

Community Rabies Awareness and Mobilization Manual



Photo by Sarah Pryke

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE RABIES HISTORY

Training Manual

Purpose

To teach community health workers about rabies and the serious threat their communities face from rabies every day.

- *Why should community health workers create awareness and distribute information about rabies within their communities?*
 1. *To encourage people to have their dogs vaccinated.*
 2. *To teach children how to avoid being bitten.*
 3. *To ensure that people report suspect dogs.*
 4. *To ensure that community members who are bitten get immediate treatment.*

- *How can trainees use their influence to mobilize communities when dog vaccinations are planned and carried out to achieve control?*
 1. *Engage with community leaders to support campaigns.*
 2. *Inform communities of coming campaigns.*

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1. Our dogs

Dogs are an important part of our communities and our history. They will always be with us, so a disease like rabies that can spread from dogs to people must be prevented. (Pictures supplied by Sarah Pryke)



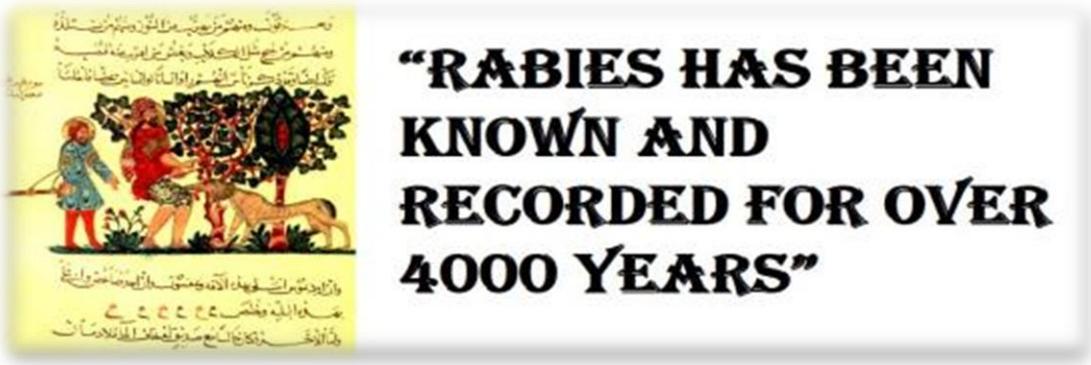
However, dogs play a far more important role in our lives and if we are good to them they will always be loyal and protect us, our homes and livestock. Dogs can also be companions to children and need to be treated with kindness. They can transmit other diseases besides rabies to people, such as worm diseases, and so a healthy happy dog is very important.

Animals need to be ensured the following five freedoms (basic needs):

- **Healthy food and clean water (diet)** – puppies must be fed 2-3 times a day and adults 1-2 times per day;
- **Shelter from wind, rain and sun (environment)** – warm and dry;
- **Treatment when sick or hurt (health)** –vaccinations, and deworming at least twice a year;
- **Other animal friends to play with (companionship);**
- **Freedom to express normal behaviour (behaviour).**



2. Rabies



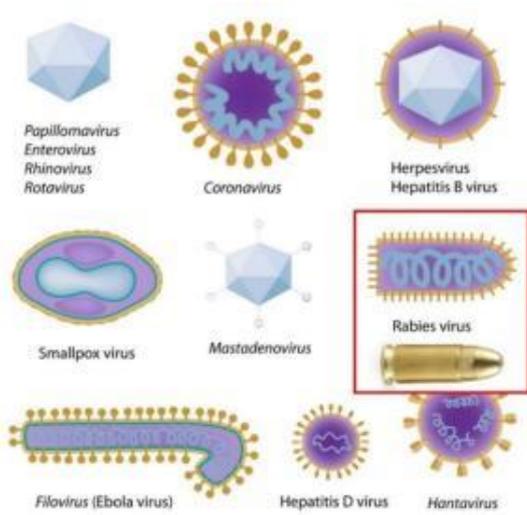
History

Only since 1976 has rabies been present in dogs in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and the disease been killing people across the province.

In 2018, KZN experienced a large outbreak of rabies in animals and as a result eight people died in eight months of rabies, six of whom were children aged 2-12 years. Most of these deaths resulted from dog bites, but one was due to a cat scratch. As the wounds were minor, people did not think that they needed help. All these deaths could have been avoided with correct, free treatment; however, victims died a terrible, painful death.

What is rabies?

Rabies is a deadly disease and is caused by a virus. A virus is a tiny organism and can only be seen with a powerful microscope. Many diseases are caused by viruses. All viruses have different shapes, as you can see in the picture below.



The rabies virus is bullet shaped, which is fitting due to its deadly nature – it is 100% fatal if untreated.

The virus is transmitted by the bite of a rabid animal, with virus-laden saliva entering the wound.

