
by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Scientiae (Veterinary Science) in the Department of Paraclinical Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria, South Africa

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty, for the strength and ability to do this work even in the midst of so much challenges and discouragement. Glory be to God Almighty (Amen).
DECLARATION

I, Stella Ejura Idachaba, hereby declare that the work on this thesis is original and that neither the whole work or part of it has been, is being, or shall be submitted for another degree at this or any other university, institution for tertiary education or professional examining body.

______________________________
Stella Ejura Idachaba (DVM)

12 January 2009

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Date
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgment</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Plates</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**  
1  
1.1 Background  
1.2 Motivation  
1.3 Research problem  
1.4 Hypothesis  
1.5 Objectives  
1.6 Work Plan
## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
2.2 Aetiology
2.3 Epidemiology
2.3.1 Distribution and transmission
2.3.2 Potential sources of human infection
2.4 Symptoms
2.4.1 Rabies in dogs
2.4.2 Symptoms of human disease
2.5 Diagnosis
2.5.1 Laboratory diagnosis
2.5.2 Differential diagnosis
2.5.3 Differential diagnosis of rabies in humans
2.6 Control
2.7 Human immunization and post-exposure treatment
2.7.1 General consideration in rabies post-exposure treatment
2.8 Literature review of the status of rabies in Nigeria

## CHAPTER 3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Model system and justification of model
3.1.1 Study area
3.1.2 Study design
3.2 Observational and analytical procedure and statistical tools
3.2.1 Data analysis
3.2.2 Statistical analysis
3.2.3 Decision tree analysis
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS  

4.1 Overview  

4.2 Relative frequency of canine rabies vaccination  

4.2.1 Dogs seen by private veterinary clinics in Jos City  

4.2.2 Canine rabies mass vaccination campaign, Plateau State 2007  

4.2.3 Calculated relative frequency of canine rabies vaccination  

4.2.4 Estimated dog population in Plateau State and dog: human ratio  

4.3 Incidence of canine rabies  

4.3.1 Estimated annual incidence of canine rabies  

4.3.1.1 The estimated incidence of canine rabies using the cases recorded in the NVRI rabies diagnostic laboratory  

4.3.1.2 Estimated annual incidence from PSVH:  

4.3.1.3 Estimated annual incidence from FCAH&PT:  

4.3.1.4 Distribution of rabies cases in LGA’s:  

4.3.2 Seasonal trend  

4.3.3 Geographical coordinates  

4.3.4 Cultural beliefs about rabies in Plateau State  

4.4 Incidence of human rabies  

4.4.1 Data on dog bites from medical facilities  

4.4.2 Informal interviews with members of the public in Plateau State  

4.4.3 Expert opinions  

4.4.4 Symptoms and signs of rabies
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Canine rabies diagnosis

5.1.1 Mass canine rabies vaccination campaign

5.2 Incidence of human rabies

5.3 Dog bites and rabies data from human facilities

5.4 Informal interviews

5.4.1 Traditional treatment

5.5 Risk analysis

5.5.1 Hazard identification and characterization

5.6 Mitigation strategy

5.7 Communication strategy

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6 Conclusions

6.1 Recommendations

CHAPTER 7 REFERENCES

APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>Table 1, 2 and 3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>Questionnaires for veterinarians and medical personnel and responses</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>Posters and pamphlet designed</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1 Canine rabies mass vaccination record for Plateau State from August to September 2007</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2 Expert opinion on dog population</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3 Number of positive canine rabies cases diagnosed from different LGA's in study area</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4 Monthly distributions of positive canine rabies Cases as recorded by NVRI-RDL</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.5 Geographical coordinates (Locations)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.6 Annual distribution of dog bite cases from hospitals investigated in Plateau State</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.7 Doses of post-exposure treatment used for dog bite patients in dog bite</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.8 Age distribution of dog bite victims</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.9 Expert Opinion Survey of medical personnel</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.1</td>
<td>Canine rabies vaccination records of GVC’s in Jos Central and ten LGA’s in Plateau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.2</td>
<td>Canine rabies vaccination records of private veterinary clinics within Jos city (Plateau State Nigeria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.3</td>
<td>Dogs seen by GVC’s in Jos Central and different LGA’s over the ten year period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.4</td>
<td>Dogs seen by private veterinary clinics in Jos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.5</td>
<td>Canine rabies mass vaccination campaign 2007, number of doses used (Indicated the number of dogs vaccinated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.6</td>
<td>Annual distribution of positive canine rabies cases in Plateau state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 4.7</td>
<td>GIS map showing location of positive samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig 5.1</td>
<td>Decision tree on probabilities of rabies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF PLATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLATES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plate 1.1 Map of Nigeria showing Plateau State</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 1.2 Map of Plateau State, Nigeria: study area showing different LGA's</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 2.1 A rabid dog showing aggression</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 2.2 A patient (male) showing muscle spasm</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate 2.3 A child with a bite on the face caused by a rabid dog</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDICES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tables 1, 2 and 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B 1-4</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires for Veterinarians and Medical doctors and responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C1-5</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk communication pamphlet and posters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D1-4</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVS</td>
<td>Director of Veterinary Services Plateau State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA’s</td>
<td>Local Government Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GVC</td>
<td>Government Veterinary Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVC</td>
<td>Private Veterinary Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVRI</td>
<td>National Veterinary Research Institute Vom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDL</td>
<td>Rabies Diagnostic Laboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEP</td>
<td>Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARV</td>
<td>Antirabies Vaccine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRIG</td>
<td>Human Rabies Immunoglobulin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERIG</td>
<td>Equine derived Rabies Immunoglobulin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFAT</td>
<td>Immunofluorescent Antibody Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUTH</td>
<td>Jos University Teaching Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECWA</td>
<td>Evangelical Church of West Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLA</td>
<td>Our Lady of Apostle Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSSH</td>
<td>Plateau State Specialist Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSVH</td>
<td>Plateau State Veterinary Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCAH&amp; PT</td>
<td>Federal College of Animal Health and Production Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographical Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PET</td>
<td>Post Exposure Treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>Low Egg Passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEP</td>
<td>High Egg Passage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY

Title:


Researcher Name : Stella Ejura Idachaba
Promoter : Professor C M E McCrindle
Department : Paraclinical Science
Degree : MSc (Veterinary Sciences)

Abstract

The aim of the study was to assess the risk rabies constitutes to the public in Plateau State. Despite the existence of regulations on antirabies vaccination, dog movement and population control (WHO, 1997; WHO, 2004), rabies remains a public health problem in Nigeria. Most reported cases of rabies deaths in humans and canines are associated with unvaccinated dogs, and the infection could be prevented through appropriate vaccination as recommended by the law of the state.

This research established the canine rabies vaccination coverage of Plateau State. The status of human rabies, canine rabies and mitigation strategies for control of rabies were also determined. A total of 760 cases were recorded; n=5
(0.66%) cases of human rabies, n=751 (98.8%) in dogs and n=4 (0.5%) in cats in the study period (1998-2007).

Research indicated a low prevalence of human rabies in Plateau State which may be attributed to under-reporting, although showing 100% cases of recorded human rabies were due to dog exposure, a high status of canine rabies in the state with a prevalence rate of >59% with a sharp increase in the rate of occurrence of canine rabies in the years 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. The high level of occurrence persisted in 2005, 2006 and 2007 indicating its endemicity in the state. All the purposively selected ten local government areas visited indicated occurrence and passive canine rabies control surveillance in the state, with a canine rabies vaccine coverage of 10.57%.

Informal interviews with medical doctors in the state and members of the public showed that citizens at risk of contracting rabies do not go for the pre-exposure prophylactic treatments. It appears that many of the citizens of Plateau State still see rabies as ‘insignificant’ and do not take serious measures to prevent or control the occurrence of the disease in the state. During the study n=72 purposively selected citizens of the state were interviewed. Of these, n=9 persons indicated they were ignorant of the disease, n=25, said that they would not vaccinate their dogs because it changed the taste of dog meat and affected the canine teeth of hunting and protection dogs. Only n-23 always vaccinated their dogs for preventive purposes, because they had heard about the disease and wanted their dogs and themselves to be safe, this group appeared to be pet dog owners. Also, n=15 persons could not remember vaccinating their dogs.
An aggressive enlightenment campaign should be carried out to create awareness of the endemicity of rabies in the state and of the importance of post-exposure prophylaxis in people bitten by dogs, as this does not seem to be happening. There appears to be a lack of record keeping and this deficiency must be made a priority in order to do effective surveillance and control of canine rabies in Plateau State.

It was also recommended that there is a need for active and effective collaboration between veterinarians, medical doctors and environmental specialists to help control and prevent the occurrence of rabies in Plateau State.

Veterinary extension and communication strategies were used to develop risk communication and risk mitigation and were demonstrated by the preparation of posters and pamphlets appropriate for use in Plateau State Nigeria.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The endemicity of rabies in Nigeria has been well documented (Bougler & Hardy, 1960; Owolodun, 1969; Banerjee & Elegbe, 1970; MacAdam, 1976; Opaleye et al., 2006). Although available records on rabies in Nigeria are far from complete, reports of human deaths from rabies in the country are a matter of great concern (Bryceson et al., 1975; Fagbami et al., 1981; Opaleye et al., 2006). Fagbami and his co-workers reported 99% of rabies victims in Nigeria contracted the disease from dogs. The Nigerian public is largely aware that rabies results from dog-bites (Harry et al., 1984). A substantial body of epidemiological theory has been developed over the past 20 years, in relation to the design of vaccination programmes, mainly in the context of infectious diseases of humans (Anderson & May, 1991). An epidemiological theory has however been applied much less to veterinary vaccination programmes and relatively few empirical data sets are available to test the predictions of epidemiological theory (Cleaveland et al., 2003).

Rabies is a fatal disease distributed all over the world, which can be eliminated by vaccination of reservoir animal populations (Wolfgang, 1999; Cleaveland et al., 2003). It is an acute viral disease that attacks the central nervous systems of its victim and is passed from animal to animal or human to human through bites or scratches. Direct human to human transmission has also been described (Fekadu
et al., 1982; Seifert, 1996; Wolfgang, 1999; Bishop et al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005; CDC, 2007; WHO, 2008). The rabies virus is mainly contained in the saliva of animals (Seifert, 1996; Bishop et al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005; CDC, 2007; WHO, 2008) but tears, urine, serum and other body fluids may be infectious as well (Wolfgang, 1999). There is little or no chance of survival after the onset of clinical symptoms, thus the concept of treatment is to remove and neutralize the infectious virus before it enters the nervous system (Wolfgang, 1999; Bishop et al, 2002; Swanepoel, 2005; CDC, 2007; WHO, 2008). However, during 2004, an unvaccinated Wisconsin patient received a new medical treatment and became the first documented survivor of rabies who had not received pre-exposure vaccination or post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), suggesting the possibility of successful future interventions (Pro Med, 2006).

