in the project area has been published in 2006 in *Vet Record*. There have been no human deaths due to rabies in Jaipur since the year 2000.

Reece, J.F. & Chawla, S.K. Control of rabies in Jaipur, India by the sterilisation and vaccination of neighbourhood dogs. *Veterinary Record* (2006) 159 379-383



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## Did you know that *WHO (World Health Organization)* promotes...

- organization of sustainable mass dog vaccination campaigns
- dog population management through control of trade and movement of dogs, reduction of populations through spaying, neutering and habitat control
- public health education strategies

WHO Expert Consultation on Rabies, 5-8 October 2004, TRS 931 WHO Geneva 2005  
WHO Fact Sheet N°99, Revised September 2006

### Towards effective rabies control

Surveillance of rabies is the basis for any programme of rabies control. Veterinary surveillance of rabies and laboratory submission of reports of suspected animal cases is also essential for management of potential human exposures and for veterinarians to adopt appropriate measures towards animals in contact with a suspected animal case.



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## Did you know that...

- Many stray dogs are the offspring of unwanted pet dog puppies left on the roadsides.
- Responsible dog ownership that includes sterilization of the pet dogs to avoid unwanted puppies, regular vaccinations and re-homing of the puppies to good homes belong to the comprehensive approach of the stray dog population control.
- Many human rabies cases are caused by pet dog bites.

### Garbage disposal

Habitat alteration is the final key to sustainable success in controlling the stray dog population. Wherever there is edible waste from restaurants, slaughterhouses, chicken shops or from public garbage bins that are not being emptied regularly the stray dogs do and breed well.



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## Conclusions

- Sustainable solution in rabies and stray dog population control can only be achieved by long term comprehensive approach including vaccination and animal birth control of both owned and ownerless animals, licensing of owner's dogs, efficient garbage disposal and responsible ownership.
- Humane euthanasia of identified furious and aggressive stray dogs as well as severely sick or injured dogs belongs to the solution.

### Oral rabies vaccine

Oral rabies vaccine offers new approaches promising a significant increase in the dog vaccination coverage (especially of free-roaming and poorly supervised dogs) both when applied exclusively or in combination with parenteral vaccination.

The oral rabies vaccine is already being used on the field in some of the metros in India. In addition, oral rabies vaccine has been used over decades in some European countries to prevent spread of rabies among wild carnivores.



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