Awareness of rabies and response to dog bites in a Bangladesh community - DTU Orbit (26/04/2019)

**Awareness of rabies and response to dog bites in a Bangladesh community**

Community awareness regarding rabies and treatment seeking behaviours are critical both for the prevention and control of the disease in human and animals. We conducted a study to explore people's awareness about rabies, their attitudes towards dogs and practices associated with treating dog bites in Satkhira Sadar, a south-western sub-district of Bangladesh. Of the total 3200 households (HHs) surveyed, the majority of the respondents have heard about rabies (73%) and there was a high level of awareness that dog bite is the main cause of rabies (86%), and that rabies can be prevented by vaccination (85%). However, 59% of the dog bite victims first seek treatment from traditional healers instead of visiting the hospitals, 29% received the rabies vaccine, 2% practiced proper wound washing with soap and water, while 4.8% have not taken any measures. None of the victims have received rabies immunoglobulin (RIG). Of the respondents, 5.2% reported a history of dog bite in at least one family member, and 11.8% reported a history of dog bite in domestic animals during the previous year. The HHs having a higher number of family members (OR: 1.13, 95% CI: 1.07–1.2), having a pet dog (OR: 2.1, 95% CI: 1.4–3.2) and caring or feeding a community dog (OR: 2.1, 95% CI: 1.4–2.9) showed an increased risk of getting a dog bite. Among the bite victims, 3.6% (n = 6) humans and 15.8% (n = 60) animals died. As a measure for dog population management (DPM), 56% preferred sterilization while the rest preferred killing of dogs. The current treatment seeking behaviours of the respondents should be improved through additional education and awareness programme and better availability for the provision of post-exposure prophylaxis in Bangladesh. We recommend scaling up national mass dog vaccination and DPM to reduce the burden of rabies cases and dog bites in Bangladesh.

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