1.2 Motivation

A few surveillance studies of the epidemiological status of rabies and canine and human vaccination have been carried out in Plateau State Nigeria, but records are scanty and not properly collated and stored. This study should provide current data on the occurrence of rabies in humans and dogs in Plateau state, Nigeria. Maps of Nigeria and Plateau state are shown in Plates 1.1 and 1.2.

The data obtained will be used to calculate the incidence of rabies in the state, and thus add to the knowledge of the epidemiology of rabies. It should also create better awareness of the status of rabies and further stimulates the interest of the population at risk in the prevention and control of rabies.
Plate 1.1 Map of Nigeria showing Plateau State

Plate 1.2 Map of Plateau State, Nigeria. Study area showing different local government areas (LGA's)
1.3 Research Problem

Reliable data on rabies is scarce in many areas of the globe, making it difficult to assess its full impact on human and animal health. Prevention of human rabies must be a community effort involving both the veterinary and public health officials (WHO, 2004; 2008).

In Nigeria, canine rabies is thought to be on the increase in Plateau State. Due to the fact that rabies constitutes a severe public health threat, it is proposed that a further study of the epidemiological status of rabies in the state be carried out. An attempt will be made to enlighten the public about the risk of this disease in Plateau State and possibly other parts of Nigeria. This poses the following research questions:

- What hazard does rabies pose to the public (hazard characterization)? [relative frequency in dogs]
- What is the risk of transmission (risk assessment and exposure assessment)? [relative frequency in humans]
- What mitigation of the risk of rabies is in place?
- What possible future strategies can be suggested for risk mitigation?
- What possibilities are there for risk communication?

From these research questions, the hypothesis was developed.
1.4 Hypothesis

That the risk of rabies transmission to humans by dogs is high in Plateau State, Nigeria, because the majority (>50%) of the cases of rabies are as a result of rabid dog bites and vaccination coverage in dogs throughout the State is less than 70%.

1.5 Objectives

The following objectives have been identified:

- To determine the number of dog rabies cases reported to major veterinary hospitals in Plateau State over a ten year period (1998 – 2007), using retrospective records from the veterinary clinic and diagnostic division, NVRI Vom, Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) veterinary clinic in Bukuru, as well as the Plateau State Veterinary Hospital at Jos.

- To determine the incidence of human exposure to dog bites using retrospective records from the medical facilities at Plateau State Specialist Hospital and the Jos University Teaching Hospital, over the same ten year period.

- To compare rabies control in Nigeria with WHO and OIE guidelines.

- To propose risk mitigation and risk communication strategies on the basis of results received from the above retrospective records in various facilities visited for data collection within the state.

1.6 Work Plan

The work plan is summarised below:
• Human medical health care facilities will be visited to obtain retrospective data from records of human rabies within the study period. Prior to the record search, three medical officers from each of the different facilities will be interviewed on their experiences of the management of human rabies cases seen and dog-bite wounds. Information on standard procedures used for human pre and post-exposure prophylaxis will be recorded.

• Veterinary practices in the different Local Government Areas (LGA’s) and major veterinary facilities where rabies cases are handled, will be visited to investigate records of rabies cases encountered and managed within the study period. Data will be obtained retrospectively from these records of anti-rabies vaccine coverage in the state over the ten year period.

• An interview will be conducted with the chief veterinarian in the state to get details on legislation concerning rabies and the on-going control measures used in Plateau State.

• After returning to the Section of Veterinary Public Health (VPH) in the Department of Paraclinical Studies at the Veterinary faculty of the University of Pretoria, the data will be analysed using Microsoft Excel ©.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

“The horrendous manner in which rabies manifests itself in its victims continues to attract the attention of scientists, health and veterinary workers”  
(Bishop et al, 2002).

Rabies is a transmissible viral disease that affects both animals and humans. It is a fatal disease of humans and all other mammals, caused by a virus which has been associated with animal bites for more than 3,000 years and it is the oldest infectious disease known to medical science (Rupprecht et al., 1987; Wilkinson, 1988; Bishop et al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005). Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of rabies infected animals (Bryceson et al., 1975; WHO, 2004; Swanepoel, 2005; Luyang, 2006; Morales et al., 2006; Paweska et al., 2006; CDC, 2007). It is a viral infection that causes acute, progressive encephalitis and is considered to be universally fatal (Pro Med, 2006; Coetzee & Nel, 2007). Rabies however, remains a vaccine- preventable disease but is still a significant public health problem in many countries in Asia and Africa (WHO, 2008). Domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*) have long been recognised as the main transmitters of the disease to people (Foggin, 1982; King & Turner, 1993; Oboegbulem, 1994; WHO, 2004; Haiying & Boayan, 2006; Sengoz, *et al.*, 2006; WHO, 2008). Rabies virus is one of the most widespread animal viruses and continues to scourge virtually the entire globe as the agent of severe and lethal
encephalopathy of all terrestrial mammals, including man (WHO, 2004; Swanepoel, 2005; Coetzee & Nel, 2007). Over 99% of human cases of rabies are as a result of exposure to rabid dogs and nearly all cases terminate in death of the affected individual (Swanepoel, 2005; Goudsmil et al.; 2006; Lodmell et al., 2006; Blanton et al., 2007; WHO, 2008).

Recently, there have been several developments in the knowledge of rabies and its control measures. Molecular biology has revealed that several different strains of the virus exist and some strains appear to show clear host preferences. This opens the possibility of more specific diagnosis and epidemiological studies (Bishop et al., 2002). Luyang (2006), suggested that as rabies is a public health problem internationally, there should be strengthening of health education on prevention and control, in order to enhance people’s consciousness of self protection and motivate for regular immunization of dogs and cats. This is in accordance with the OIE’s suggestion in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Thrusfield, 2005; O.I.E, 2008). The spread of canine rabies depends on the tradition of human-dog interactions as well as on the structure and density of the existing dog population, with feral and stray dogs playing crucial roles (Beck, 1975; Tierkel, 1975; Umoh & Belino, 1979).

2.2 Aetiology

Rabies is caused by a virus of the family Rhabdoviridae and the genus Lyssavirus. This type of specie is now called Lyssavirus 1 (Swanepoel, 1994; Seifert, 1996; Swanepoel, 2005). The virus is bullet-shaped, measuring 180x75nm and consists
of a nucleocapsid measuring size 160x50nm which is surrounded by a bilayer lipid envelope derived from host cell membranes (M), through which flattened spikes, or peplomeres project. It contains an RNA genome (Charlton 1994; Seifert, 1996; Coetzee & Nel, 2007).

2.3 Epidemiology

Rabies is an ancient disease and its history traces back more than 3,000 years (Bishop et al., 2002), yet it remains an important global disease (Lackay et al., 2008) with over 50,000 annual fatalities (Swanepoel, 2005; Goudsmil et al., 2006; Lodmell et al., 2006; Blanton et al., 2007; WHO, 2008). Most of the human cases occur in Asia and Africa, where dog rabies remains endemic or epizootic, and thus the main source for human exposure (Fu, 1997). An enzootic viral disease widespread throughout the world, it is a vaccine preventable disease (Sugiyama & Ito, 2007).

2.3.1 Distribution and transmission

Rabies is widely distributed throughout the world and it is present in all continents (Rupprecht et al., 1987; Wolfgang, 1999; CDC, 2008; WHO, 2008). Canine rabies has existed in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt for centuries; these countries reporting more than 100 cases a year in dogs (Cleaveland et al., 2002).

The natural transmission of rabies from animal to animal or to man is via bites as the virus is present in the saliva of the affected animal (Wilkinson, 1988; Bishop et
al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005). As the virus is excreted in saliva, infection can also occasionally occur via scratches infected with saliva although the infection rate is 50 times lower (McKay & Wallis, 2005). There is no substantiated case of transmission by human saliva, although transmission from human to human has been described through organ transplants (WHO, 2004). Two types of rabies epidemiology are described. The first is the so-called “street form”, “urban rabies” or “canid rabies” where the domestic dog is the main vector and there is a very high risk to humans. Secondly, the so-called “sylvatic form” where the disease circulates in the wildlife population and man is only an accidental or occasional host (Bishop et al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005). In Nigeria, the urban form is probably the most significant (Opaleye et al., 2006).

2.3.2 Potential sources of human infection

The potential sources of human infection are listed as:

- Any infected animal that has started to excrete the virus in the pre-clinical phase, several days before clinical signs are seen, in countries where rabies is endemic in wildlife, pets and livestock (Bishop et al., 2002; Coetzee & Nel, 2007; OIE, 2008).

- The only infective and zoonotic source of rabies in the United Kingdom (UK) is in that part of the bat population, which is infected with the EBLV2 (and possibly EBLV1) strain of the virus (McKay & Wallis, 2005; CDC, 2007).

- Workers in quarantine kennels or dealing with animals imported illegally and or the owners of those animals may be exposed to infection brought in from abroad in countries such as UK, Australia and New Zealand, where rabies is not endemic (WHO, 2004).
• In countries with established infections, infected wildlife or companion animals would be the most likely sources (WHO, 2006).

2.4 Symptoms

2.4.1 Rabies in dogs

The domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*) has been described as the natural reservoir or vector host of the virus, depending on the author (Foggin, 1982; King & Turner, 1993; Oboegbulem, 1994; WHO, 2004; Haiying & Boayan, 2006; Sengoz, *et al*., 2006; Lackay *et al*., 2008; WHO, 2008).

Plate 2.1 A rabid dog showing aggression *(Source: WHO, 2008)*

Dogs represent more than 75% of rabid animals in most African countries (Okoh, 2000; Bishop *et al*., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005).

A photograph of a dog in the aggressive phase of rabies is shown in Plate 2.1
The classical course of rabies in dogs has the following three stages:

- The prodromal stage. The dog is shy, quite or unusually friendly.

- The excitation stage (raging fury). This stage is characterised by restlessness, excitement, aggressiveness, a mania for biting and snapping at any object. At this stage, the saliva is highly infective.

- The paralysis stage or silent fury. This stage appears shortly before death (Charlton, 1994; Seifert, 1996; Bishop et al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005).

