

Announcements

World Heart Day — September 29, 2014

World Heart Day will be observed September 29, 2014. The focus of World Heart Day this year is creating heart-healthy environments in which persons are able to make heart-healthy choices wherever they live, learn, work, and play. Heart disease and stroke are the world's leading causes of death, claiming an estimated 17.3 million lives in 2008, and representing 30% of all deaths worldwide (1). A heart-healthy environment can help persons make healthy choices to reduce their risk for heart disease. World Heart Day 2014 encourages persons to reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease by promoting smoke-free environments, environments that encourage physical activity, access to healthy food choices, and a heart-healthy planet for all.

CDC is working to help create heart-healthy environments in multiple ways, including community-based approaches, such as the Sodium Reduction in Communities Program (SRCP), and community-clinical linkages, such as the Million Hearts Initiative. SRCP aims to increase access to and accessibility of lower-sodium food options while building the evidence base on population approaches to reduce sodium consumption at the community level. Million Hearts aims to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017 by bringing together communities, health systems, nonprofit organizations, federal agencies, and private-sector partners from across the country to fight heart disease and stroke and their risk factors.

Additional information about World Heart Day is available at <http://www.world-heart-federation.org/?id=123>. Additional information about Million Hearts, SRCP, and CDC's Healthy Community Programs is available at <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov> and <http://www.cdc.gov/nccd-ph/dch/programs/healthycommunitiesprogram/index.htm>.

Reference

1. World Health Organization. Global status report on noncommunicable diseases 2010. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2011. Available at http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/ncd_report2010.

World Rabies Day — September 28, 2014

September 28, 2014, is the 8th annual World Rabies Day. Rabies is a fatal acute encephalitis caused by lyssaviruses (1). The number of human rabies deaths worldwide is estimated to exceed 55,000 each year (2). In the United States, wild animal reservoirs serve as the most important source of infection. However, over 90% of human deaths globally are caused by bites by rabid dogs (3).

Rabies control and prevention efforts focus on elimination of canine rabies through mass vaccination campaigns and treatment of exposed persons with prompt wound care and administration of human rabies immune globulin and vaccine. Although rabies is preventable, a lack of accurate data on the burden of disease, inadequate rabies diagnostic laboratory capacity, and poor access to rabies vaccine for postexposure prophylaxis has delayed progress towards regional goals for human rabies elimination.

Blueprints developed by international rabies experts can be used for the development of country-specific rabies elimination plans (4). These blueprints focus on describing the epidemiology of rabies, improving surveillance, raising awareness among clinicians and the public, achieving high canine vaccination coverage, and ensuring reliable diagnostic, cold chain, and vaccine procurement capacity (5).

Despite many challenges, considerable progress has been made in the Western Hemisphere; human rabies mortality has been reduced by more than 90% over the past century (6). Communicable disease programs proven to be successful in settings similar to those where canine rabies is endemic can be emulated for rabies control and prevention efforts in the future. Also, lessons learned during rabies control efforts can prove valuable for responding to emerging zoonotic diseases (7).

References

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5. Franka R, Smith TG, Dyer JL, Wu X, Niezgoda M, Rupprecht CE. Current and future tools for global canine rabies elimination. *Antiviral Res* 2013;100:220–5.
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