

1 ZOOTIC AND VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

a An update on rabies in South Africa, 2017

A case of rabies was confirmed in a three-year-old male child from Zimbabwe. The child was scratched by stray dog in May 2017 in Zimbabwe (exact location or date not clear at time of report). The patient did receive injections post-bite, but the exact post-exposure prophylaxis regimen could not be established. The patient was admitted to a Johannesburg hospital on 4 August with fever, hypersalivation, vomiting and depressed consciousness. Rabies was confirmed by RT-PCR on three saliva specimens collected at different time points. The patient demised on 11 August.

To date, two human rabies cases have been reported in South Africa, excluding the case reported here, which was not acquired in South Africa. Both South African cases were reported from the north-east part of the Eastern Cape Province, which remains one of the highest risk areas.

An increasing number of dog rabies cases in several coastal districts of KwaZulu-Natal requires increased vigilance and consideration for possible human exposures (Figure 1). Cases of rabies in animals

were also reported from the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and North West provinces during the month of July 2017 (Agriculture Research Council- Onderstepoort Veterinary Research and Allerton Provincial Veterinary Laboratory).

For more information regarding the guidelines for post-exposure prophylaxis in humans, please visit the NICD website, www.nicd.ac.za.

Source: Centre for Emerging, Zoonotic and Parasitic Diseases, NICD/NHLS; (januszp@nicd.ac.za); Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital; Allerton Provincial Veterinary Laboratory and Agriculture Research Council — Onderstepoort Veterinary Research

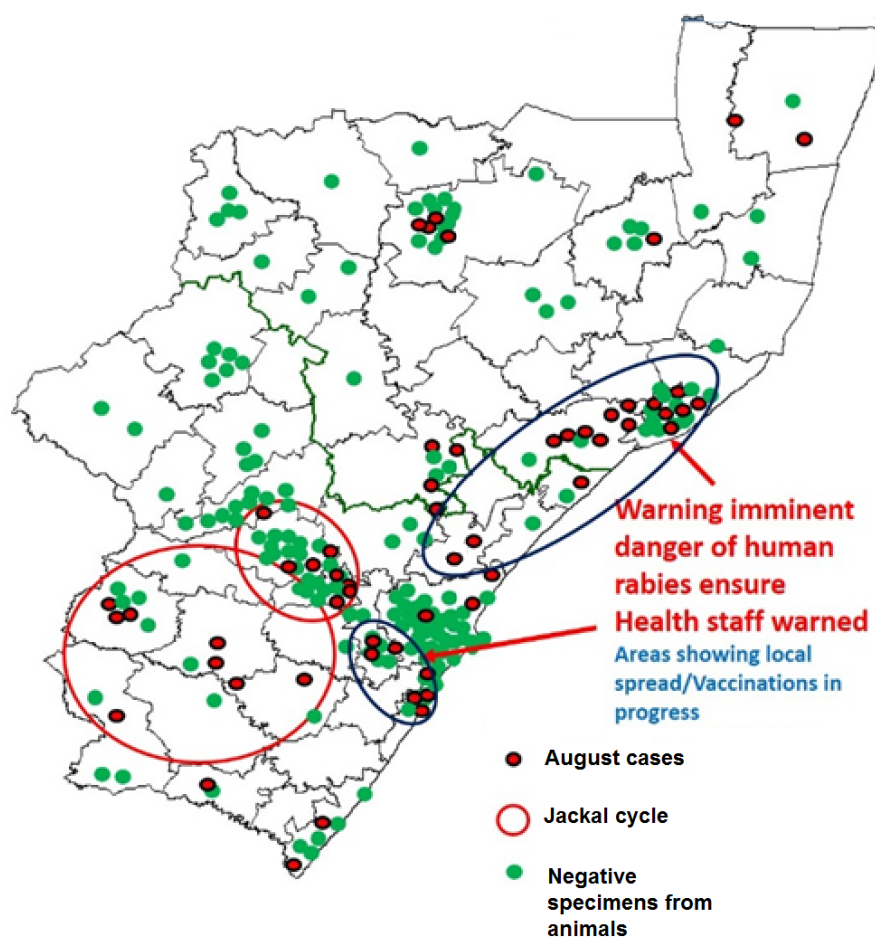


Figure 1.

Map indicating laboratory-based surveillance for rabies amongst animals in KwaZulu-Natal for 2017 to date. Two cycles of rabies virus circulation have been identified in the province: a domestic dog cycle and a jackal cycle. The major concern currently, is the increase in domestic dog cases as indicated in the blue circles (Contribution by Allerton Provincial Veterinary Laboratory).