As soon as the virus attaches itself to a nerve, there is no cure and the animal or person will die of rabies.

What kind of animal can get rabies?

All mammals can get rabies. Mammals are warm-blooded animals with hair and they produce milk to feed their babies.

Animals like snakes, frogs and birds (cold-blooded animals) do not get rabies.

Rabies in KZN is mostly spread by dogs. Jackals are the only other host of the disease in KZN but play a small role in the Midlands area. Where rabies occurs, that is, most parts of KZN, 85-90% of rabies cases are rabies in dogs.

Cattle have the next most cases, with a few cases in goats and sheep.

Cats also get rabies and are very dangerous to people because they get very aggressive.

No rats or monkeys with rabies have been found in KZN.



"100% of animals that get rabies will die."

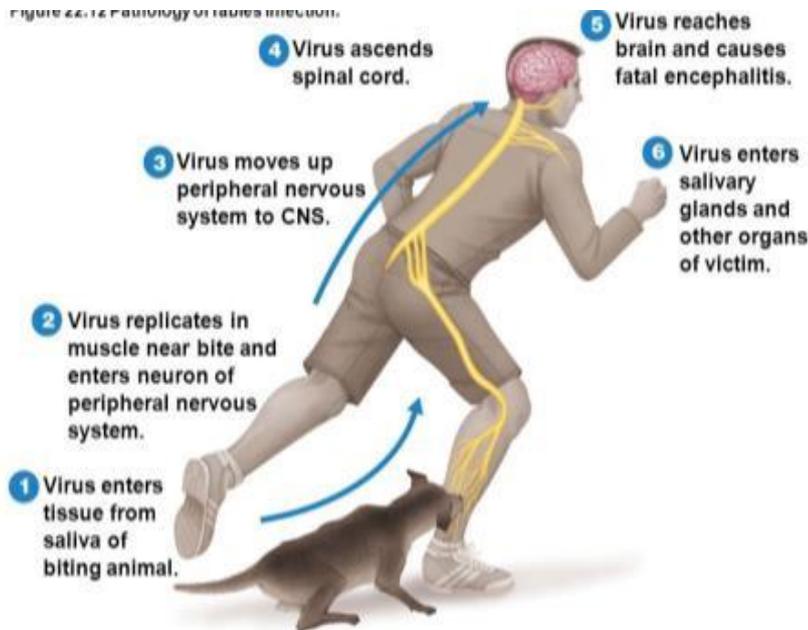
Many other animals also get rabies, especially mongooses, wildcats and antelope. Bats also get rabies from a slightly different virus; they are then considered very dangerous.

Most importantly, humans can also get rabies, and because of this danger we want to raise awareness and educate people on how to avoid this terrible disease.

3. How does the rabies virus enter the body?

The virus is found in the saliva of a dog or animal with rabies. When it bites a victim the saliva enters the body (see picture).

FIGURE 22.12 Pathology of rabies infection.



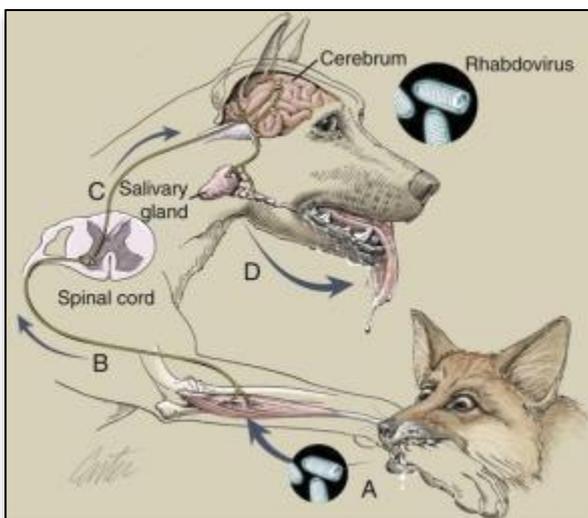
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The virus will multiply at the site of the bite (**this is the most important stage in treatment**).

When it reaches a nerve cell it is too late for treatment. It normally takes about two-six weeks from the time a dog/human is bitten to the time they start showing signs of the disease; however, this period can become very long, ranging from six months to more than a year.

When the virus enters a nerve cell it starts to multiply quickly and move toward the brain. It attacks nerve tissue. Nothing can be done to save a person once the virus enters the nerve cells – the person will die.

Once in the brain, the virus multiplies and starts causing symptoms that we see as it affects different parts of the brain.



The virus then moves to the salivary glands where it is secreted, and so it can be seen that the secretion of the virus and the onset of symptoms happen at about the same time. The symptoms are terrible and very scary for both the victim and the people around them. The virus quickly affects important functions in the body by paralyzing muscles, which always leads to death, most commonly as the respiratory system shuts down. Death normally occurs three to five days after symptoms start.

