

JUST VACCINATE ALL THE DOGS.... IT AIN'T THAT EASY

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Every year, particularly around world rabies day, several inspirational articles are published claiming that global canine rabies elimination is within our reach. They claim that we have all of the tools needed to eliminate this disease. They claim we just need to “vaccinate all of the dogs”. The question posed in this session is, “if it is so easy, why has it not yet been accomplished?” A vaccine to prevent rabies has existed since 1885, and has been widely used in developed countries since the early 20th century. Canine rabies elimination programs were built on the back of this vaccine and were wildly successful at eliminating the disease under the premise of a developed nation’s infrastructure. Yet, there are still at least 90 countries that have not eliminated the canine rabies virus variant (46% of all countries). Canine rabies is the world’s top zoonotic disease killer. So if it is so easy to vaccinate all of the dogs, why has it not been done? Canine rabies elimination through mass vaccination requires, at a minimum, knowledge of the dog population (ecology), knowledge of the human-dog relationship, knowledge of vaccine acceptability, cold-chain infrastructure, veterinary infrastructure, and capacity to conduct post-vaccination evaluation. This presentation will examine recent published and unpublished data from programs where extensive efforts have been extended to evaluate canine vaccination programs in developing countries. This presentation will pose the questions, “when viewed from the eyes of a developing nation, is canine rabies elimination truly feasible with current technologies?” and “do we believe that tools created for use in developed countries can have the same success in less developed nations?”

http://www.who.int/rabies/Presence_dog_transmitted_human_Rabies_2014.png?ua=1