



# Rabies Vaccination Among Foreigners in Thailand: A Summary From a Medical Center

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## Dear Editor,

Rabies is an important tropical infection. Getting bit by a rabid animal is the main cause of rabies. Exposure to a rabid animal is the indication for rabies vaccination.<sup>1</sup> Of interest, many foreigners are exposed to rabid animals or require rabies vaccinations in other countries. In Thailand, a tropical country in Indochina, rabies is common, and the rabies vaccination is an important post-exposure treatment. Each year, thousands of rabies vaccines are used for the post-exposure vaccination of local Thai people. There are also many post-exposure vaccinations given to foreigners.

Herein, the authors reveal the records of a medical center in Thailand (Sanitation 1 Medical Academic Center, Bangkok Thailand) on the rabies vaccination of foreigners in Thailand. The data from a one-year period (2016) was reviewed. In that period, there were 1584 post-exposure rabies vaccinations with 1498 given to local Thais (812 males and 686 females, aged between 6 and 81 years) and 86 given to foreigners (52 males and 34 females, aged between 14 and 63 years). Focusing on vaccinations for foreigners, 74 were first-dose post-exposure vaccinations. Of those 74 cases, 70 cases arose from dog bites (all stray dogs at Buddhist temples, markets, and hotels in 60, 6, and 4 cases, respectively) and 4 cases from cat bites. Of the 74 cases, 68 were foreign migrant workers and 6 were tourists. Among the other 12 cases with non-first-dose post-exposure vaccination, 10 cases required the last dose, 2 cases required the second dose, and all were tourists. All 12 cases were bitten in nearby Indochinese countries (Cambodia and Laos) during travel. There were no side effects from the vaccine.

Based on this data, foreigners comprise an important group of patients (5.43%) requiring rabies vaccination in Thailand. Several categories of foreigners (migrant workers, tourists)

may be exposed to rabid animals. In addition, exposure in a nearby country is another important reason for obtaining the vaccination in Thailand. Travelers to Indochina must be concerned with the prevention of rabies exposure.<sup>2,3</sup> According to a report by Flaherty et al,<sup>4</sup> the knowledge of travelers regarding rabies prevention is still an important point to be provided.

## Authors' Contributions

VW and BJ contributed equally to this letter to editor.

## Conflict of Interest Disclosures

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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