

Constant Vigil, Vaccine Key to Control of Rabies

Current efforts to control a disease which has ravaged mankind since Biblical times have been so successful that only one person died in the United States in 1965, Dr. Edward Aaron told the Torrance Safety Council Monday.

The disease — rabies.

The control — vaccination of dogs, continuing surveillance of wildlife, and human

vaccine developed by Louis Pasteur, a French biologist, in the 1880s.

But, warned Dr. Aaron, complacency about rabies could lead to a serious outbreak. Because of that potential, Dr. Aaron explained, the Los Angeles County Health Department carries on a public education program

and offers annual clinics where residents may have household pets vaccinated against rabies.

DR. AARON, a veterinary doctor for the County Health Department, said more than 51,000 bites were recorded in Los Angeles County in 1965. Nationwide, the figure exceeds two million. But, he noted, no deaths were reported in the county and only one death was recorded in the nation. About 35,000 per-

sons underwent the Pasteur treatment in the nation, he added.

Rabies, he explained, is carried in the saliva of wildlife—principally skunks and foxes. Cats and dogs become infected when bitten by rabid skunks or foxes and transmit the disease to man by biting.

Rabies vaccine for dogs has proven very effective, he explained. Dr. Aaron also said rabies can only be transmitted by saliva, although there is some dispute about the

possibility of rabies being carried on the claws of cats and dogs.

THE DISEASE attacks the nervous system and, with the exception of bats, kills animals unless they have been successfully vaccinated. The fruit bat, Dr. Aaron said, apparently carries the disease, but is not killed by it.

It is a worldwide disease, although such islands as Hawaii and England are free of rabies. Fido will be kept

in quarantine for 120 days if he travels to Hawaii, Dr. Aaron said.

The County Health Department, thought continuous surveillance of wildlife and a compulsory vaccination law for dogs, has maintained a record of no deaths from rabies for several years. The potential, however, is always with us, he warned.

EARL KENDRICK, M.D., Torrance District Health Officer, said persons who are

bitten by wildlife — particularly the skunk — are advised to wash the wound well with a detergent soap and see a physician. Such bites are generally considered "positive exposures," he explained.

The Pasteur treatment required in such cases involves 14 to 21 injections of vaccine, usually given in the abdomen. It is considered dangerous because of the possibility of allergic or neurological reactions and because of the concentration of injections.

able today. One, a nerve tissue vaccine, has been in use longest and is generally considered to be more effective. A duck embryo vaccine is used, however, in many cases because it is considered less dangerous.

Dr. Aaron also told the Safety Council that no rabid dog had been reported in Torrance in the past ten years and said surveys of skunks and other wildlife in the Torrance and Palos Verdes Peninsula area had turned up no cases of rabies.

Relaxing the vigilance, he warned, could prove dangerous.

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