

TOWARDS ZERO RABIES: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, A SHARED FUTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Rabies is one of the oldest and deadliest diseases known to humankind, yet it is also one of the most preventable. Every year, thousands of people lose their lives to rabies, and sadly, most of them are children who are bitten by infected dogs. India carries the world's highest burden, reporting nearly 20,000 human deaths annually.

What makes rabies even more tragic is that it is 100% preventable with timely vaccination of dogs and proper treatment after an animal bite. Still, lack of awareness, delay in treatment, and poor coordination between human and animal health services allow the disease to persist.

This is where the One Health approach becomes vital. By bringing together doctors, veterinarians, public health workers, and communities, rabies can be eliminated. It truly calls for an "All for One, One Health for All" effort to save lives and create a rabies-free future.

ONE HEALTH APPROACH

Systematic Data Collection - Routine reporting on dog population, rabies cases, and vaccination data to guide strategies.

Inter-sectoral Coordination - Improve collaboration and data sharing among human, animal, and environmental health sectors.

Surveillance - Include rabies under Animal Health monitoring, extend to wildlife

surveillance, and use oral rabies vaccines (ORV) for wildlife.

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)- Ensure sufficient, accessible PEP/PrEP nationwide, especially in rural areas; use Integrated Bite Case Management (IBCM).

Mass Dog Vaccination - Achieve $\geq 70\%$ coverage with compulsory, routine dog vaccination and booster follow-ups.

Vaccine Quality- Maintain cold chain and proper handling to ensure vaccine efficacy.

Awareness- Community education on rabies prevention, vaccination, and PEP availability.

Laboratory Capacity- Strengthen diagnostic labs, improve access, and use rapid test kits for screening.

Research- Conduct epidemiological and socio-economic studies to guide long-term control strategies.

CONCLUSION

Rabies remains a symbol of inequity, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations in endemic regions. Yet, its elimination is within reach. Through sustained

political commitment, cross-sectoral collaboration, and effective resource allocation, rabies can be eradicated as a human health threat. The vision of "All for One, One Health for All" is not only a goal for rabies but also a model for tackling future zoonotic diseases and strengthening global health security.

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