

HUMAN RABIES PRE-EXPOSURE VACCINATION: RADICAL RABIES RISK REDUCTION FOR WHO
NEED IT MOST

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Rabies pre-exposure vaccination (Pre-EP) for human populations living in high risk areas for exposures had been recommended since 2004 by the World Health Organization. In 2010, Peru became the first country to implement a policy to administer rabies Pre-EP massively for the high-rabies-risk areas in the Peruvian Amazon Basin, where vampire bat rabies is endemic, and bat bites are highly common. The Peruvian Pre-EP Program effectively stopped human rabies cases in the intervened zones. Since then, other countries in South America also implemented similar programs and pilot studies targeting areas with high risk for vampire bat rabies. Also, in Asia, The Philippines implemented a Pre-EP school program targeting specific canine rabies risk areas. The Peruvian Pre-EP campaign progressively included several regions in the country and provide important evidence for future programs in other countries. The observed results in Peru Pre-EP campaign allows to state that: 1) Massive Pre-EP with modern human rabies vaccines is safe, 2) Human rabies risk is drastically reduced to almost none for vaccinated individuals, despite the high likelihood of exposure is unchanged, 3) Remote indigenous populations in the Amazon Basin can be reached to receive the 3-dose Pre-EP schedule, with an acceptable investment. Those three key points support the advocacy for the urgent implementation of the use of Pre-EP in countries with high rabies risk with population living in regions with limited access to human rabies vaccines and basic health services, and achieve the elimination of the existing disparities for human rabies prevention across the globe.