

International Poster 3

Rabies in Georgia, 2011 (Georgia, Gardabani Region, Village of Nazarlo) August 2011 — December 14

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BACKGROUND: About five Georgians (from 4.5 million population), have died annually from rabies since 2005; similarly, 102 animals had laboratory-confirmed rabies. In August 2011, Georgia National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) and Ministry of Agriculture Laboratory (LMA) learned of human death due to rabies in the village of Nazarlo, Gardabani Region. We investigated to determine the extent of the outbreak and implement control measures.

METHODS: We visited households within 3km radius of residence of human rabies death. We collected data on demographics, animal bites, post-exposure rabies vaccination; NCDC and LMA provided laboratory results for rabies.

RESULTS: A 52 year-old man was bitten by stray dog on September 7, 2011; he was unvaccinated; became symptomatic on December 8; he died six days later; PCR confirmed rabies. We interviewed an adult in 149 nearby households (799 persons). Six additional persons were bitten by dogs (3 strays; 3 domestics) since August. The same dog bit the decedent and wife on one day. She received first dose of rabies vaccine as recommended, but stopped due to vaccination cost; she completed vaccination after her husband's diagnosis. Two more persons were bitten and completed vaccination; three others were bitten and unvaccinated. During August to December, two dogs died; bioassay confirmed rabies. We vaccinated 114 domestic animals against rabies.

CONCLUSION: Four bite-victims were not vaccinated due to cost. Following a correctly started post-rabies vaccination series, delayed completion probably prevented one human death. Diagnosis by bioassay requires 21 days, limiting its value to determine timely control measures. Persons at risk of rabies may refuse vaccination due to cost. We recommend education about the importance of rabies vaccination and development of dog vaccination programs.

KEYWORDS: rabies, vaccination, bioassay, health education, Georgia