2. 4. 2 Symptoms of human disease

The incubation period of the disease may range between 9 days to 2 years in humans, but is generally 2-8 weeks (Bishop et al., 2002; McKay & Wallis, 2005). Early symptoms may include numbness or tingling around the bite site, fever, loss of appetite, tiredness, weakness, headaches, or other aches and pains (Bishop et al., 2002; Lackay et al., 2008). Later, stimulation of any of the senses (by touch, noise or light etc) may provoke violent and painful muscle spasms (See Plate 2.2).

Hydrophobia and maniac behaviour may alternate with periods of full comprehension. The disease progresses to paralysis and coma, and death follows from respiratory arrest (WHO, 2001; Bishop et al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005; Lackay et al., 2008).
Plate 2.2 A patient (male) showing muscle spasm. (Source: Wikipedia, free encyclopedia, 2008)

The severity, location and multiplicity of bites inflicted on the victim influence the outcome. Bites on the head and neck result in the shortest incubation (resulting in a quick manifestation of clinical signs and symptoms in humans; Headache, malaise, restlessness and hydrophobia seen almost immediately) periods and the highest mortality rate (Seifert, 1996; Bishop et al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005).

Rabies should be suspected in any case where a dog or human (patient) presents with neurological signs after having been bitten by a rabid dog or other mammal, particularly in an endemic area (Bishop et al., 2002; McKay & Wallis, 2005; Swanepoel, 2005). Plate 2.3 shows a child with a bite on the face caused by a rabid dog.

Plate 2.3 A child with a bite on the face caused by a rabid dog. (Source WHO, 2008.)

2.5 Diagnosis

No intravitam test for rabies exists, therefore determination of whether to kill an animal and examine its brain for evidence of rabies depends on the situation of attack. Stray and unwanted domestic dogs and cats involved in unprovoked biting incidents are killed and tested (Smith, 1996). If the animal is not overtly “rabid”, it
can be observed for 10 days (Seifert, 1996; Bishop et al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005).

Euthanasia of the animal is always considered after an attack or bite by animals, especially dogs showing rabies symptoms, in order to make a diagnosis and treat the human concerned (Oboegbulem, 1994; Seifert, 1996; Bishop et al., 2002; McKay & Wallis, 2005; Swanepoel, 2005).

No tests are currently available to diagnose rabies infection in humans before the onset of clinical disease (Smith, 1996; WHO, 1997; Jackson, 2007). Hence diagnosis in human patients is based on clinical history, symptoms and signs, supported by epizootiological information (Fu, 1997; McKay & Wallis, 2005; Jackson, 2007). Diagnosis is usually made at autopsy, if rabies is suspected and the patient dies (Swanepoel, 2005).

2.5.1 Laboratory diagnosis

The brain tissue is examined and rabies antigen detected within a few hours by direct immunoflourescence. The direct immunoflourescent-antibody (dIFA) test is the preferred test for rabies diagnosis (Smith, 1996; Bishop et al., 2002; McKay & Wallis, 2005; Swanepoel, 2005). The dIFA test is rapid, sensitive, specific, easy to perform, and relatively inexpensive (Dean et al, 1996; Smith, 1996; WHO, 1999).
The immuno-peroxidase test can also be used on both fresh and formalin-fixed brain tissues to diagnose rabies (Hamir & Moser, 1994; Baba, 1999; Whitfield et al., 2001; Ajayi et al., 2006).

2.5.2 Differential diagnosis

Rabies is considered in the differential diagnosis of many suspected mammalian encephalitides. Some conditions that may be clinically confused with rabies in canine and feline species include tetanus, canine distemper and infectious canine hepatitis, toxoplasmosis, cerebral babesiosis and tetanus should be differentiated in bovine and ovine species, meningitis /encephalitis, botulism and heartwater in cattle and sheep (Seifert, 1996; Bishop et al., 2002).

2.5.3 Differential diagnosis of rabies in humans

Conditions like hysterical pseudo-hydrophobia, tetanus, encephalitides, including other viral infections, delirium tremens, various chemical intoxications, typhoid fever and poliomyelitis can be clinically confused with rabies in humans (Warrell, 1996; Bishop et al., 2002; Swanepoel, 2005).

2.6 Control

Control of rabies is by prevention of infection, which can be maintained by active immunization of animals and strict quarantine regulations (Okoh, 2000; McKay &
A range of highly effective, safe and thermostable, inactivated veterinary vaccines is currently available (Barth et al., 1985; Van Steenis et al., 1985; Swanepoel, 1994). In some countries (e.g. Nigeria) live rabies vaccines are still used in dogs (Okoh, 2000; Opaleye et al., 2006). In most other countries, inactivated vaccine is used (Swanepoel, 2005).

2.7 Human immunization and post-exposure treatment

The high demand for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in Africa and Asia exerts a substantial economic burden, as a result of the high cost of human vaccine (Cleaveland et al., 2003). Antiserum is used to provide immediate protection until vaccine–induced immunity becomes effective (Swanepoel, 1994; Swanepoel, 2005). Inactivated and purified vaccines prepared from virus grown in human diploid cell cultures were developed during the 1960s and became increasingly available for use in humans during the 1970s and 1980s, however they are expensive to produce, partly because of rigorous quality control (Kuwert & Scheiermann 1985; Bishop et al., 2002).

From the WHO website it can be noted that:

“WHO strongly advocates the use of modern (purified products prepared on cell-culture) vaccines for the PET that comply with WHO criteria for potency, innocuity
and have been assessed satisfactorily in humans in well-designed field trials” (WHO, 2006).

2.7.1 General considerations in rabies post-exposure treatment

General considerations in PET include the following:

- A rabies case is an emergency and as a general rule should not be delayed or deferred.
- There is no contradiction if modern purified rabies biologicals are used.
- PET must be applied using vaccine regimens and routes of administration that have been proven to be safe and effective (WHO, 2006).

Immediate washing or flushing with disinfection of the wound and rapid administration of purified immunoglobulin and modern vaccine according to the modalities described in the guidelines, assure prevention of infection in almost all circumstances (WHO, 1997). Human cases require specialised hospitalisation procedures. Management failures are usually due to deviations from the WHO management recommendations and lack of essential biologicals (Jackson, 2007; Wilde, 2007).

2.8 Literature review of the status of rabies in Nigeria

The epidemiology of rabies in Nigeria is like that of many developing countries where the canine, rather than the sylvatic, form predominates and all the classic
and well-known aspects of the dog-human cycle are reported (Boulger & Poterfield, 1958; Shope et al., 1970; Ezeokoli & Umoh, 1987). Rabies in Nigeria, as in many parts of the world, endangers both human and animal health (Radostis et al., 1995). The disease has vernacular names; “ara nkita” in Igbo, “ciwon haukan kare” in Hausa, “ginnaji” in Fulfulde, “digbolugi” in Yoruba, “idat ebua” in Efik/Ibibio authorities (Oboegbulem, 1994). Outbreaks are frequently reported to veterinary authorities. The epidemiology of the disease is further complicated in Nigeria, by stray dogs that roam the cities, as most dog owners let their dogs roam the streets. Rabies is likely to be enzootic in urban areas, as in all states of Nigeria as dogs are the main reservoir host (Acha & Szyfres, 1987).

Since the ancient times it had been recognised that the causative agent of rabies is associated with saliva of mad dogs (Boulger & Poterfield, 1958; Oboegbulem, 1994). Despite efforts to control rabies, the disease continues to be a major scourge of dogs and cats in Plateau state and in Nigeria in general (Umoh & Belino, 1979; Ezebuiro et al., 1980; Fabgami et al., 1981; Okoh, 1986).

In Nigeria, all published reports have established dogs as the predominant vector of rabies. The 1942 annual report of the Veterinary Division of Northern Nigeria recorded canine rabies outbreaks from Kano, Zaria, Borno and Ilorin and in 1946 outbreaks were reported from Plateau, Markurdi and Enugu. A more extensive record compiled from the annual reports of the Rabies Diagnostic Laboratory at the National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI) Vom, indicates that during the period 1928 to 1990, 3,555 out of 3,770 animal rabies cases confirmed in Nigeria
occurred in dogs (Oboegbulem, 1994). In 1993, the WHO reported that in Ghana, a neighbouring country to Nigeria, dogs accounted for 474 (or 96%) of 494 incidents of animal rabies confirmed between 1981 and 1999 (Alonge & Abu, 1998; Domingo, 2000; Kiyali et al., 2003).

Specific control measures are crucial for recognising and minimizing the incidence of rabies. The routinely applied strategy is the annual vaccination of dogs and cats against rabies. In Nigeria vaccination against rabies commenced in 1935 (Okoh, 1982). Later, the production laboratory was faced with problems during manufacture, storage and transportation and the vaccine became associated with neuroparalytic accidents and vaccine failure (Okeke, 1983 unpublished work). Consequently the dog vaccine was withdrawn from the field within five years of its issue (Thorne, 1954). In 1956, the NVRI Vom made available the Flury low egg passage (LEP) vaccine, which has since then been made available for vaccination of dogs and cats in Nigeria (Oboegbulem, 1994).

Among the measures recommended for rabies control, vaccination constitutes the main solution that can be applied against canine rabies (Lombard et al., 1988) as well as to interrupt the rabies transmission cycle; WHO recommends 70% minimum vaccination coverage of the population at risk in all areas (Adeyemi & Zessin, 2000). Thousands of dogs are vaccinated annually with the Flury LEP vaccine strain, produced at Vom, Nigeria (Nawathe et al., 1981), but the prevalence of the disease in dogs and cats has not declined (Durojaiye, 1984; Okoh, 1986). Various workers have reported rabies in vaccinated dogs in Nigeria (Okoh, 1982; Bobade et al., 1983; Okoh et al., 1985; Oboegbulem et al., 1987).
Okoh in 2000 also isolated rabies virus from three previously vaccinated dogs that died of rabies.

The occurrence of street rabies virus in vaccinated dogs dying from the disease suggests a failure of the LEP vaccine to protect against invading street variants, although it was not possible to determine the antibody titre in dying vaccinated dogs (Okoh, 2000). Occasional failure occurs even when the vaccine is assumed to be potent (Hattwick et al., 1972; CDC, 1976). It was also suggested that lack of cold-chain maintenance in vaccines used in dogs may have made them less effective or ineffective (Adeyemi & Zessin, 2000; Adesina & Harry, 2005).

