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Distribution and outcomes of animal bites in the Mbale region of eastern Uganda

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Abstract:

Animal bites can lead to rabies, tetanus, and skin/soft tissue infection, and are a significant cause of global morbidity and mortality. Although an average of 16,414 animal bites are reported each year in Uganda, there is a paucity of data on animal bites in the country. In this cross-sectional study, we aimed to determine the distribution and outcomes of animal bites in the Mbale region of eastern Uganda. We collected data on demographic characteristics of those with animal bites in the Uganda District Health Information Software 2 database maintained by the Uganda Ministry of Health. We included data that were reported from January-December 2022 from outpatient departments in the 16 districts of the Mbale region. We determined frequencies and proportions of each variable and used the QGIS to present the analyzed data. Animal bites were documented in 984 of 4,656,700 patient visits to health centers in the Mbale region. During the same period, a total of 15,261 rabies exposures were reported in the country with 833 (5%) reported from the Mbale region. Of those bitten by animals in the Mbale region, 540 (55%) were male and the median (interquartile range) age was 17.5 (7.5-25.5) years. The frequency of animal bites ranged from 10 to 20 per week. Bukwo, Tororo, and Busia districts had the highest prevalence rates of animal bites in the Mbale region with 1.74, 1.68, and 0.81 bites per 1000 population, respectively. Of those bitten, there were 7 deaths (case fatality ratio 0.71%), all of which were attributed to rabies. Animal bites and rabies exposure are common in the Mbale region. Our findings emphasize the need for the availability and administration of routine and post-exposure vaccination to prevent rabies and tetanus following animal bites in the high prevalence at-risk Mbale region of eastern Uganda.

Category (Complete): Viruses - Field and ecological studies of viruses, including surveillance and spillover risk and emergence

Approach (Complete):

Approach: Population surveillance

Presentation Preference (Complete): Oral

Keyword (Complete): Animal bites ; Rabies ; Vaccination

Disclosures (Complete):

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