

Rabies Surveillance in the Rural Population of Cluj County — Romania

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Abstract — Between April 1998 and December 2004 Cluj County reported 1008 cases of human exposure to potential rabid animals (April 1998 – December 1998 n=103 cases; year 1999 n=164 cases; year 2000 n=150 cases; year 2001 n=163 cases; year 2002 n=150; year 2003 n=119 cases; year 2004 n=159 cases). 334 cases (33.13%) were reported among patients under the age of 16 of which 192 were boys and 142 were girls.

The relative contributions of the major groups of animal aggressors were as follows: 882 dogs (81.55%), 51 cats (5.06%), 30 foxes (2.98%), 28 horses (2.78%), 19 rats (1.89%) and 58 other animals (5.74%).

Post exposure prophylaxis with antirabies serum immune globulin was prescribed in 90 cases of which 50 cases were in patients under the age of 16. Vaccine was recommended in 726 cases of which 243 cases were in patients under the age of 16.

283 patients out of 726 (38.98%) underwent complete vaccine prophylaxis, 88 of them being under the age of 17. 443 (61.02%) patients did not undergo a complete vaccine prophylaxis. 155 of those patients were 16 years old or younger.

During 1998 - 2004 the number of cases of rabies diagnosed in humans was 6 (3 cases in the year 2000 and 3 cases in 2002), none of those cases were diagnosed in the population of Cluj County.

Diagnoses in animals suspected of having rabies were made by direct immunofluorescent antibody staining of rabies viral antigen in brain material. The number of animals tested positive for rabies during April 1998 – December 2004 was 49. More than 77% (n=38) were in wild animals, and 23% were in domestic species. The relative contributions of the major groups of animals were as follows: 33 foxes (67.35%), 7 dogs (14.29%), 2 wolves (4.08%) and 7 other animals (14.29%).

Due to the fatal risk of rabies in human beings, the persistence of the virus in this geographic area justifies the recommendations of prophylactic procedures for exposed persons to potential rabid animals.