

Rabies, Human

2011 Case Definition

Clinical evidence

Rabies is an acute encephalomyelitis that almost always progresses to coma or death within 10 days after the first symptom.

Laboratory evidence

- detection of Lyssavirus antigens in a clinical specimen (preferably the brain or the nerves surrounding hair follicles in the nape of the neck) by direct fluorescent antibody test, or
- isolation (in cell culture or in a laboratory animal) of a Lyssavirus from saliva or central nervous system tissue, or
- identification of Lyssavirus specific antibody (i.e. by indirect fluorescent antibody (IFA) test or complete rabies virus neutralization at 1:5 dilution) in the CSF, or
- identification of Lyssavirus specific antibody (i.e. by indirect fluorescent antibody (IFA) test or complete rabies virus neutralization at 1:5 dilution) in the serum of an unvaccinated person, or
- detection of Lyssavirus viral RNA (using reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction [RT-PCR]) in saliva, CSF, or tissue.

Case classification

Confirmed: a clinically compatible case that is laboratory confirmed by testing at a state or federal public health laboratory.

Comment

Laboratory confirmation by all of the above methods is strongly recommended.