

**Talking Points: Zoonoses and Public Health – “Rabies Prevention and Management of Cats in the Context of Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release Programmes”**

**The Article**

- The article suggests that trap-neuter-vaccinate-release (TNVR) programs have not demonstrated effectiveness towards preventing and controlling rabies among feral cat populations.
- The article cites evidence in support of this conclusion, notably:
  - TNVR programs have typically not demonstrated appropriate vaccination levels.
  - Among TNVR colonies, group feeding can put cats at greater risk for rabies transmission.
  - TNVR programs alone are unlikely to achieve declines in stray cat populations.
- The article also discusses ways to more comprehensively control rabies among cats, including:
  - Public health programs implementing activities that can reduce rates of abandoned cats.
  - Cat owner education on responsible pet ownership, particularly as regards regular vaccination and record keeping, spaying/neutering, and restricting cats from roaming freely.
  - Increased enactment or enforcement of animal control laws by state/local government including removal of stray or unwanted cats.
  - Increased oversight of animal control practices by state/local government, including removal of stray of unwanted cats.

**CDC and TNVR Programs**

- CDC does not currently have an official position on trap-neuter-vaccinate-release (TNVR).
- CDC encourages local governments to initiate and maintain effective programs to ensure vaccination of all dogs, cats, and ferrets and to remove stray and unwanted animals.
- In collaboration with USDA and other partners, CDC will continue to evaluate the role TNVR and other programs may have in rabies prevention and control.

**Cats and Rabies**

- Compared to wildlife and dogs, cats pose a higher risk of human exposure to rabies, partly because people (especially children) are more likely to approach them.
- Adherence to policies that promote mass vaccination coverage and control of stray dogs has led to the dramatic decline in dog rabies-, but the number of rabid cats has not declined in the same way.
- Vaccination, a significant factor in the sharp reduction of rabid dogs, is required for cats in only 30 states, compared to 38 states that mandate dog vaccination.
- In 2011, 303 rabid cats were reported, while 70 rabid dogs were reported.

**Human Rabies Prevention**

- Timely administration of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is highly effective at preventing rabies infection after an exposure.
- PEP consists of rabies immune globulin and a vaccine dose given as soon as possible after exposure, with additional vaccine doses given on days 3, 7, and 14 after the first vaccination.

- The shots are given in the arm, are relatively painless, and highly effective. Every year, approximately 40,000 people in the U.S. receive PEP after exposure to an infected animal.