Inadequate vaccination coverage may also contribute. Low vaccination coverage results in a build up in the susceptible dog population and favours large scale epizootic or focal outbreaks, with an increase in the risk of rabies for humans (Adeyemi & Zessin, 2000). Reported cases of dog bites and rabies in humans in Nigeria are low; this could be attributed to under-reporting, or lack of knowledge of the danger of rabies to humans and cultural beliefs in the area (Fagbami et al., 1981; Oginni et al., 2002). Prevention and control of rabies in humans is by vaccination, treatment and health education. According to Coker et al., (2000) as a first measure to improve control, the link between the veterinary and medical officers in Nigeria, which was very weak, needs to be strengthened.
3.1 Model system and justification of model

The model system employed was collection, collation, classification and analysis of retrospective data on rabies in humans and dogs in Plateau state, Nigeria, from 1998 to 2007. This was an incidence study, as described by Thrusfield (2005). The data was used to do risk analysis and propose suitable risk mitigation and communication strategies to decrease the incidence of human and dog rabies. Data were collected taking into consideration environmental determinants that influence the disease occurrence, canine gender, age and vaccination records and general history of affected animal/human to estimate seasonal and annual incidence rates.

3.1.1 Study area

The study area included the human and dog populations of Plateau State. Census data from the Nigerian National Census of 2006 showed that the state has an estimated human population of 3.1 million people. In Plateau State dogs are kept both for hunting and as a source of meat and dogs are sold commercially, however there is little data available on the dog population and dog: human ratio. Retrospective data was collected from the Plateau State Veterinary Hospital, the National Veterinary Research Institute Vom and the Evangelical Church of West
Africa (ECWA) veterinary clinics Bukuru-Jos, as these are the main sources of data on rabies in Plateau State Nigeria. Records on dog bites and rabies in humans were also sourced from the ECWA Hospital (Evangelical Church of West Africa), Plateau State Specialist Hospital and the Jos University Teaching Hospital, as these are also the main sources of data on human cases (dog bite/rabies) in Plateau State Nigeria. These records have not previously been studied or collated for clues to the control of rabies in Plateau State.

The study area, Plateau State, is one of the thirty-six states that make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. It derived its name from the Jos plateau, which is the ubiquitous and predominant geographical landscape in the middle belt of Nigeria. Plateau State is located in the Middle Belt Zone, lies within latitude 80° 22′ North and 100° 24″ North and longitude 80° 32′ East and 100° 38′ East and has a total land area of 26,899 square kilometres. It is bordered in the North West by Kaduna State, in the North East by Bauchi State, in the South West and West by Nasarawa State and in the South East by Taraba State (see map in Chapter 1 Plates 1.1 and 1.2). The State has a daily average temperature of between 18°C and 22°C.

Plateau State is inhabited by several ethnic groups, who speak mainly Hausa and English. The Nigerian National Census of 2006 revealed that about 3.1 million people live in Plateau State. It is cosmopolitan because a fraction of every tribe in Nigeria can be found in the State (National Population Commission, 2008). The State has seventeen local government areas. These include Barakin-Ladi, Bassa, Bokkos, Jos North, Jos South, Jos East, Kanam, Kanke, Lantang North, Lantang
South, Mangu, Mikang, Pankishin, Quan-Pan, Riyom, Shendam and Wase. The population is mainly engaged in farming, hunting and mining as their means of livelihood. On the average, 30% of the population are civil servants (National Population Commission, 2008).

3.1.2 Study design

A checklist was developed to collect, collate and classify data on rabies vaccination, number of submitted and positive cases (animal) from Plateau State Veterinary Hospital, National Veterinary Research Institutes, veterinary clinic and diagnostic division and the ECWA veterinary clinic Bukuru. Retrospective data of human cases of dog bites / rabies were also collected from the ECWA Hospital, Plateau State Specialist Hospital and the Jos University Teaching Hospital for analysis. These facilities diagnose and control rabies in the Plateau State and neighbouring areas.

3.2 Observational and analytical procedures and statistical tools

Simple descriptive statistical methods were used in the study and description of recorded rabies cases and the possible causal factors. The incidence of rabies in the state was measured by looking at the frequency per annum / local government area over 10 years and recording this in the form of tables and graphs. The incidence of rabies over the 10 year period in different LGA’s in the study area was calculated.
Risk analysis, involving hazard characterization, risk assessment, risk mitigation or management and risk communication was also considered (Thrusfield, 2005).

### 3.2.1 Data analysis

Data obtained were analysed using the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention statistical package (Epi-Info 6.04 package, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta Georgia) and Microsoft Excel ® (Microsoft Corporation, USA).

### 3.2.2 Statistical analysis

Quantitative data was entered into Microsoft Excel ® (Microsoft Corporation, USA). Data were presented as frequency tables and graphs. Data was analysed for significant correlation as described by Thrusfield (2005).

### 3.2.3 Decision tree analysis

Decision tree analysis as described by Thrusfield (2005) was used to calculate probabilities to estimate the risk of zoonotic transfer of rabies from dogs to humans in Plateau State.

### 3.3 Interviews

Structured interviews (the questionnaire is listed in Appendix B 3) were used to
conducted an expert opinion survey of the medical officials (n=10) at the three (human health) facilities to record opinions and experiences of the disease and how it was managed. Details of pre and post exposure vaccinations in humans were also recorded. An expert opinion survey of private practicing veterinarians was also conducted on their experiences with the disease (the questionnaire is listed in Appendix B 1).

An informal interview was conducted with the Director Veterinary Services in the state to get details on actual legislation in place concerning rabies and the ongoing control measures in Plateau State.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Overview

The problem of prevention and control of rabies in Nigeria is a topical issue as it is an important zoonosis. Over the last decade (1998-2007), 760 cases among humans, dogs and cats were registered in Plateau State.

The results of this study include data on canine rabies vaccination and rabies occurrence in dogs, obtained from the Plateau State Veterinary Hospital (PSVH); the Federal College of Animal Health and Production Technology clinic (FCAH & PT) Vom; National Veterinary Research Institute Rabies Diagnostic Laboratory (NVRI-RDL), Vom; private veterinary clinics in Jos and government veterinary and livestock centres in Plateau State. Data on the occurrence of human rabies was obtained from Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH); the ECWA Evangel Hospital; Plateau State Specialist Hospital (PSSH) and Our Lady of Apostle (OLA) Hospital, Jos. The human incidence was worked out according to the population of Plateau State obtained from the National Population Commission Nigeria (NPC) (National Population Commission, 2008). As it was obvious from the data collected that there was considerable under-reporting, incidence was also estimated from expert opinion surveys and reported incidence in neighbouring states, as per OIE standards (OIE, 2008). Using this data, risk analysis was done on human and
canine rabies in Plateau State and risk mitigation and communication strategies were designed.

4.2 Relative frequency of canine rabies vaccination

Appendix A, Table 1 shows the number of doses of canine rabies vaccines used annually by selected major veterinary clinics in Jos city and major government veterinary clinics in LGA’s in Plateau State.

Ten (n=10) out of 17, randomly selected local government areas were visited to examine their records. It was noticed that canine vaccination is poorly carried out in the LGA’s (see Fig 4.1). Figure 4.2 shows the level of canine rabies vaccination in the main private veterinary clinics in Jos city with Unity Veterinary doing the largest number of vaccinations in the year 2000. Maas Veterinary Clinic recorded the next highest number in 2007. Almond Veterinary Clinic had the lowest vaccination rate. The clinics generally did fluctuating numbers of canine rabies vaccination annually during the study period.

However, we were told that dog owners that take care of their dogs would rather visit government establishments because of the subsidies they offered.
Figure 4.1 shows the level of canine rabies vaccination in the different veterinary clinics in the LGA’s in Plateau State over the study period. Fewer canine rabies vaccinations were done at GVC’s, in comparison to the private clinics shown (Fig 4.2). A notable exception is the PSVH Jos, which is in the central urban area, where there was a high number of vaccinations throughout the study period, with a marked increase in 2007.
Fig. 4.2 Canine rabies vaccination record of private veterinary clinics within Jos city (Plateau State Nigeria)

**KEY:** FCAH= Federal College of Animal Health and Production Technology; MVC= Maas Veterinary Clinic; YYC= Yaks and Yaks Veterinary Clinic; UVC= Unity Veterinary Clinic; AHVC= Ahmid Veterinary Clinic; AVC = Almond Veterinary Clinic; EVC= ECWA Veterinary Clinic Bukuru.

Appendix A, Table 2 indicates the total number of dogs seen at each of the clinics annually over the same period. Rabies vaccine is done annually in Nigeria, as rabies is endemic (OIE, 2008).

Fig 4.3, below shows the number of dogs seen as patients over the ten year period in the state clinics in Jos, it shows that a relatively high number of dogs visited the GVC in Jos city. These dogs were brought in for different purposes while Fig 4.4 shows the number of dogs seen in private clinics over the same period. The different clinics have different figures of dogs that visited the clinics in the study period; not all the dogs that were seen by the Veterinarians in the clinics
came in for rabies vaccination as others were there for conditions like distemper, worming, neutering, and surgery etcetera.

**Fig 4.3** Dogs seen by Government Veterinary Clinics in Jos Central and the different LGA’s over the ten year period

**KEY:** PSVH = Plateau State Veterinary Hospital Jos; BDV= Bassa Divisional Veterinary Clinic; BLDVC= Barakin Ladi Divisional Veterinary Clinic; RYDVC= Riyom Divisional Veterinary Clinic; MNDVC= Mangu Divisional Veterinary Clinic; PNDVC=Pankshin Divisional Veterinary Clinic; SHNDVC= Shendam Divisional Veterinary Clinic; JEDVC =Jos-East Divisional Veterinary Clinic; KNDVC= Kanke Divisional Veterinary Clinic; JSDVC=Jos South Divisional Veterinary Clinic; BKDVC=Bokkos Divisional Veterinary Clinic.

**4.2.1 Dogs seen by private veterinary clinics in Jos**

The private veterinary clinics appear to have seen more dogs than the state clinics, over the study period but EVC shows an even larger number of dogs. The clinic is located in a peri-urban area located close to the city centre as the major veterinary clinic around that side that has been noted previously.
Fig 4.4 Dogs seen by private veterinary clinics in Jos

**KEY:** FCAH= Federal College of Animal Health and Production Technology; MVC= Maas Veterinary Clinic; YYC= Yaks and Yaks Veterinary Clinic; UVC= Unity Veterinary Clinic; AHVC= Ahmad Veterinary Clinic; AVC = Almond Veterinary Clinic; EVC= ECWA Veterinary Clinic Bukuru.

