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A serological study in response to people at occupational risk of rabies virus exposure in Nepal

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A serological study to know the antibody titer against rabies virus in human beings, who are at occupational risk, was conducted in Nepal in 2014. A total 44 serum samples were collected out of which 21 samples were collected from medical professionals (working at Sukraraj Tropical Hospital) and 23 were collected from veterinary professionals (working at Central Veterinary Hospital, Central Veterinary Laboratory and Rabies Vaccine Production Laboratory) in Kathmandu. Among the 44 samples, 4 were collected from unvaccinated persons. The other 40 peoples' samples were vaccinated with inactivated rabies cell-culture vaccine 6 months to 5 years ago. All samples were subjected to the Rabies Fluorescent Focus inhibition Test (RFFIT) test in Centre for Disease Control, Atlanta, USA. The antibody level of 7 persons was found to be less than the recommended titer of 0.5 IU/ml. Six medical professionals and one veterinary professional had a low rabies virus neutralizing antibody titer. The 4 samples collected from unvaccinated persons, and 3 collected from vaccinated persons (7.5%) had a titer below 0.5 IU/ml. This study shows that medical and veterinary professionals who are responsible to nurse or handle rabies patients, rabid animals or rabies virus are still at high risk. This underscores the importance of recommendations for regular serological testing of occupationally exposed individuals and rabies vaccine booster when necessary.

Biography

Ganesh Raj Pant is a Senior Veterinary Officer and Chief of Rabies Vaccine Production Laboratory in Kathmandu within the Department of Livestock Services, Government of Nepal. He has been working in Nepal since 1983 and involving in the laboratory diagnosis as well as field investigation of animal diseases. He has also been involved in the surveillance program of Rinderpest and Avian Influenza in his country. He completed his Bachelor's degree in Veterinary Science from India and Master's in Tropical Veterinary Science from UK. He is into the research work and has published 15 research articles in national and international journals.

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