



President's Message

Greetings to all members and well wishers.

We are now in the year 2010 and the magical year 2020 is coming closer. Many goals are to be achieved in our country by the year 2020 and one of them is "Rabies Free India". However achieving this goal is a difficult task.

The most important step in achieving this goal is the control of Canine Rabies in our country. A monumental effort is needed to control the population of stray dogs, which are the main vectors of the disease in our country. The ABC Program being implemented in various municipalities across the country has not been successful in controlling the stray dog population. Animal Rights cannot take preference over safety of human beings. A rethinking is needed and the strategy to control stray dog population has to be changed. Unless the stray dog population is reduced significantly, the incidence of dog bites cannot be reduced. Similarly stray dog vaccination programs have to be properly implemented.

Availability of proper and timely Post Exposure Prophylaxis to all victims of animal bites is the only option available to reduce the incidence of Human Rabies.

Cell Culture Vaccines are now available in adequate quantities in the country. Introduction of IDRV in some states has resulted in administration of full course of vaccine to all patients seeking treatment at Government centers.

Usage of Rabies Immune globulins (RIGs) is very low in our country. It is hoped that RIGs will be made available in the near future in all government hospitals treating animal bite victims. Many doubts and questions remain in the minds of medical practitioners regarding the usage of RIGs. Many doctors prefer using RIGs intramuscularly rather than by local infiltration into the wounds. Studies have revealed that administration of entire volume of RIGs intramuscularly results in low levels of antibodies in the circulation and probably less than the required protective levels at the animal bite site. Hence all medical practitioners have to be made aware that local infiltration of RIGs is of utmost importance in all Category III Exposures.

A State level TOT Workshop on RIG Administration was recently held in Thiruvananthapuram. Government of Kerala is now making RIGs available in District and Taluk hospitals. Doctors and paramedical staff from these hospitals actively participated in this Workshop and shared their experiences. Successful implementation of this Government initiative will serve as a role model for other states in the Country.

Apart from these measures, increased awareness among the public and patients about proper and timely local wound treatment and administration of Vaccine and RIGs will help a lot in decreasing the burden of Human Rabies. Similarly, responsible pet ownership, which includes regular vaccination of pet animals against Rabies, has to be advocated.

With the active participation and sustained efforts of all stakeholders, the distant goal of "Rabies Free India" can be hopefully achieved.

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Place : Hyderabad

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