4.2.2 Canine rabies mass vaccination campaign, Plateau State 2007

A mass canine rabies vaccination campaign was conducted in August to September 2007, sponsored by the government. This resulted from speculations from the public and records received from the RDL- NVRI that canine rabies was on the increase in the state. Result shows a sharp rise in number of positive cases encountered from the year 1998 through to 2006. The campaign was carried out in the entire LGA’s in the state as shown below in Fig 4.5.
Fig 4.5 Canine rabies mass vaccination campaign 2007, number of doses used (indicates the number of dogs vaccinated)

KEY : BLG = Bassa Local Government Area; BLLG = Barakin Ladi Local Government Area; BKLG = Bokkos Local Government Area; JELG = Jos East Local Government Area; JNLAG = Jos North Local Government Area; JSLG = Jos South Local Government Area; KMLG = Kanam Local Government Area; KNKLG = Kanke Local Government Area; LNLAG = Langtang North Local Government Area; LSLG = Langtang South Local Government Area; MNLG = Mangu Local Government Area; MKLG = Mikang Local Government Area; PNKLG = Pankshin Local Government Area; QPLG = Quan-Pan Local Government Area; RYL = Riyom Local Government Area; WLG = Wase Local Government Area; JCLG = Jos central Local Government Area; SHNLG = Shendam Local Government Area.

Figure 4.5, above, shows the proportion of dogs vaccinated in each LGA during the mass vaccination campaign in 2007. This is probably not a good estimation of the total number of dogs in each area.

The data for each area are also shown in Table 4.1 below. During the mass vaccination campaign, a total of 11,165 dogs and 34 cats were vaccinated in the entire state, with the highest number being vaccinated in the Jos city centre.
Table 4.1 Canine rabies mass vaccination record for Plateau State from August-September 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccination Station</th>
<th>Number of dogs and cats vaccinated</th>
<th>Dogs</th>
<th>Cats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bassa</td>
<td>991</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barakin-Ladi</td>
<td>494</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokkos</td>
<td>544</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jos East</td>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jos North</td>
<td>778</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jos South</td>
<td>808</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanam</td>
<td>198</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanke</td>
<td>782</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langtang North</td>
<td>586</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langtang South</td>
<td>593</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangu</td>
<td>543</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikang</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pankshin</td>
<td>793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quan-Pan</td>
<td>573</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riyom</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shendam</td>
<td>695</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wase</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Hospital, Jos</td>
<td>1,979</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,165</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Very few cats were vaccinated, perhaps because cat owners were not aware of the need for vaccination or because they were unable to transport them to the vaccination sites.

4.2.3 Calculated relative frequency of canine rabies vaccination

Using the 2007 data, the relative frequency of vaccination was estimated for each area using the estimated dog population. The calculated relative frequency of canine rabies vaccination in the state was 10.57%. Relative frequency was calculated by dividing the numbers of dogs vaccinated during the mass canine rabies vaccination campaign by the estimated dog population.

Number of vaccinated dogs n=11,165

Estimated dog population 105,595
Thus \( n = \frac{11,165}{105,595} = 0.10573 \times 100 = 10.57\% \) which is quite low compared to the theoretically recommended figure of 70% to achieve rabies immunity in a dog population (OIE, 2008).

### 4.2.4 Estimated dog population in Plateau state and dog: human ratio

From expert opinion interviews with veterinary professionals \( (n=3) \) working in Plateau State, an average dog population for Plateau State of 105,595 was estimated:

Expert \( A + B + C / 3 \) = Estimated dog population. This was calculated according to the recommendations of Thrushfield (2005). Expert opinions were sought from 3 different veterinary practitioners in Jos Plateau State to reach the estimation (Table 4.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Job description</th>
<th>Estimate dog population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. A</td>
<td>Veterinarian in general veterinary practice</td>
<td>120,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. B</td>
<td>Veterinarian in general veterinary practice</td>
<td>100,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. C</td>
<td>Veterinarian in general veterinary practice</td>
<td>95,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>316,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>316,785/3=105,595</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The estimated dog population is \( n = 105595 \) (see Table 4.2) and the human population in Plateau State is \( n = 3178712 \) (NPC, 2008). The dog: human ratio could thus be estimated to be 1:31.
4.3 Incidence of canine rabies

Incidence is the number of new cases that occur in a known population over a period of time (Thrusfield, 2005). The number of positive cases in Plateau State is shown in Figure 4.6. From this, the incidence was estimated.

Fig. 4.6 Annual distribution of positive canine rabies cases in Plateau state

**KEY:** NVRI-RDL= National Veterinary Research Institute Vom Rabies Diagnostic Laboratory; PSVH= Plateau State Veterinary Hospital; FCAH&PT=Federal College of Animal Health and Production Technology Clinic.

It can be seen that the highest number of new cases of canine rabies occurred in the years 2002 and 2004 followed by the year 2001 and 2003. The lowest numbers of new cases diagnosed occurred in the years 1998 and 2007. Figure 4.6 also shows a very low number of new cases submitted to PSVH for diagnosis in the years 2000 and 2003.
4.3.1 Estimated annual incidence of canine rabies (cases /population at risk)

Three different incidence levels were calculated:

4.3.1.1 The estimated incidence of canine rabies using the cases recorded in the NVRI Rabies Diagnostic Laboratory

This was (n=751) and the estimated dog population in Plateau State was 105,595. The incidence thus came to 0.071% (see below for calculation). This is probably the most accurate incidence.

\[
\text{Incidence} = \left( \frac{\text{New Cases}}{\text{Population at risk}} \right) \times C
\]

(Thrusfield, 2005)

The population at risk is the same as the dog population, which is 105,595 (estimated by working out the average of n=3 experts (Table 4.2). The number of canine rabies cases from 1998-2007 is 751. Thus, the average number of cases per annum calculated from the cases listed by NVRI/RDL = 751/10 = 75.1.

Thus annual incidence is \((75.1/105,595) \times 100 = 0.071\%\), or slightly less than one in every thousand dogs (Incidence A).

4.3.1.2 Estimated annual incidence from PSVH:

The total number of cases diagnosed from PSVH (see Appendix A Table 3) was 101 over 10 years.
The average number of new cases per annum is therefore 101/10=10.1

The annual incidence is thus (10.1/105,595) X 100

=0.0095 or just less than 1 dog in ten thousand per annum (Incidence B).

### 4.3.1.3 Estimated annual incidence from FCAH & PT:

Using the data from the FCAH & PT, the total number of cases diagnosed (see Appendix A Table 3) was 322 over 10 years. Thus the average number of cases per annum was 322/10=32.2

The annual incidence is (32.2/105,595) X 100

approximately 3.2 dogs in 10,000 per annum (Incidence C).

The three incidences (A, B and C) calculated above give a range of the incidence of canine rabies in Plateau State (1998 to 2007) of between 0.0095% and 0.071%.

### 4.3.1.4 Distribution of rabies cases in LGA’s:

Table 4.3 shows the distribution of the positive rabies cases in LGA’s in the study area.

Several of the LGA’s show very low numbers, suggesting under-reporting or that these results may be due to the distance that must be travelled to reach the
laboratory for diagnosis. For instance, NVRI-RDL, Vom is over 30 kilometres (Km) from the city centre and 100km to 1000km, away from the other LGA’s.

Table 4.3 Number of positive canine rabies cases diagnosed from different LGA’s in study area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dogs</th>
<th>Cats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barakin Ladi</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokkos</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jos – East</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jos- North</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jos – South</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanke</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langtang – North</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langtang – South</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangu</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikang</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pankshin</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quan – Pan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riyom</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shendam</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wase</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jos – Central</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2 Seasonal trend

Canine rabies occurred throughout the year as shown in Table 4.4. However the largest number of positive cases was recorded in the month of September in the study period followed by October and November of the study period, which is the dog breeding season and the beginning of dry months of the dry period in Nigeria.

This agrees with Ezeokoli & Umoh, 1987, who reported that canine rabies occurrence corresponds with the dog breeding season in Nigeria.
Table 4.4 Monthly distributions of positive canine rabies cases as recorded by NVRI-RDL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Positive cases of rabies in cats cases were recorded in December and March of years 1998 and 2001, n=2 in each of these years. There were too few cases for any conclusion to be drawn.

4.3.3 Geographical coordinates

The study area in Plateau State included the ten LGA’s which were randomly selected. The geographical coordinates of each LGA visited in Plateau State while carrying out this research is shown in Table 4.5. More cases were recorded in Jos Central probably because more dogs are seen in the clinics in the city, agreeing with Ezeokoli et al., (1987) that more rabies outbreaks are encountered in the urban than rural area.

Data from the RDL-NVRI listed numbers of confirmed cases of canine rabies originating from the rural and peri-urban areas in Plateau State, Nigeria.
Table 4.5 Geographical coordinates (Locations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Geographical coordinate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bassa</td>
<td>10°, 06', 34.80'' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barikin-Ladi</td>
<td>9°, 33', 27.03'' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riyom</td>
<td>9°, 33', 31.54'' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangu</td>
<td>9°, 20', 44.54'' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pankshin</td>
<td>9°, 13', 41.89'' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shendam</td>
<td>8°, 40', 12.99'' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jos-South</td>
<td>9°, 38', 30.68'' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jos-East</td>
<td>9°, 52', 18.01'' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanke</td>
<td>9°, 22', 12.62'' N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokkos</td>
<td>9°, 12', 38.29'' N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Location plotting on the Map in Fig 4.7 shows that positive cases originated from locations not too far from each other, such as Riyom, Jos-South and Barakin Ladi LGA’s, Bassa and Jos East LGA’s, Bokkos and Mangu LGA’s and Kanke and Pankshin LGA’s. However, Shendam LGA, which seems farther from the centre of the state, also showed the occurrence of positive cases.

