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Rabies update

No new human cases of rabies have been confirmed since the previous report. A total of seven human cases has been confirmed to date with cases reported from Mpumalanga (n=1), KwaZulu-Natal (n=1), Limpopo (n=3) and Free State (n=2) provinces. In addition, three clinical cases of rabies in humans have been reported for

2013 to date; although the clinical features and outcome of all three cases were suggestive of rabies, laboratory confirmation was not possible. These cases originated from Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga provinces. The total number of confirmed human rabies cases for the past five years per province is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Laboratory-confirmed human rabies cases, South Africa, 2008-2013

Year	Province									Total
	KZN	ECP	MP	NCP	FSP	NWP	LP	WCP	GP	
2008	5	8	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	17
2009	4	7	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	15
2010	3	2	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	11
2011	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	6
2012	4	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	10
2013	1	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	7
Total	19	19	6	1	3	0	17	0	1	66

In November 2013 a case of rabies in a domestic cat was reported from Sedibeng District (Vanderbijlpark and surrounds) in Gauteng Province. Ring-vaccination of dogs and cats in the district was done in response to this case. No additional cases of animal rabies in this area have been reported. Further laboratory investigation confirmed that the rabies was of the "mongoose"

biotype. Two biotypes of rabies virus circulate in Southern Africa; these biotypes are antigenically and genetically distinct rabies viruses. The canid biotype is commonly associated with domestic dogs and other canids (i.e. jackal). The mongoose biotype is found in members of the *Herpestidae* family which includes different species of mongoose and surricates. Consequently, the geographic

distribution of these biotypes depends on the distribution of the host species, with the mongoose biotype most commonly reported from the central plateau of South Africa. Mongoose rabies is intermittently reported in Gauteng Province, particularly from the periphery which is typically more rural and where mongoose would naturally occur. Mongoose rabies has been reported from rabid cats in several cases. Interestingly, the mongoose rabies biotype is associated with dead-end infections in canid species, so has not been associated with continued transmission in other species (jackals, dogs etc).

Health professionals and members of the public can access more information on rabies through the NICD website: www.nicd.ac.za. The national rabies guideline document may also be downloaded from the NICD website: <http://www.nicd.ac.za/?page=guidelines&id=73>.

Source: Centre for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases ,NICD-NHLS