

# IDENTIFICATION OF A RABID DOG IN FRANCE ILLEGALLY INTRODUCED FROM MOROCCO: COMMENT

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As highlighted in the above article by a multidisciplinary investigation team from France, there have been previous reports of dogs being illegally introduced to France and subsequently identified with rabies infection. No human cases related to these events have been identified to date. Although exposure to rabies from animals in the European Union (EU) remains a rare event, in the absence of post-exposure prophylaxis before symptoms rabies is invariably a deadly infection in humans. The French authorities have implemented extensive measures, including the tracing of humans and animals possibly in contact with the suspected rabid dogs, and awareness of the event has been relayed to the general public through the media in order to assist in identifying other possible human or animal contacts.

The index dog was reported to have been in Portugal for a few days while travelling to France. Thus, information to the public has also been published by the Portuguese health authorities on the website of the Ministry of Health (<http://www.dgs.pt>). It cannot be excluded that other EU citizens who have visited those particular geographical areas in France or Portugal during these periods may have been bitten or scratched by the index dog. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) thus published a threat assessment of this event on its website ([http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/pdf/threat%20assessment%20080311\\_.pdf](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/pdf/threat%20assessment%20080311_.pdf)) to raise awareness among clinicians for returning travellers from the at-risk areas during the at-risk periods who may have been in contact with these dogs.

This event in animals also emphasises the importance of good communication between animal and human health authorities, in each country and at the EU level, in identifying and responding to any subsequent threat to human health from animal health events.

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