Program Update

Mary Akinyi* walks into a health clinic in a remote village in Siaya looking for help to treat a dog bite for her son. She is unsure if the dog who bit her 10 year old son has rabies and wants to make sure he is safe.

Mary’s situation is very different than people seeking treatment in the west. She had to walk several kilometers with her son to get to the clinic without knowing if the post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) would be available. Payment for PEP is not cheap either. The cost for the four courses is about $100, which is significant for someone living on $2 per day. Since the treatment is spread over 28 days, this means additional trips to the clinic.

The Rabies Free Africa team in Kenya has been researching these challenges with a goal of increasing access to PEP. Led by Dr. Thumbi Mwangi, they are looking at how to overcome the barriers of lack of information on the must-do’s...
Thumbi and team have visited with Mary's home village as part of the outreach effort to increase access to rabies PEP. We know that many people are unable to make it to the health clinic, or afford the care, so Thumbi and his team travel to villages that have had suspected cases and talk with anyone who might also have been bitten. It is critical that the health facilities do not run out of anti-rabies human vaccines, so the rabies research team works closely with the local governments to highlight shortages in places with rabid dogs.

The outreach effort is part of a larger study looking at increasing access to and affordability of the rabies PEP through the national government to prevent human death from rabies. This study was used, alongside others from around the globe, to encourage the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) to source rabies PEP for countries where the disease is still prevalent. GAVI is an international organization that strives to save lives and improve health by making new and underused vaccines available. GAVI's decision will make rabies PEP more accessible and affordable for the people who need it most.

Action like this is the goal of Rabies Free Africa and the WSU Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health. Research conducted by faculty provides proven guides for local and national governments to improve healthcare systems. The team is able to leverage knowledge gained from research to increase access to life-saving prevention or treatment options through international organizations, governments, foundations or non-governmental organizations.

Mark your calendars for World Rabies Day:

**Saturday, September 28, 2019**

As we get closer to the date, you will received information from us about how you can help spread the word on this global awareness day.

**Animals to humans: how culture impacts infectious disease**

Join Dr. Kariuki Njenga, Country Director of the WSU Global Health Program – Kenya at the Pacific Science Center on July 9 to learn how culture impacts infectious disease transmission.

When outbreaks of infectious diseases strike, one obvious solution is to increase health education. But lack of education is only one of many factors contributing to the issue. Dr. Njenga will discuss zoonotic illnesses in sub-Saharan Africa: diseases that can pass
son lost the battle with the killer virus.

“This is life and death work!” Thumbi asserts. Every rabies death is horrible and very painful for the family. To stop these preventable deaths, the team is researching optimizing rabies vaccinations in the dogs and placement of life-saving vaccines within reach of bite victims – with a deep sense of urgency!

*name changed to provide privacy for the family

findings that suggest a region's own culture and the occupation of its people – NOT a lack of health education – contribute most to these outbreaks.

The lecture is free. Food and drinks will be available for purchase.

Register today online.

Quick Links

Clinic Toolkit
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Why Partner

Beyond Vaccination
To support veterinarians and to help provide the manpower needed to vaccinate all dogs in the country on an ongoing basis, livestock field officers are being mobilized in Tanzania. The field officers, who each cover an administrative ward that consists of approximately four villages, will manage stocks of rabies vaccines and will vaccinate dogs throughout their area.

Every three months, field officers will receive a fresh batch of rabies vaccines, which they will store at the ward level in a refrigerator called a Zeepot. The Zeepot is made from clay and will help keep the vaccine cool to maintain viability over the three months. The field officers will vaccinate any new dogs to the area, including puppies born since the last visit. The intention is that by having the vaccine readily available locally and administered more frequently, more dogs will be vaccinated and the herd immunity will be maintained at or above the threshold to break the rabies transmission cycle.

This program is starting in nine districts in Tanzania this month. We will keep you updated about the program as it progresses.

Social Media

Check out the most popular post on social media. You can share them too!

Facebook

Twitter

Parents had the chance to combine #rabies vaccines for their dogs with #deworming treatment for their kids as part of a research project funded by the @gatesfoundation One Tri. two treatments! #GlobalDayOfParents @fekxjlankester @W5UGlobalHealth ow.ly/BcKm50umVRU
Our mailing address is:
WSU Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health
PO Box 647090
Pullman, WA 99164

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