



Demographic and epidemiological characteristics of animal bites in the North West Health Region, Algeria

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Animal bites, classified as a major zoonosis by public authorities in Algeria, are a common problem with 120 000 human bites occurring each year and between 15 and 20 cases of clinical human rabies.

In all, 116 403 animal bites were recorded in 2017 in Algeria, including 20 deaths. Of these, 73% occurred in Tell, 22% in Highlands and 5% in Sahara. The lowest incidence rate (30 bites per 100 000 people) was recorded in Adrar, a southern province, and the highest incidence (648 bites per 100 000 people) was recorded in Mostaghanem, a Northwest coast province. Half of the country's provinces had an incidence higher than the estimated national incidence of 279 human bites per 10 000 inhabitants. Almost two-thirds of animal bites were caused by dogs and cat bites accounted for 30.5%.

The demographic and epidemiological characteristics, and spatial distribution of animal bites in the North West Health Region (NWHR) were profiled. Out of the 21 314 animal bites occurred in the NWHR during 2019, 71.3% were males. Of the 8275 bites occurred in children under 15 years, 66.8% were boys and 29.3% were children under 5 years. There was slight difference in animal bites occurrence between seasons and 58.7% of animal bites occurred outside dwellings. Most of the bites were of Category II (45.7%) followed by Category III (38.6%).

Dog bites are a significant source of morbidity and mortality and risk factors include young children and men. Educational, preventive, and informative programs are needed in addition to development of sustainable strategies against stray dogs.

Keywords: Algeria, Animal bites, Epidemiology, Spatial distribution

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