Iowa Rabies Exposure Assessment Tree

Was the patient bitten or was there saliva contact from the animal to an open cut or mucous membrane of the patient? (1)

- Yes
  - Is the species a rodent (including squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, or mice), a lagomorph (rabbit or hare), or an opossum?
    - No action necessary. (1) There has not been a conclusive diagnosis of rabies in these species in over 35 years in Iowa. If unusual circumstances, see footnote 2.
    - Yes
      - Is the animal apprehended? (On a case by case basis, waiting up to 72 hours to capture the animal may be reasonable, assuming the correct animal can be identified.)
        - Yes
          - Does the animal exhibit signs of rabies…or did it die suddenly?
            - No
              - Test animal for rabies (4). No prophylaxis needed pending test results (1). Is test positive?
                - Yes
                  - Administer rabies prophylaxis: RIG and HDCV (3).
                - No
                  - No rabies prophylaxis.
        - No
          - Species of Animal
            - Is the species a dog or a cat, or domestic ferret?
              - Yes
                - Will responsible party provide for confinement & observation of the dog, cat, or ferret?
                  - No
                    - No rabies prophylaxis.
                  - Yes
                    - Quarantine the animal, whether immunized or not, for 10 days after exposure. Does the animal show signs of rabies or has it died?
                      - Yes
                        - Administer rabies prophylaxis: RIG and HDCV (3).
                      - No
                        - No rabies prophylaxis.
              - No
                - Is the animal apprehended? (On a case by case basis, waiting up to 72 hours to capture the animal may be reasonable, assuming the correct animal can be identified.)
                  - Yes
                    - Does the animal exhibit signs of rabies…or did it die suddenly?
                      - No
                        - Call CADE for prophylaxis guidance (2).
                      - Yes
                        - Test animal for rabies (4). No prophylaxis needed pending test results (1). Is test positive?
                          - Yes
                            - Administer rabies prophylaxis: RIG and HDCV (3).
                          - No
                            - No rabies prophylaxis.
              - No
                - Is the species a wild animal such as a skunk, raccoon, fox, or bat?
                  - Yes
                    - Call CADE for prophylaxis guidance (2).
                  - No
                    - Test animal for rabies (4). No prophylaxis needed pending test results (1). Is test positive?
                      - Yes
                        - Administer rabies prophylaxis: RIG and HDCV (3).
                      - No
                        - No rabies prophylaxis.

Footnotes:
1) Wound Care: All bites and wounds should be thoroughly cleansed with soap and water. Tetanus vaccine should be considered. (Exception - Severe bite or bites above the shoulder may need immediate prophylaxis, please contact the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology).

2) Consultation can be obtained from the Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) 24 hours/day, any day. Business hours (800) 362-2736 or after-hours (515) 323-4360. (State Patrol will contact CADE person on call.)

3) Both human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) and human rabies vaccine (HRV) should be given as soon as possible.

4) The animal should be taken to a facility to have the head removed (except for bats - provide entire carcass for speculation) and submit to either: University Hygienic Lab (UHL), Oakdale Campus, Iowa City (319) 335-4500 or, Veterinary Diagnostic Lab., College of Veterinary Medicine, ISU, Ames (515) 294-1950.

5) Bats pose particular risks and are capable of transmission in the absence of a bite. Therefore, every effort should be made to capture and test the bat involved in an exposure incident. If the patient can provide adequate history that, while conscious, no direct exposure occurred, then no treatment is necessary. If the patient is an unobserved child, or was asleep, intoxicated, or mentally challenged, then post-exposure prophylaxis may be indicated, especially if the status of the bat can not be ascertained with lab testing. See Rabies Exposure Management for Bat-related Incidents flow chart (published separately).

Iowa Department of Public Health - September/2003