Fig 4.7 GIS map showing location of positive samples
4.3.4 Cultural beliefs about rabies in Plateau state

The objective of this investigation was to collect and collate data from official sources on rabies cases and rabies vaccination in Plateau state. Informal interviews with citizens (N=72), during the course of the study, showed that there was also a lack of knowledge of rabies and rabies vaccination in the general public. It also emerged during these informal interviews that several cultural beliefs were influencing the control of rabies. Of these 72 respondents, 63 had previously heard about rabies, the other nine did not know what the word meant. Twenty three of those who know about rabies had vaccinated their dogs, 25 had not and the other 15 could not remember. Of interest is that the 15 who did not vaccinate their dogs said that they felt the vaccine could alter the flavour of the dog meat and 10 would not vaccinate as they felt it would affect the canine teeth of the dog and prevent it from hunting. More than half (n=50) said that they thought that the number of “mad dogs” had increased over the last 10 years. Any dog on the street that shows “mad” or aggressive behaviour is immediately killed by passers-by, usually using sticks or clubs. When asked what they would do if bitten by a mad dog, they described traditional treatments:

- You could pull hairs from the dog that bit you and rub it on the bite site to prevent rabies.
- You could kill the dog and remove and boil the brain and spinal cord and feed this to the victim.
- A herbal concoction is available from traditional healers for oral consumption to prevent rabies.
Those who used more western methods described the use of neat (undiluted) antiseptic (Dettol® or Tincture of Iodine) rubbed into the bite wound. They also described how chemists who have Patent Medicine shops will inject tetanus toxoid into dog bite victims. Out of the 72 respondents, 35 of them believed that rabies could be treated with native remedies at home, without visiting a medical doctor.

4.4 Incidence of human rabies

The incidence of canine rabies in humans in Jos Plateau State within the study period was determined using the number of cases diagnosed and the current census data (NPC, 2008):

\[
\text{Incidence} = \frac{\text{cases}}{\text{Population at risk}} \times C, \text{ where } C \text{ is a constant.}
\]

(Thrusfield, 2005)

The number of cases over the 10 year period = 5 i.e. = 0.5 persons/year
Population at risk = 3,178,712 (NPC, 2008)

\[
\text{Incidence} = \frac{0.5}{3,178,712} \times C = 0.000000157
\]

Very few (n=5) human cases of rabies were diagnosed over the 10 year study period: four of these cases were diagnosed at JUTH, two in 2000, one in 2002 and one in 2005. Only one case was recorded at OLA hospital. This patient was a child of 14 years old, who showed typical symptoms but was discharged because the hospital lacked the facilities needed to treat a case of human rabies. All affected
patients were below 20 years of age. The diagnoses were all based on clinical signs as necropsies were not performed, due to cultural and religious practices.

4.4.1 Data on dog bite cases from medical facilities.

Table 4.6 shows data on dog bite cases diagnosed over the ten year period under study. The data originated from medical facilities including ECWA, JUTH, PSSH and OLA in Jos.

Table 4.6 Annual distribution of dog bite cases from hospitals investigated in Plateau State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECWA</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUTH</td>
<td></td>
<td>Record Not Available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLSH JOS</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLA hosp. Jos</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Dog bite</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

123
The hospitals mentioned above confirmed that they administered antirabies vaccine to dog bite victims that reported to the hospital. Rabies hyperimmune serum was not readily available.

**Table 4.7 Doses of post-exposure treatment used for dog bite patients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Doses of ARV received</th>
<th>No. of patients</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>83.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although 123 dog bite victims received antirabies vaccines (ARV), 105 did not complete the treatment, 103 of them received between one to two doses, 2 patients only 3 doses, while only 18 patients received the complete five doses.

The age distribution of dog bite patients is shown in Table 4.8 below.

**Table 4.8 Age distribution of dog bite victims**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen that of the 123 patients, 64 (52.0%) were children while 59 (47.97%) were adults.

More cases of dog bite were recorded among male patients; (n=93 or 75.6%). Of these, 21 (17.0%) were males older than 23 years, 72 (58.5%) were males aged 0-20 years, 8 (6.5%) were males between 17-20 years of age. Only 30 (24.3%) were
females. It was found that 103 (83.7%), belonged to the low socio-economic (i.e. persons whose estimated annual income is less than $ 5,000.00) or illiterate groups, while 95 were from LGA’s close to Jos city and 20 (16.26%) belonged to the upper socio-economic or elitist group (i.e. persons whose estimated annual income is above $20,000.00). Over 100 patients received ARV over the study period in the four human facilities visited in Plateau State. In the records seen, all patients treated with ARV suffered from dog bites.

The antirabies vaccine used by ECWA Evangel, PSSH and OLA hospitals was the Verorab® or Raipur® rabies vaccine; imported from India. Only 10 vials of human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG) was used in the treatment course as it was not readily available. It is also very expensive; the price is N5,000.00 per vial ($41.00).

A breakdown of victims of dog bite by gender and age showed that more dog bite wounds were found in young males between 0-19 years old. The site of dog bite wounds were predominantly the extremities, 62 of the 72 cases (86.1%) being a lower limb while 8 of the 72 (11.1%) were on the upper limbs and only 2 of the 72 (2.7%) on the neck of the patient.

4.4.2 Informal interviews with members of the public in Plateau State

During the study, 72 persons were randomly selected, (taking seven per LGA in Plateau State) and 63 of these revealed that they were aware that a disease called rabies existed, but were not sure of the prognosis of the disease and thought traditional medicines or home remedies could be used to treat or prevent it when it
occurred. Out of those interviewed, nine knew nothing about rabies and its transmission.

4.4.3 Expert opinion

Table 4.9 shows the results obtained from an expert opinion survey of medical personnel (n=11).

Table 4.9 Expert Opinion Survey of medical personnel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical personnel</th>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Practice Specialization</th>
<th>No. of rabies cases seen</th>
<th>Diagnosis method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. A</td>
<td>Evangel hospital Jos</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. B.</td>
<td>Evangel hospital Jos</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. C</td>
<td>Evangel hospital Jos</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. D</td>
<td>Plateau State specialist hospital</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. E</td>
<td>Plateau State specialist hospital</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. F</td>
<td>Plateau State specialist hospital</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. G</td>
<td>JUTH</td>
<td>General practitioner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Symptomatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. H</td>
<td>JUTH</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. I</td>
<td>OLA hospital Jos</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. J</td>
<td>OLA hospital Jos</td>
<td>Nursing officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Symptomatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. K</td>
<td>OLA hospital Jos</td>
<td>Nursing officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Symptomatic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire used for the expert opinion survey is attached as Appendix B 3. The doctors interviewed were in practice in the study area. Two pharmacists were also interviewed as they issue medications for dog bite cases. A total of eleven (n=11) medical personnel were interviewed. Three medical personnel who had experienced rabies cases in their work place agreed that rabies is a serious
disease with a high fatality rate in Nigeria, although this was not borne out by data obtained from hospitals and laboratory facilities (see earlier). The common responses obtained from questionnaires administered to veterinarians and medical personnel are also attached as Appendix B 2 and 4.

4.4.4 Symptoms and signs of rabies

As mentioned previously, five patients were affected with rabies over the study period and four did not obtain the correct first wound care protocol as recommended by WHO. The full course of treatment was not offered before clinical manifestation set in. In one patient, a child, who had received the full course of treatment, presented severe clinical signs (malaise, fever, headache, restlessness, hydrophobia and aerophobia) and died after 4 days of hospitalization. The record files of the five rabies victims showed that they were bitten by stray dogs between 45-90 days before they were presented at the hospitals.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Data was recorded from human and veterinary facilities and diagnostic laboratories as described earlier. Cases that occur in rural and peri-urban areas may have gone unreported, thus the positive cases in this study were probably an underestimate of the actual number of cases in dogs, cats and humans. Over the period 1998-2007 in Plateau State, a total of 760 rabies cases were diagnosed, five (0.66%) in humans and 755 (99.3%) in dogs and cats.

In Nigeria currently, the RDL-NVRI Vom is the only approved and recognised rabies diagnostic centre to which various samples are sent from all over Plateau State and the country as a whole (Ogunkoya, 2008).

Appendix A Table 1 and Figures 4.1 and 4.2 showed that rabies vaccination fluctuated throughout much of Plateau State over the study period. However, a marked increase in vaccination coverage was seen in 2007 in all the LGA’s in Plateau State, due to a canine rabies mass vaccination campaign that was carried out free of any charge to dog owners (Fig 4.5).

Appendix A Table 2 shows 98,786 over the 10 year period as the estimated number of dogs in Jos City, probably because it is urban, located in the centre and the administrative location of the state, with probably the highest dog population. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 compare the vaccination coverage by privately owned
veterinary clinics as well as the government owned veterinary clinics, showing
different levels of canine rabies vaccination in Plateau State. The vaccination
campaign gave a coverage of 10.57%. Effective vaccination campaigns need to
reach a sufficient percentage of the population to eliminate disease and prevent
future outbreaks (which for rabies is advised to be 70%) at a cost that is
economically and logistically sustainable (Kaare et al, 2008). A survey was carried
out in Nigeria by Vose et al. (1997) and it was found out that

40% of owned dogs were unvaccinated. This agrees with the result obtained from
the interview with the public in Plateau State, where 34.7% of the respondents did
not vaccinate their dogs.

5.1 Canine rabies diagnosis

The immunoflourescent antibody test (IFAT) is the gold standard test
recommended for rabies diagnosis. This test is the laboratory method most widely
used to diagnose rabies in humans and animals (Dean et al., 1996; WHO, 1999).
A high percentage of the dog samples taken from the different parts of Plateau
State, to the NVRI Rabies Diagnosis Laboratory for rabies analysis were positive
for canine rabies during the study period; 100% in 2002, 2004 and 94% in 2005
as shown in Appendix A, Table 3 and Fig 4.6. This finding is similar to the rates of
positive dogs found in a region of Tanzania within an active surveillance system
(Cleaveland et al, 2002).
5.1.1 Mass canine rabies vaccination campaign

The DVS and his team appealed to the government to sponsor a mass canine rabies campaign as there were speculations and reports from the RDL-NVRI on the increase of canine rabies in the state (Fig 4.5). From reports from the NVRI-RDL, the number of positive cases had risen sharply and control measures would be necessary in the state. This was not, however verified by data obtained in this study.

The mass canine rabies vaccination campaign was a control measure carried out to control the occurrence of rabies and sensitize the public about the disease and how to prevent its transmission.

Although veterinarians made an attempt to vaccinate all dogs, there were insufficient vaccines available for the dogs brought to the vaccination points. Veterinarians doing the vaccines also mentioned that not all dog owners were aware of the campaign and suggested that more publicity be done in future. However, as this applied equally in all areas, the numbers probably give a good indication of the proportion of dog owners in each area.

5.2 Incidence of human rabies

The low number of positive human cases (n=5) probably reflects only a small proportion of actual cases. This could be due to poor record keeping in many of
the hospitals, failure of patients to report to hospitals because of their traditional beliefs and treatment, or the long distances to health care facilities.

