

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION OF RABIES IN LITHUANIA IN 1994-2003

Jonas Milius¹, Daiva Razmuvienė², Eugenijus Jacevičius¹, Vytas Tamošiūnas³, Kazimieras Lukauskas⁴

¹ Nacionalinė veterinarijos laboratorija, Kairiūkščio g. 10, LT-08409 Vilnius; tel. (8-5) 278 0470;
el. paštas: jmilius@nvl.lt

² LR sveikatos apsaugos ministerija, Valstybinė visuomenės sveikatos priežiūros tarnyba,
Užkrečiamųjų ligų profilaktikos ir kontrolės centras, Kalvarijų g. 153, LT-8221 Vilnius; tel. (8-5) 277 9051;
el. paštas: rdaiva@takas.lt

³ Vilniaus universiteto Imunologijos institutas, Molėtų pl. 29, LT-08409 Vilnius; tel. (8-5) 246 9231;
el. paštas: vat@imi.lt

⁴ LR valstybinė maisto ir veterinarijos tarnyba, Siesikų g. 19, LT-07170 Vilnius; tel. (8-5) 240 4361;
el. paštas: klukauskas@vet.lt

Summary. The prevalence of rabies in wild and domestic animal populations and humans in Lithuania was investigated during 1994–2003. Rabies in animals was registered in all regions of Lithuania. The largest incidence of rabies in wild and domestic animals was found in Lazdijai, Klaipėda, Panevėžys and Tauragė districts. The highest number of rabies (309 cases) was registered in Lazdijai district. During the study period 9481 wild and domestic animals were tested for rabies. 37.06% of 4083 samples from domestic animals tested were rabies positive, while 57.90% of 5398 samples of wild animals showed positive test results. During recent years, between 8 to 11 thousand people are infected with rabies by animals each year. Most likely people are infected through contact with infected dogs (60–80% of all cases), and 4.5% to 6.9% of these cases are caused by contact to rabid dogs. People who become infected from animals are vaccinated. This immunopreventive means is applied to 4–8 thousand people every year, which constitutes 47–60% of all cases that are suspected to have a contact with infected animals. This vaccination proved to be very effective, because during 1994–2003 there were no mortal cases among the people vaccinated, though the number of cases exceeded 70,000. Two human deaths were registered during this period, but these people were not vaccinated against rabies.

The diagnostic methods for rabies are described and evaluated. The vaccination results in humans and animals is presented and its efficiency is evaluated. The monitoring and prevention programs for rabies are also described.

Keywords: rabies, epidemiology, humans, wild and domestic animals.