

July 2014

Human exposures to animals susceptible to rabies, Montana, June 2013–May 2014

Humans typically acquire rabies through a bite or scratch from an animal infected with the rabies virus. In humans, rabies is nearly always fatal. Prompt administration of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (rPEP) can prevent human death from rabies. In June 2013, the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) were modified to require local health officers to report to DPHHS any human exposure to animals susceptible to rabies that resulted in a recommendation for, or administration of, rPEP (ARM 37.114.203). In this report, we summarize case report data submitted to DPHHS during June 1, 2013–May 31, 2014 by local health departments. More than 70% of exposures were reported during July–September (**Figure**). Seventy-eight events were reported from 19 counties. The counties with the largest number of reported events included Yellowstone (n=25 [32%]), Missoula (12 [15%]), Custer (6 [8%]), and Flathead (6 [8%]) Counties. Of the 78 exposures, 45 (58%) occurred among females and the median age was 32 years (range: 2–77 years). rPEP was recommended to 69 (88%) patients; of those, only 27 (39%) were known to have completed the series. No hospitalizations or deaths from rabies virus were reported. Dogs accounted for nearly half of reported exposures (**Table**). Only 4 (9%) of 45 dogs and cats were known to have been vaccinated against rabies. Bats accounted for 30 (38%) exposures.

Figure. Reported human exposures (n=78) to animals susceptible to rabies by month, Montana, June 2013–May 2014

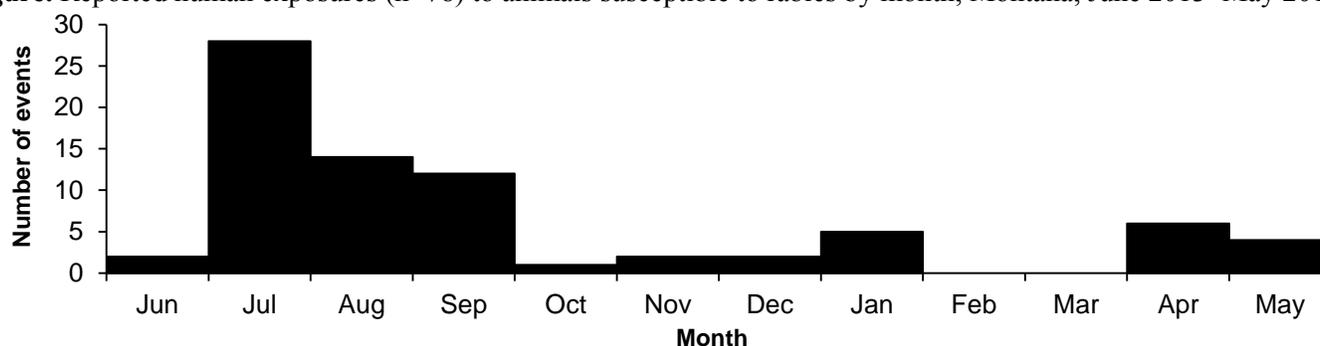


Table. Classification and rabies vaccination status of animals involved with possible human exposure to rabies, Montana, June 2013–May 2014

Species	Total	Classification				Vaccinated against rabies		
		Pet	Stray	Wild	Unknown	Yes	No	Unknown
Bat	30	0 (0)	0 (0)	30 (100)	0 (0)	N/A	30 (100)	N/A
Cat	7	0 (0)	7 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (14)	6 (86)
Cow	1	1 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Dog	38	29 (76)	4 (10)	0 (0)	5 (14)	4 (10)	0 (0)	34 (90)
Skunk	1	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (100)	0 (0)	N/A	1 (100)	N/A
Snake	1	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (100)	0 (0)	N/A	1 (100)	N/A
Total	78	30 (39)	11 (14)	32 (41)	5 (6)	4 (9)*	33 (42)*	41 (89)*

*Percentage does not include wild animals.

Recommendations:

- (1) Domestic dogs and cats should be vaccinated against rabies to prevent transmission to humans or other animals. Existing animal rabies vaccination ordinances should be enforced.
- (2) Persons should avoid bat contact and take steps to prevent bats from entering their homes or cabins as described at <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats/>.
- (3) Human exposures to animals susceptible to rabies should be **reported immediately** to the local health department.
- (4) When indicated, rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (rPEP) should be administered promptly per ACIP recommendations as described at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5902a1.htm>. Healthcare providers and public health practitioners should work to ensure the rPEP series is completed and documented.