In Plateau State, the hospitals that had records of suspected cases of rabies confirmed that clinical manifestation were severe and the patients were usually presented when the clinical manifestation had set in. From the history they received, most patients were attacked and bitten by stray dogs. Under-reporting may have occurred due to transportation difficulties or the choice by victims to use traditional remedies due to poverty and cultural beliefs. None of the victims of rabies in this study applied correct first wound care, although chemical or physical elimination of rabies virus at the site of infection is recommended as the most-effective mechanism of protection (WHO, 1997).

It has been suggested that the true extent of human exposure to rabies in Nigeria is difficult to establish due to lack of reporting (Ogunkoya & Fekadu, 1986). It is no different in Plateau State. It appears as if the situation in some other developing countries is also similar to what obtains in Nigeria and Plateau State (Domingo, 2000; Cleaveland et al., 2002; Marc-Alain et al., 2002; Kayali et al., 2003; Ali et al., 2006).

Although rabies is often considered a relatively insignificant cause of human mortality in developing countries, data from Tanzania indicate that the disease is under-reported (Cleaveland, et al., 2003), while in Sudan resurgence in rabies post-exposure was observed and a high number of human deaths due to the fact that rabies is continuously occurring (Ali et al., 2006). In N'Djamena, the capital of
Chad, the annual incidence of canine rabies is 1.4 per 1000 unvaccinated dogs (Kayali et al, 2003). Togo experienced 13 major outbreaks between 1954 and 1974. In 1997, in Lome, capital of Togo, 816 dogs had bitten people with 2 deaths recorded (Domingo, 2000). Kitala et al, (2000) reported 8.6 rabid dogs per 1000 dogs with an active surveillance system in Machakos District of Kenya 1992-1993. The surveillance method in Plateau State Nigeria was however, passive as only cases admitted to human or veterinary clinics were counted.

5.3 Dog bite and rabies from human facilities

The 123 cases of dog bite cases that were reported over different years within the study period are shown in Table 4.5. Certain facilities did not record rabies cases, probably because they lacked the facilities to manage the cases. In places where the cases were managed, post-exposure treatment included the administration of anti-rabies vaccine (5 shots at days 0, 3, 7, 14 and 28 of report of dog bite exposure to the hospital), tetanus toxoid and ampicloxallin antibiotics. Human rabies immunoglobulin serum was not readily available and this may be why it was not used. It was also very expensive. The apathy of the public to rabies because the mortality rate is very low (often labelled as ‘insignificant’) may be the reason for not taking the prophylactic measures seriously. The medical experts interviewed, said that members of the public in high risk occupations were advised to do have pre-exposure vaccination done to prevent this risk. Rabies in Plateau State can be regarded as a disease of the poor, as the majority of cases occurred in rural and peri-urban areas, in low income indigenous populations.
5.4 Informal interviews

Members of the public (n=72) interviewed, claimed that they were too busy with other personal chores to take dogs for vaccination. It was interesting that 25 respondents said dogs were kept for food purposes and vaccination could affect the taste of meat. Many households also depend on dogs for hunting and security.

Interviews however, revealed that human antirabies vaccines were not readily available in the hospitals visited. As a result, human patients have to buy these vaccines from elsewhere at exorbitant prices i.e. N2, 500 ($21.00) per vial and those that cannot afford this either become apathetic towards antirabies treatment or resort to native treatment.

5.4.1 Traditional treatment

Herbal concoctions were made for victims for oral consumption or the hairs of the offending dog was removed and rubbed on the bite site or the brain or spinal cord of offending dog removed, boiled and given to the victim to eat.

Of the veterinarians interviewed, 15 advocated the need for focused public education about rabies including prevention through annual canine vaccination. They agreed to further advise the state government to encourage public health awareness campaigns through a collaborative effort by veterinarians and medical practitioners to create awareness and enlighten the public about the risk of rabies in their communities.
5.5 Risk Analysis

When analysing the risk of canine rabies in Plateau State, the issue of inappropriate canine rabies vaccination coverage comes into play as the entire dog population may not be protected with the most recent 10.57% vaccination coverage, thus putting the human population at risk, bearing in mind that canine rabies is endemic in the state. However this risk may be reduced if pre-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is taken more seriously in high risk occupations like veterinarians, dog breeders and hunters, who use dogs for hunting. Dog owners should also vaccinate their dogs as part of P.E.P.

If Plateau State had a protected dog population, the risk of contracting the disease from dog bites would be markedly reduced. Elsewhere, vaccination of dogs has not only led to a decline in dog rabies, but also to a rapid reduction in demand for human post-exposure treatment (Cleaveland et al., 2003).

5.5.1 Hazard identification and characterisation

The hazard identified in this rabies survey in Plateau State is the presence of stray dogs and the lack of interest of dog owners towards proper care of their pets and hunting dogs. According to Fagbemi et al., (1981), 99% of rabies victims in Nigeria contracted the disease from dogs. Due to the incidence of canine rabies, the fact that dogs are left to stray in most of the areas in Plateau State as well as the lack of enthusiasm of these dog owners in regard to the proper care and vaccination of their dogs and cats, the risk of rabies transmission is high. All of the
cases suspected to be human rabies in Plateau State have resulted after exposure to dog bites.

Fig 5.1 shows a decision tree with the probabilities of rabies transmission in Plateau State.

**Probability of Rabies**

**Bitten by dogs**

\[
\begin{align*}
n &= 123/n = 3,178,712 \\
&= 0.00003868
\end{align*}
\]

**Not bitten by dogs**

\[
\begin{align*}
1 - 0.00003868 &= 0.99996131 \\
\text{- No rabies.}
\end{align*}
\]

**Agent present (non vaccinated dogs)**

\[
\begin{align*}
n &= 5/n = 123 = 0.04065 \\
\text{Yes}
\end{align*}
\]

**Agent absent (vaccinated dogs)**

\[
\begin{align*}
1 - 0.04065 &= 0.9594 \\
\text{No rabies}
\end{align*}
\]

**Susceptible persons (No PEP)**

\[
\begin{align*}
1 - 0.00003868 &= 0.99996132
\end{align*}
\]

**Persons not susceptible. (PEP; vaccinated persons)**

\[
\begin{align*}
1 - 0.99996132 &= 0.00003868
\end{align*}
\]

**Appropriate treatment**

\[
\begin{align*}
0.00003868
\end{align*}
\]

**No Appropriate treatment**

\[
\begin{align*}
0.99996132
\end{align*}
\]

**Rabies**

**Death**
Based on the decision tree in Fig 5.1, there is a high probability (p=0.99) of dying of rabies if bitten by a dog in Plateau State, especially with the existence of feral dogs in the street as they go around looking for their own food, with most of the citizens of the state not doing PEP and the low probability of receiving an appropriate treatment post-exposure. The decision tree shows that in a population with vaccinated dogs, the probability (0.95%) of ‘No rabies’ is very high. Because many dogs are left to stray, the issue of vaccinating them is not very practical as their owners may find it difficult to restrain them for vaccination.

Also, the probability of persons not contracting rabies after being bitten is high if PEP is done. When the appropriate steps of post-exposure treatment (PET) are followed in time, death is prevented.

5.6 Mitigation strategies

The laws of the federation of Nigeria in Chapter 55 of 1958 deal exclusively with dogs. It requires that every dog be licensed and a certificate is issued upon payment of a fee; any dog without a licence must be quarantined; any dog in quarantine proved or suspected by a veterinary officer or medical officer to be suffering from rabies may be destroyed by the authority. There is no mention of antirabies vaccination of dogs. This law needs to be reviewed to specifically include the need for annual canine rabies vaccination due to the endemicity of the disease in Nigeria (Fagbami et al., 1981).
In Plateau State however, the above law is followed, with the incentive of the veterinary division of the Ministry of Agriculture enlightening the public about the risk of rabies to society and advice on prevention by annual rabies vaccination of their dogs and cats.

Meetings with the DVS in Plateau State suggested that collaboration between veterinarians and human medical doctors took place with “aggressive sensitization”, as the public seem to view the disease as ‘insignificant’. The most important factor was to sensitize the public about the risk they faced due to the numerous feral ‘pariah’ dogs that went around the streets.

During this sensitization process, members of the public should be told the importance of washing the bite site when there is a dog or cat exposure with soap and water for at least 5 minutes and reporting to a medical centre for proper treatment to avoid the issue of “If only I had known what to do”.

Meetings should be held with school teachers and they should be taught the risk of rabies and how it could be avoided, so that they could in turn teach their pupils and students about rabies.

Currently a three years mass canine rabies vaccination campaign is running in Plateau state which commenced in August 2007.
5.7 Communication strategy

Four different types of posters (25 copies each) and one pamphlet (100 copies) were designed and printed and distributed to members of the public while carrying out surveys (See Appendix D1-5). One of the posters was written in Hausa language, the commonly spoken language in the area. The posters and pamphlets were distributed amongst the dog owners, veterinarians, the general public and medical clinics and hospital personnel.

Developing an adequate communication strategy is of great value to the control of rabies and the safety of the public in a community and country as a whole. To communicate effectively, the Send, Message, Channel, Receiver, Effects (SMCRE) strategy must be used (McCrindle, 2008).

A number of communication tools which could be used to channel this information include the use of radio, television, posters and pamphlets/handbills, workshops and conferences.

In Plateau state there are different target audiences with different characteristics and different risk activities that must be addressed

- Families with children who own or play with dogs (pet owner’s children)
- Children who are in the streets with feral dogs but do not usually interact with dogs
- Adults walking in the streets
- Adults who own dogs for hunting
• Adults who breed or catch dogs for meat
• Families who have dogs for security purposes

Of the above target audiences the ones most likely to respond to vaccination to decrease a risk of rabies will be those who own dogs as pets, breed dogs or hunt with dogs as they are in close contact and their dogs can easily be infected by a feral dog or cat. Also, they are able to restrain their dogs for vaccination, unlike the pariah dogs in the streets that are not handled.

The general public who do not own dogs, also need to be warned about rabies and probably the best place to do this economically would be to educate the owners of the chemist shops and to educate teachers of young children.

This strategy was fully employed during the course of this project. Only a small number of posters and pamphlets were made because of lack of funds, as a larger number of posters and pamphlets could have gone round a larger population in the state educating more persons. However, the preferred communication tool would have been the radio, as there would have been a wider coverage of information and even the illiterates who cannot read would hear the message and be informed of the risk canine rabies constitutes to their community and how to prevent it.

