



RABIES

CASE DEFINITION

Rabies is a zoonotic viral disease, which infects domestic and wild animals. It is transmitted to other animals and humans through close contacts with saliva from infected animals (i.e. bites, scratches, licks on broken skin and mucous membranes). The symptoms include involvement of the respiratory, gastrointestinal and/or central nervous systems, hyperactivity (furious rabies) or paralysis (dumb rabies), coma and death.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Treatment

There is no treatment for active rabies. Once symptoms develop, death is the unfortunate outcome.

Prevention

Post-exposure treatment

As part of wound management, the most effective mechanism of protection against rabies is to immediately vigorously wash and flush wound or point of contact with antiseptic solution (chlorhexidine) or soap and water. Anti-rabies vaccine should be given for Category II and III exposures as soon as possible. Anti-rabies immunoglobulin should also be given for all Category III exposures and for Category II exposures in immunosuppressed patients. Suturing should be avoided.

Animal vaccination

Prevent rabies through dog and cat vaccination. The veterinary services should be notified and information obtained on the epidemiological situation in the area.

Health Education

Ensure regular vaccination campaigns of domestic canines.