NO ANIMALS OR HUMANS SURVIVE RABIES.

Symptoms in animals

It is not always clear from symptoms that an animal has rabies. That is why it is important not to touch unknown animals.

The symptoms can be varied and occur at different stages in the three-five-day clinical period. There are two main forms of rabies, namely the dumb and furious forms; however, these forms are also misleading.

Important symptoms:

- Change in behaviour
- Attacking and biting anything
- Exaggerated response to light and sound
- Restlessness
- Nervousness
- Snapping at imaginary flying insects
- Disorientation
- Wandering aimlessly
- Fixed stare
- Drooling saliva
- Hoarse howling
- Choking sounds
- Uncoordinated actions
- Progressive paralysis
- Dilated pupils
- Biting itself
- Convulsions and spasms
- Coma
- Death

IMPORTANT!
Rabies symptoms can be varied as the virus affects the animal's brain, so be aware of any change in behaviour.

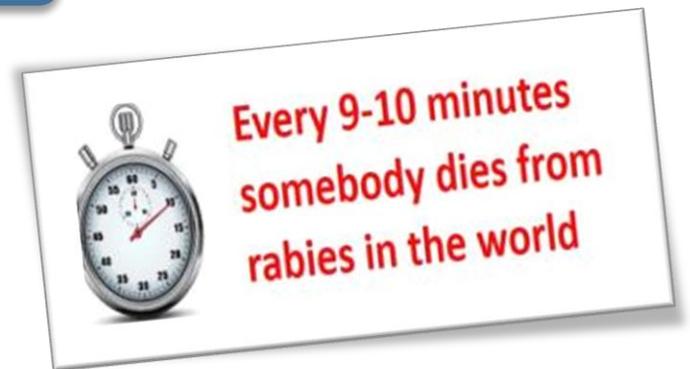
Symptoms in humans can be similar to those in animals.



4. Rabies and children

Most people who die of rabies are children who have been bitten by dogs but do not go to a clinic for treatment.

If you are treated properly and quickly after being bitten, the treatment is 100% effective.



Rabies is 100% fatal but also 100% preventable.

NOBODY HAS TO DIE FROM THIS DISEASE!!!

That is why we need to raise awareness.

If someone is bitten, the wound must be washed immediately with soap and water and they must go to the nearest hospital or clinic for treatment. If the wound is bleeding the patient will receive a special injection of immunoglobulin, that is pure antibodies are injected into the wound. The patient receives four injections of the vaccine, the first on the day of the bite and the others three, seven and 14 days after.

Most deaths result from lack of community awareness, incorrect treatment or patients not receiving all their injections. Children do not go to a clinic as they do not understand the dangers of this disease. Insist on treatment if someone is bitten.

The symptoms of rabies in humans are horrific and in KZN they are often confused with demonic possession. All victims who do not receive immediate treatment die.

Most bites that spread rabies are small bites or scratches that children and parents do not worry about. The size of the wound does not matter; go to the nearest hospital for treatment!



5. What can we do about this disease?

RABIES CAN BE ELIMINATED THROUGH THE VACCINATION OF DOGS.

If 70% of dogs are vaccinated against rabies the disease will be wiped out.

If people who are bitten by dogs or cats go for treatment – **THEY WILL NOT DIE.**

If everybody helps by looking after their dogs, feeding them and keeping them in their yard, it would stop dogs from wandering and getting rabies.

If children understand how dogs behave and when and how to avoid them, they can avoid being bitten.

Rabies can appear anywhere and anytime

Dogs with rabies sometimes run for many kilometres. A dog can have the virus in its body for months without showing symptoms or being dangerous. Therefore, someone buying puppies from another area can bring rabies into their area. These puppies or dogs can suddenly get sick and spread the disease in your community. It is very important that new puppies are vaccinated. When buying a new puppy first check if the bitch was vaccinated before moving the puppy; otherwise, have the puppy vaccinated immediately.

We need to vaccinate as many dogs (and cats) as possible.



Vaccinating dogs and cats is safe

Rabies vaccines are safe and will not affect your dog in any way.

It won't make your dog sick, aggressive or a worse hunter.

Vaccinate regardless of the age or size of your animal.

6. How do we vaccinate dogs when we come to the community?

- We inform the community one to two weeks before we are coming.
- We send a message through the Department of Health/Red Cross.
- Schools – Inform principles and ask them to put up information about vaccination day.
- Loudhailers – Advertise using loudhailers two days before and on the day of vaccination.
- Put up posters at tuck shops, churches etc.
- Radio



On the day of vaccination:

- We arrive with a group of vehicles (see below).
- Vehicles go up and down the roads, and people are called with loudhailers to bring their dogs to the road to be vaccinated.
- Certificates are issued to all owners by the vaccinators.