In this case only the educated persons will be able to read the information on the posters and pamphlets and inform others who cannot read. Lack of funds was the main factor against public enlightenment through the use of the radio.
Enlightened members of the public, were interested in knowing more about canine rabies and its transmission as it sounded new to them and they exhibited a willingness to vaccinate their dogs immediately, to avoid tragedy.

On evaluation of the strategy employed, the aim of the risk communication was achieved, as dog owners who could afford the canine rabies vaccines were immediately willing to vaccinate their dogs.
6 Conclusions

In conclusion, research has shown that the number of reported cases of rabies represents only a fraction of the total cases that occur each year in Plateau State. The predominantly passive nature of rabies surveillance and lack of formal census of animal populations dictates that accurate incidences and data for rabies cannot be determined for humans, dogs and cats in Plateau State. Results show that record keeping of rabies occurrence and dog bite cases in Plateau State is inadequate, especially in the human hospitals, as victims are not readily taken to the hospitals and the native belief of being able to heal the disease at home by using local fetish knowledge. Examples of local traditional treatments are:

- When a victim is bitten by a dog, the dog is immediately killed and the brain and spinal cord is taken out and cooked for the victim to eat to prevent further consequence.
- The hairs of the biting dog is removed and rubbed on the bite site to avoid further consequence.

Control of rabies is hampered by cultural, social and economic realities i.e. refusal to vaccinate dogs because of selfish reasons of meat taste and blunting of the dogs canine teeth for hunting and security. Post-exposure prophylaxis is not done, as the current price of a full dose intramuscular vaccine is beyond what an
average family in Plateau State can afford. Immunoglobulins are currently not readily available worldwide. In the countries where rabies is endemic, there is the perception that insufficient public and professional education concerning rabies and rabies treatment has been carried out (Wolfgang, 1999).

This research has also shown that dogs were the main causes of rabies infection in humans through dog bites in Plateau State. Canine rabies vaccination coverage is relatively low in the state. Failure to control dog rabies across much of the developing world has been attributed to various factors, including inappropriate vaccination strategy design, lack of will, competing national health priorities and inadequate resources (Kaare et al, 2008).

Prevalence is the number of occurrence of disease infection, antibody presence in a population usually relating to a particular point in time (Thrusfield, 2005). In this research the prevalence of human rabies in Plateau State is very low as records revealed only n=5 cases which occurred between year 2004 and 2005 in a population of over 3 million people. For canine rabies the relative frequency was found to be high in brains (751) submitted for diagnosis and new cases of canine rabies were encountered annually over the study period (see Tables 4.3 and 4.4 and Appendix A Table 3).

6.1 Recommendations

- The prevention and control of rabies should be encouraged through the education of the population in general, with a focus on the indigenous populations in the
LGA’s in Plateau State and children in particular with advice on animal care, animal wellbeing, and on measures to adopt following aggression by an animal.

- Education projects should focus on an aggressive educational awareness and involvement of the vulnerable population of Plateau State and inform them of the value of dog vaccinations, proper garbage disposal and appropriate rabies treatment.

- The people in rural areas should be educated to let them know that rabies can be prevented in humans and can be eliminated in dogs. Picture posters would be the most efficient way to educate people on rabies located in the rural areas in Plateau State.

- The local population should be empowered to engage fully and effectively in rabies prevention and control; to vaccinate dogs against rabies and lower the density of susceptible dogs; voluntary undergraduate students could be provided with an opportunity to be involved in rabies control programs so that the people's attitudes and level of awareness on matters concerning rabies should be understood by the veterinary profession in future.

- Annual canine rabies vaccination should be carried out to decrease the endemicity of the disease in the state. There should be radio campaigns to promote vaccination of dogs. Government assistance in subsidizing the cost of canine rabies vaccines would go a long way and poor dog owners would always be able to afford to vaccinate their dogs annually.
• The government should increase the resources available to help the veterinary department continue to conduct canine rabies vaccination throughout the state by providing cold chain facilities and training more community animal health workers to help in the vaccination process. This could also be taken to dog owners’ houses to tackle the issue of difficulty in transportation.

• Human antirabies vaccines (ARV’s) should be made more available and affordable if government subsidized rabies vaccination by non-governmental organizations.

• The government should help to make Human (HRIG) or equine (ERIG) derived rabies immunoglobulins (HRIG, ERIG) available. These are essential biologicals to be administered together with the rabies vaccines for post-exposure treatment (WHO, 1997).

• The government should help create health care centers closer to the population at risk, with adequate facilities to diagnose and treat rabies in humans.
CHAPTER 7

REFERENCES


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91. **Vose A. Aylan O. & Turan B. (1997).** Oral vaccination (Ov) of dogs against rabies: Studies in Turkey to combine this technique with the traditional method of parenteral vaccination if indicated to reach a better overall coverage. Rabies Bulletin Europe, 21: (1)11-14.


APPENDIX A Table 1 Canine rabies vaccination records in Plateau State (APPENDIX A) over the 10 year period

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Clinic location</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>350</td>
<td>451</td>
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<td>793</td>
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<td>890</td>
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<td>1006</td>
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<td>793</td>
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<td>4178</td>
<td>4269</td>
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<td>37276</td>
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NA= Not available.
**APPENDIX A** Table 2 Number of dogs that came to each clinic per year over the 10 year period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinic location</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
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NA - (Not Available) Records for those periods were not available.

Colour figures obtained from veterinary clinics in Jos city as number of dogs that visited over the 10 year period.
### Appendix A Table 3 Data on canine rabies from PSVH, FCAH&P and NVRI diagnostic laboratory over the 10 year period

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<th>PSVH %</th>
<th>FCAH &amp; P No. confirmed rabid</th>
<th>FCAH &amp; P No. suspected rabid</th>
<th>FCAH &amp; P %</th>
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APPENDIX B 1

STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

EXPERT OPINION SURVEY - FOR DIRECTOR VETERINARY SERVICES AND OTHER PRIVATE VETERINARIANS

Name..............................................................................................................................................

Address........................................................................................................................................

Questions

1) Have you had encounters with dogs suspected/confirmed to be rabid?

2) How was it managed?

3) Are dogs in the State vaccinated against rabies and do you recommend antirabies vaccination? How frequent?

4) What was the outcome?

5) What is your opinion on the prevalence of rabies in dogs in Plateau State/year?
   0%-25%, 0%-50%, 0%-100%
6) What is the prevalence of rabies/10,000 patients (dog bite) per year in the state?

7) Are dog bite/suspected rabid cases often reported to the Veterinarian/hospital?

8) Do you recommend Pre-exposure prophylaxis?

9) How have patients responded to your recommendation?

10) What is the state’s mitigation policy against rabies and what legislation in place about rabies and dog bite in Plateau State?
COMMON RESPONSES FROM VETERINARIANS AND THE DIRECTOR OF
VETERINARY SERVICES IN PLATEAU STATE

1) Yes.

2) Suspected cases are quarantined and observed for 14 days. If canine or animal dies by day 14, the head is severed and taken to the laboratory at NVRI for confirmation.

3) Yes, Dogs are vaccinated annually especially in the urban areas; annual vaccination is recommended.

4) Rabies is controlled.

5) 0-50%/year.

6) 2-5/10,000 patients (dog bite)/year.

7) Usually on dog bite, victims come to the veterinary clinic but are referred to human hospitals for post-exposure treatment.

8) Yes especially to people in high risk professions like Dog breeders, hunters, veterinarians, dog handlers.

9) Very well and promise to go and get vaccinated.

10) The state has none specifically, except for the national laws; that is the Northern Nigerian Laws and the Federal law of 1958, which is still in place.
APPENDIX B 3

STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

EXPERT OPINION SURVEY - HUMAN FACILITIES MEDICAL OFFICERS

Name...........................................................................................................................

Address...................................................................................................................

Questions

1) About how many patients does this hospital see per year?

2) Approximately how many people with rabies do you see or treat every year at this hospital?

3) How many cases of dog-bites/ suspected rabies are reported to the hospital per year?

4) How many of the suspected cases are found to be positive?

5) How were the patients exposed to rabies: What proportion from stray dogs, from pet dogs, from dogs slaughtered for food?

6) Which Department/s of the hospital is involved in the diagnosis and treatment of patients exposed to rabies or suffering symptoms of rabies?
7) How is a patient with rabies/ suspected rabies handled? Do you go by the WHO, OIE and CDC guidelines?

8) Do you administer post exposure prophylactic treatment in the hospital?

9) How have patients responded to your recommendation?

10) What was the outcome of treatment (survivors/ deaths) of patients exposed to rabies?

11) Is there any data on the incidence of rabies in humans in Plateau State?

12) Do you recommend vaccination of patients likely to be occupationally exposed (e.g. vets, those who breed/ slaughter dogs) against rabies at this hospital?

13) Do you think it would be a good idea for all or most dogs in Plateau state to be vaccinated against rabies? Give reasons for your answer.
COMMON RESPONSES FROM MEDICAL PERSONNEL

1) > 50,000-100,000/year.
2) None in the recent past.
3) About 1-10/year.
4) Not sure.
5) Usually from dog bite after 65 days to 3 months.
6) Patients are first taken to the OPD (Out Patient Department) where they continue with their treatment course until they are discharged. Clinical cases are handled by the Medicine Department.
7) Yes, dog bite wound is washed properly with soap and water with antiseptic, and then treated with iodine solution.
8) Yes, antirabies vaccine is administered immediately on day 0, then subsequently on day 3, 7, 21 and 28. On day 0 the patient is also treated with tetanus toxoid and ampiclox antibiotics given for 5 days.
9) Patients have shown willingness to get the pre-exposure vaccination and a number requested for it immediately.
10) In most cases, the dog bite patients recover and get well after the treatment course.
11) None published.
12) Yes.
13) Yes. Dogs will be protected, preventing transmission of the virus. This will consequently protect the human and animal population in the state thus reducing the risk of rabies

**Appendix C1** - A risk communication poster 1
Appendix C2- poster 2
Appendix C3-Poster 3 written in ‘Hausa’ language –the commonly spoken language in Plateau State

Appendix C4- poster 4
A very simple form of communication
Appendix C5 – A communication pamphlet on rabies

Appendix D – Photographs from Veterinary clinics

Dog owner with dog at PSVH Jos
A dog owner with dog at the ECWA veterinary clinic Jos
Clinic staff washing a dog at the PSVH Jos
A dog being vaccinated with antirabies vaccine at PSVH-Jos