

4 ZOO NOTIC DISEASES

Rabies

Rabies was confirmed as the cause of death in a five-year-old girl from Cabazi village, near Mount Frere (KwaBhaca), Eastern Cape Province. She presented to hospital on 10 April 2014 with fever, headache, confusion, autonomic instability and insomnia, and died four days later. The child was attacked by a dog in the village and sustained 'scratches' on her right lower leg. No history of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis was reported. Rabies was confirmed on a post mortem-collected brain sample (using the direct fluorescent antibody test and RT PCR) and cerebrospinal fluid (using RT PCR).

Two cases of human rabies have been confirmed for 2014 to date - the case reported here, and a previously-reported case involving an elderly male from Limpopo Province.

A further three suspected rabies cases originating from Mpumalanga (n=1) and Limpopo (n=2) provinces have also been reported for 2014 to date. These cases could not be verified by laboratory testing, but clinical and exposure histories were compatible with a diagnosis of rabies. This compares to seven laboratory-confirmed human rabies cases in 2013, reported from Mpumalanga (n=1), KwaZulu-Natal (n=1), Limpopo (n=3) and Free State (n=2) provinces. Health professionals and members of the public can access more information on rabies through the NICD website: www.nicd.ac.za.

Source: Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response and Centre for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases, NICD-NHLS