Static



clinics – For this we would ask a school or shop owner if we could use their premises for a clinic. Advertising a static clinic is done the same way as advertising a mobile clinic. With a static clinic, we stay in one place and people come to us. A clinic is only static if the people can bring their dogs to a central point easily. It works best in

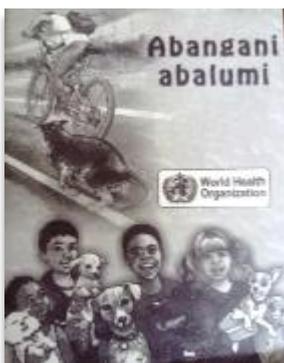
isolated villages.

7. How can you help – why we need you

Talk to school children

Talking to school children is one of the main ways to raise awareness. Ask schools to allow you 10 minutes in assembly or maybe even one lesson during school time.

- **Booklets** – You can use the booklets as teaching aid to teach the children about rabies, and to teach them to look after their pets and to avoid being bitten by a dog. These booklets should preferably be used to teach a class and not just be given out to all the kids. (Copies of the certificate can be made to reward kids for completing the workbook tasks.)



- **Comics** – These are stories that the kids can read and even act out in class. After each story you can go through the questions, and also educate through role-play. Again, comics should be used as a resource by the teachers and not given to the children, unless more are supplied. (One can be left in each library.)

Also use the other material we will supply you with – PowerPoint presentations, video clips (give copies to schools, so they can show them in their own time), colouring pages, etc. Be creative and make this education as interesting as possible.

Key message:

Stay away from any dog or cat that you do not know personally, especially stray or sick or injured animals. Do not touch them and do not play with them.



Get your dogs and cats vaccinated. IT IS THE LAW.



If you are bitten by a dog or cat:

1. Wash the wound thoroughly under running water for at least 15 minutes.
2. Put a disinfectant on the wound.
3. Go straight to a clinic or hospital.
4. Do not wait, act immediately.

It is important to teach kids how to avoid being bitten by dogs.

Children need to read a dog’s body language, and understand that dogs need to be treated with kindness and respect. Use the booklets, information sheets, posters and the PowerPoint presentations which include video clips.

HOW TO AVOID BEING BITTEN BY A DOG



IF BITTEN: -Immediately wash thoroughly with soap and running water for 10 minutes
- go to the hospital!

DOGGIE LANGUAGE

WHAT IS MY DOG TELLING ME?

BAD SIGNS



GOOD SIGNS



Learn to read a dog's body language yourself, and study it further. (See websites/flyers from the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) at the end of this booklet.)

Use as much of the educational material as you can to make the lessons as interesting as possible for the children.



Build a good relationship with all community members, especially community leaders

By building a good relationship with all the community members, especially community leaders, you can influence the community on a much bigger and wider scale and maybe even get help from the community leaders. So, one of the first things you should do is to contact the community and community leaders to let them know who you are and what you/we want to achieve.

KEY to success: relationships

If possible, get written approval from your community leader. Then go to schools, churches, and other institutions to let them know who you are and what you would like to do. Raising awareness about rabies through education!

8. To whom should the community report rabies problems?

Clinics – all people who are bitten by animals must go to a clinic the same day.

Get to know the nurses and sisters at local clinics so that they understand you are trying to help with rabies. You can also put up flyers at clinics and information about the next rabies vaccination drive for dogs. It all depends on the relationship you build up with the staff at clinics.

South African Police Service (SAPS) – if dogs are vicious and biting people it can be reported to the SAPS.

State animal health officials (state veterinarian) – suspect dogs and other animals must be reported to the state vet. (See list attached.)

KZN Department of Health – the **KZN** Department of Health can be contacted toll free on 0800 005 133

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) or tribal authorities – the SPCA or tribal authorities can also be contacted.

What should you do until help arrives?

First of all, stay calm. Warn the people about the animal and tell them to stay away from it. If you can safely confine the animal without risk, do so and alert the authorities. It is important to know where the animal is so that it can be taken away when help arrives.

Let's work together to make rabies history!

Contact details of state veterinarian officials

District	State veterinarian/Supervisor	Number
Illembe		032 437 7504
Uthukela		036 634 6300
Ugu		039 682 2020
Umzinyathi		034 299 9662
King Cetshwayo		035 474 2163
Ethekweni		031 328 9300
Hluhluwe		035 562 0207
Jozini		035 572 5303
Nongoma		035 874 9018
Harry Gwala		039 834 2974
Umgungundlovu		033 347 6247
Amajuba		034 315 3936
Vryheid		034 981 4416/7

Contact details of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health

Toll free number – 0800 005 133