

RABIES IN A CAT IN LUSAKA

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Introduction

Rabies in Zambia has been endemic for last 100 years. Shone 1962, Gasper 1976, Akafekwa 1976, Pandey 1995 and Mweene 1996 reported cases and epidemics of Rabies in Zambia. 80% to 82.5% cases were reported in Dogs and 10% in Cattle. During 1969-76, 1304 cases of Rabies in wild animals were reported by Rotcher *et al.*, 1976. Shandon and Raningu in 1976, Sharma and Chiba in 1981 reported highest incidence of outbreaks in Cattle from Livingstone to Lusaka and Kabwe, Ndola to Kitwe. Raman *et al.*, 1988 reported a case of Rabies in woman causing myocarditis and encephalitis. From review of literature it is evident that there is no report of Rabies in domestic in Cat in Lusaka. Present case seems to be the first case of Rabies in cat in Lusaka province.

Material, Method and Result

Owner brought a kitten to Veterinary Clinic Show ground. Kitten had been showing nervous signs since last 4 days. Brain was collected on 24th March and kept in freeze. Material was brought to the Department of Pathology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine for Diagnosis of Rabies. Brain tissue smear were examined by Direct Immunofluorescent method on 21st March 2001 smears were found positive for the antigen of Rabies. Histopathological section revealed of perivascular cuffing, focal and diffuse gliosis with few macrophages and plasma cells. Negri bodies were also seen.

Discussion

Rabies in Cats has been reported in many countries of South Africa namely South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. Survey from 1928-91 revealed that 437 cases were positive in South Africa, 66 in Namibia, 12 in Botswana, 138 in Zimbabwe and 9 in Lesotho but number of Positive cases were far less in cats as compared to dogs and cattle. Fogg in 1982; King & Crick 1988 isolated Rabies virus from Cat. Hyales reported 16 cases of Rabies in 8 provinces of Zambia but none has been reported in Lusaka Province.

Rabies related viruses are however reported in Human beings and Cats sporadically but not in other Carnivores. Rahman 1996 reported incidence of Rabies in Karnataka, India from 1972-96. He reported that numbers of cases in cats were 11 out of 65 and that in dogs 1118 out of 2196 examined. Their percentage was 16.92% & 50.9% respectively. Similarly Sokhey 1996 reported number of positive cases in C.R.I. Kasauli, India during 1991-96. In dogs 691 cases were found positive out of 930 received, while in cats, 26 cases were found positive out of 33 samples received. They used Fluorescence Antibody test and Biological Tests for diagnosis.

Bellinger 1983 induced Rabies in a cat by immunizing it by high egg passage flury (HEPF) strain vaccine.

Shukla *et al.*, reported 15 positive cases in Lusaka in Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zambia. Only 1 case was positive in cat, 13 cases in dogs and 1 case in cattle.

Generally each ecotype of Rabies Virus is responsible for transmission of disease in given geographical area but transmission of Rabies in Cats through bat is more common. However Dog to Dog and Jackal to animals is more common in Africa and Asia. It would be interesting to study incidence of Rabies in Cats in Lusaka, where disease is endemic and there is no control of Rabies in Canines by regular immunization of stray dogs or by sterilization and mass destruction.

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