



World Rabies Day 2022 Brief

Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths

Introduction

World Rabies Day is held every year on September 28 to raise awareness and advocate for rabies elimination globally. It is an event designed to be inclusive, uniting people, organizations, and stakeholders against rabies. It is for this reason that the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) would like to share, in advance of the public launch, the World Rabies Day theme for 2022. In the spirit of World Rabies Day, we hope to continue to join forces, foster collaboration and promote partnerships to assist all those involved in the fight against rabies. Despite being the driver of World Rabies Day, GARC relies on the support and collaboration of all its partners' combined efforts towards rabies elimination.

Theme

Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths

Primary focus

The primary focus of this year's theme will be on One Health, coupled with the reminder of the Zero by 30 goal and the fact that dog-mediated human rabies elimination is possible.

Rationale

The World Rabies Day theme for 2022 has been proposed to be "Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths". This theme aligns with current global trends, public perception and directly refers to the goal of the "Zero by 30: Global Strategic Plan".

One Health is a concept that is becoming more entrenched in disease control programs. As recent examples such as COVID-19 and antimicrobial resistance have shown the world, the health of



people, animals and the environment are all inextricably linked and interdependent. The importance of One Health is also evident through the discussions and its mention in the G20 summit (2020) among other major platforms, as well as the development of the WHO NTD roadmap and the One Health companion document that specifically mention rabies.

Rabies elimination exemplifies the One Health approach, with participation and collaboration from human, animal, and environmental health sectors. Furthermore, it is commonly used as an example of operationalizing One Health. Considering that the theme focuses on One Health, it has thus been designed to be inclusive, ensuring that all stakeholders, champions, and people on all levels - local, national, and International - see themselves as integral partners towards rabies elimination. We hope to encourage collaboration, partnership, and a joint approach towards rabies elimination – or “Zero Deaths”, in line with the “Zero by 30: Global Strategic Plan for the elimination of dog-mediated human rabies deaths by 2030”.

Zero Deaths - the second part of the theme - also highlights the fact that rabies is preventable, and that elimination is possible. In fact, it is the only vaccine preventable NTD, so through One Health, we aim to reach Zero Deaths.

Within the Zero by 30: Global Strategic Plan (WHO 2018), One Health is a core concept and is mentioned in light of the following:

- 1) That rabies elimination is a model for One Health collaboration.
- 2) The development of National Strategic Plans for rabies elimination.
- 3) International collaboration includes partners from all sectors.

This year's World Rabies Day theme will further support and enhance communications surrounding international cooperation of multiple individuals, groups, and organizations towards the common goal of Zero by 30.

Current topics and issues

The theme is cognizant of, and addresses, several current topics and issues faced by the global public:

- 1) **A dearth of negative media:** Considering the current COVID-19 pandemic and the dearth of negative media relating to the pandemic, the public is likely to be interested in a more positive message. It is for this reason that the message of unity (One Health) and one that



reinforces that rabies elimination is possible (Zero deaths) was chosen. This presents the Zero by 30 target in a positive and inspiring manner, rather than instilling fear in people.

- 2) **The impact of Covid-19:** As the OECD noted, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how vulnerabilities in health systems can have profound implications for health, economic progress, and trust in governments. An emphasis on unity through inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination is essential as countries rebuild and strengthen their health systems and rabies control program.
- 3) **Trust in governments:** Recent events have impacted trust in governments as national health systems struggled to cope with COVID-19, leading to many protests from the public relating to mandatory vaccinations and the “Vaccination pass” for COVID-19. This stems not only from anti-vaccination trends, but also from stringent government mandates. Similar to the point above, the concept behind this year’s World Rabies Day theme is to therefore focus on a positive message (Zero deaths) as opposed to focusing on vaccination. This does not preclude vaccination, but rather addresses the issue in a positive light to foster better community engagement.
- 4) **Despite COVID-19, Zero Deaths is still achievable:** Rabies vaccines for human and animals exist and save lives. Rabies remains the only vaccine preventable Neglected Tropical Disease.

Timeline

The public announcement for the World Rabies Day 2022 theme is scheduled for **Monday 25 April 2022**.

Joint messaging

GARC encourages the opportunity to deliver joint messaging with all of its partners and encourages all stakeholders to do so with their partners. Please contact Kim Doyle (kim.doyle@rabiesalliance.org) and Terence Scott (terence.scott@rabiesalliance.org) to discuss joint messages for release in the build-up to, or on, September 28 2022.

