

SEATO MEDICAL RESEARCH STUDY ON RABIES

Coordinator: Paul C. Smith, MAJ, VC, Asst Chief of Veterinary Medicine

Principal Investigators: Paul C. Smith, MAJ, VC
William E. Vick, CPT, VC
Kwanyuen Lawhaswasdi, D.V.M.

Assistant Investigators: Jack S. Stanton, MAJ, VC
James P. Slowey, SSG
Jack M. Preston, SP5

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General Information

The high incidence of rabies in the canine population of Thailand continues unabated. The inherent danger of animal bites is magnified by the high percentage of positive cases of rabies in routine specimens submitted to our laboratory following potential exposures by bite or contact. Concise data of human deaths from rabies is not available because usually no attempt is made at laboratory confirmation of clinical diagnoses and because the disease is not considered a reportable one. Recent unconfirmed reports indicate that at least 15 people dying in Bangkok hospitals during the month of March, 1968, were clinically diagnosed as rabies; three of these were confirmed in our laboratory.

The Ministry of Public Health has recently shown a renewed interest and effort in rabies control in outlying provinces by stray dog elimination and mass immunization programs.

Results of rabies surveys of sylvatic animals indicate that frugivorous and insectivorous bats and rodents must be considered potential reservoirs of rabiesvirus infections in Thailand.