

Medical Branch  
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Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

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HSS(MD) 7/2008

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

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To:

Directors of Public Health of HSS Boards - *for cascade to:*

- All General Practitioners – *please ensure this message is seen by all practice nurses and non-principals working in your practice and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'*
- Out of Hours Centres

Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD) 7/2008

Date: 3 March 2008

Medical Directors of HSC Trusts - *for cascade to:*

- Accident and Emergency Departments
- Consultant Microbiologists and Virologists

Consultants in Communicable Disease Control HSS Boards  
Director, Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service  
Director of Pharmacy, Belfast HSC Trust

## **URGENT COMMUNICATION**

Dear Colleague

### **CONFIRMED RABIES CASE IN DOG IN FRANCE**

The Health Protection Agency, England, has become aware of a case of confirmed rabies in a dog, diagnosed in France on the 26th February 2008. Laboratory testing by the French authorities confirmed the dog has a canine viral strain of Moroccan origin. The French authorities have identified 4 potential risk areas (see below) where people may have been exposed to rabies.

GPs, A&Es and other health care professionals need to be vigilant for people reporting dog bites that occurred in the risk areas during the risk periods (see below). There may also be people who have presented previously who have been reassured because France is rabies free. Hence, doctors are especially asked to check records from patients presenting since the beginning of the risk period to review and reassess these cases.

## Potential Risk Areas

The dog lived in Grandpuits in the Seine-et-Marne district (a small town approximately 30 miles SE of Paris). Investigations by French officials established that the dog was probably exposed to rabies via an illegally imported dog from Morocco through the chain of events outlined below:

Dog 1: [mixed breed Border collie] Imported from Morocco in late October to Gers, near to Toulouse and Aquitaine (in the south west France), via Tarbes (Haute Pyrenees). Died 12<sup>th</sup> November.

Dog 2: [black cross Labrador] Contact with dog 1 in Gers, then travelled with family back to Grandpuits on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Died 5<sup>th</sup> January. This dog travelled to Lisieux, Normandy and was there from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December.

Dog 3: [young mixed-breed female] in same family as dog 2, first symptoms appeared on 15<sup>th</sup> February and died 19<sup>th</sup> February.

French health officials have investigated possible areas where all three dogs may have lived or visited and identified individuals who may have had contact with the infected dogs. Identified individuals have been offered preventative treatment.

The Health Protection Agency has been in close contact with the French authorities, and is advising the UK public that any person who has had a significant exposure i.e, a bite, scratch, or lick to mucous membranes or broken skin, from any dog in the following areas during the relevant time period should seek prompt medical assessment from their GP.

According to current information, the **periods of possible exposure** to rabies are:

Hautes-Pyrénées (Tarbes and surroundings), from the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

Gers (Auch and surroundings), from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007.

Seine-et-Marne, environs of Grandpuits from the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (see names of villages listed below).

Calvados (Lisieux and Thury Harcourt and their surroundings), from the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2007

Current list of **villages considered at-risk** in Seine et Marne

|                            |                           |                    |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Andrezel                   | Courtomer                 | Mormant            |
| Argentières                | Crisenoy                  | Nangis             |
| Aubepierre-Ozouer-Le-Repos | Fontenailles              | Pécy               |
| Bernay-Vilbert             | Fontenay-Tresigny         | Quiers             |
| Blandy                     | Fouju                     | Rampillon          |
| Bombon                     | Gastins                   | Rozay-En-Brie      |
| Bréau                      | Grandpuits-Bailly-Carrois | Saint-Mery         |
| Champeaux                  | Guines                    | Saint-Ouen-En-Brie |
| Chaumes-En-Brie            | La Chapelle-Gauthier      | Vanvillé           |
| Clos-Fontaine              | La Chapelle-Iger          | Vaudoy-en-Brie     |
| Courpalay                  | La Croix-En-Brie          | Verneuil-l'Etang   |
|                            | Maison-Rouge              | Vieux-Champagne    |

