

Current major event

Global strategic plan to end human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030

In 2018, WHO, FAO, OIE and GARC developed and published a Global strategic plan to end human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030, through extensive consultation with affected countries globally.

Editorial note

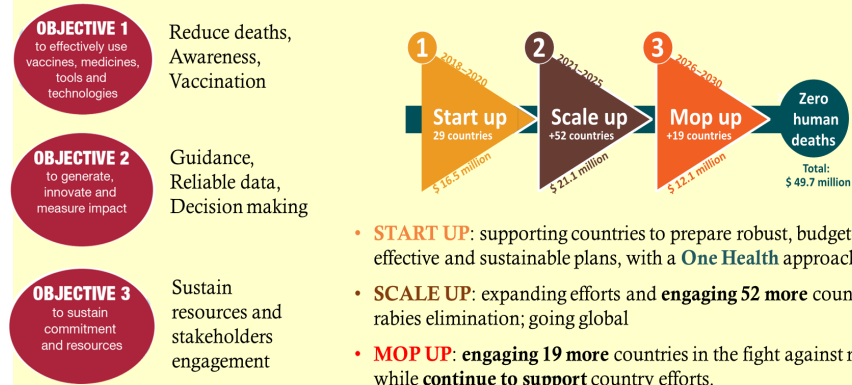
Rabies is an infectious viral disease that is almost always fatal following the onset of clinical symptoms. In up to 99% of cases, domestic dogs are responsible for rabies virus transmission to humans. Yet, rabies can affect both domestic and wild animals. It spreads to people through bites or scratches, usually via saliva.

The number of human deaths globally due to dog-mediated rabies is estimated to be 59 000 annually. The majority of deaths are estimated to have occurred in Asia (59.6%) and Africa (36.4%). Rabies is one of the neglected tropical diseases that predominantly affects poor and vulnerable populations who live in remote rural locations. Although effective human vaccines and immunoglobulins exist for rabies, they are not readily available or accessible to those in need. Globally, rabies deaths are rarely reported and children between the ages of 5–14 years are frequent victims.

In Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) nearly 600 million people are at risk of getting rabies infection. Among the 22 EMR countries only 6 countries are considered with low risk levels for transmission of rabies to human. During 2018, one of the countries of EMR; Lebanon reported three human rabies cases with 100% case fatality rate.

Poor surveillance, underreporting, frequent misdiagnosis and the absence of coordination among all the sectors involved are likely to contribute the underestimation of the extent of the rabies burden. In the absence of specific data, clustering of countries on the basis of epidemiological, socioeconomic and geographical criteria has been used to extrapolate estimates and better surveillance. Strengthening national, regional and global

The global strategic plan



The critical success factors of dog-mediated rabies elimination

- Long-term political and social commitment
- Community engagement
- Sustainable vaccination of 70% of the at-risk dog population
- Prof of concept: start small, scale up
- Sufficient resources, logistic and infrastructure
- Promote vaccine banks and other strategies for acquisition of rabies immunologicals to ensure sufficient supply of quality-assured rabies vaccines and human immunoglobulin
- Reach remote, rural and at-risk populations
- Conduct performance measurement at all levels
- Maintain trained and motivated implementation personnel

surveillance and reporting systems would increase the accuracy of estimating rabies and better understanding the impact of control programmes. Country-specific studies of the burden and better surveillance are encouraged to obtain more reliable regional and global estimates.

This global strategic plan has given a stepwise approach to be implemented for the dog-mediated rabies elimination. The stepwise approach to rabies elimination (SARE), is a tool to assist countries to develop national plans, enhance inter-sectoral collaboration and measure progress towards rabies elimination. Implementation of rabies surveillance system in human health and as well as in animal sector, enhanced community awareness and implementation of the vaccines for the dogs and for humans through structure multi-sectoral campaigns, is the need of the time to combat this preventable fatal infection.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

MERS in Saudi Arabia; **MERS** in Oman; **cholera** in Somalia; **cholera** in Yemen; **Multidrug-resistant typhoid fever** in Pakistan.

Current public health events of concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian influenza: 2006-2017

Egypt (A/H5N1) [359 (122), 33.98%]

Egypt (A/H9N2) [4 (0)]

Ebola virus disease (EVD): 2018-2019

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) [921 (582), 63.19%]

Cholera: 2017-2019

Somalia [6 867 (46), 0.67%]

Yemen [1 483 130 (2 891), 0.19%]

Diphtheria: 2018-2019

Yemen [3 524 (203), 5.76%]

Bangladesh [8 474 (45), 0.53%]

MERS: 2012-2019

Saudi Arabia [2 000(745), 37.25%]

Oman [24 (7), 29.16%]

Multidrug-resistant typhoid fever: 2016-2019

Pakistan [6 346 (0)]