



This research highlight is based on **NHMS 2020 : Communicable Diseases: Cognitive, Affective & Behaviour. Volume II**

Who is this publication for?

- Ministry of Health
- Department of Veterinary Services (DVS)- Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (MAFI)
- Local Authority

Purpose of this summary

To share the main findings of Zoonosis Module NHMS 2020 and to recommend appropriate strategies in increasing rates for pet registration, vaccination and annual health checks.



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The Institute for Health Behavioural Research provides evidence to policy makers and health managers at every level, to enable them to make evidence-based decision making on health matters.

DOG OWNERSHIP IN MALAYSIA: LICENSING & VACCINATION PRACTICES

ISSUE

- Pets have become increasingly common among households and increasing in number of households adopting dogs as pets [1].
- The Animal Welfare Act 2015 (Act 772) (enacted 29/12/2015 and enforced since 1/07/2017) aims to promote the welfare and responsible ownership of animals [2]. Pet licensing will ensure compliance with pet ownership regulations including an appropriate number of pets per household, addressing problems of overpopulation, abandonment and proper monitoring of pet care[3].
- The Animals Act 1953 also enforces pet owners to vaccinate their pets for pet long-term health. ***Zoonotic diseases such as rabies can be prevented if pets are vaccinated and it will reduce the risk of infection to human and other animals [3,4].
- Strays and free roaming dogs in rabies endemic areas pose a significant threat to human health because of the risk of rabies infection [5].

***Zoonotic disease is any disease or infection that is naturally transmissible from vertebrate animals to humans (3)

KEY MESSAGES



IMPLICATIONS

- Unlicensed dogs maybe subjected to be caught and destroyed despite being kept as pets
- Unlicensed free-roaming dogs and without annual check-ups are prone to rabies infections as they are not vaccinated and at risk of getting infection from other dogs
- Increase risk to human and others pets could cause outbreak of rabies in an area and a threat to public health concern

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Ministry of Health (MOH)

- **Collaborate** with Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) and local authority in promoting dogs licensing and vaccination
- **Ensure** the provision of health promotion materials and activities for the community via collaborations with DVS and local authority
- **How** – preparation of campaign materials that can be disseminated via various channels or during activities
- **Which channel** – print media (brochures, poster), electronic and social media (videos, animations, Instagram posts, Facebook posts, TV, radio)
- **When** – during community campaign activities and primetime viewing

Department of Veterinary Services (DVS)- Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (MAFI)

- **Oversee** the management of the vaccination process throughout the country
- **How** – monitor vaccination given through official channels (public and private animal centres)
- **Which channel** – reports from vaccination centres
- **When** - periodic
- **Collaborate** with MOH and local authority in the conduct of health promotional activities to the community; general or focused outbreak area
- **What** – setting up activities to encourage pet dog vaccination and engage with interactive activities
- **When** – community campaigns

Local Authority

- **Oversee** the management of pets licensing and ensure registered pets receive tags or chips for recognition purposes
- **Strengthening enforcement** on mandatory licensing for pet dog
- **Standard** tagging for pet dog
- **Collaborate** with MOH & DVS on promotional activities to encourage registration of pets and other health promotion information
- **What** – setting up activities to encourage pet dog registrations and engage with interactive activities
- **When** – community campaigns
- **Ensure** the control of stray animals within the council's purview area
- **Monitoring** of dog population within the area to prevent over population of wild/stray/free roaming dogs and increase risk of rabies outbreak

METHODS

We used data from the National Health & Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2020 to focus on communicable diseases. The NHMS 2020 was a nationwide community-based cross-sectional study design using a multistage stratified random sampling method. The survey included respondents living in non-institutionalized living quarters from 113 enumeration blocks in Malaysia. Data were analysed in account for complex survey analysis to obtain population estimates. Adults aged 13 years and above were sampled in this survey. This survey was administered via a Self-Administered Questionnaire (SAQ) using a validated CAB-IHBR-Zoonoses-A-01 instrument tool consisting of Cognitive (knowledge regarding dog-associated disease on rabies and Animal Welfare Act 2015), Attitude (perception regarding the risk factors of contracting dog related diseases) and Behaviour (practices on immediate action after/if bitten by dog, dog ownership and responsibility). The NHMS 2020 official report has further details on the methodology used.

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Disclaimer

The views, interpretation, implications, conclusions and recommendations are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the investigators participating in the project nor the views or policy of the Ministry of Health, Malaysia.

This research highlight is part of a collection from the NHMS 2020:

- 1) Are you at risk of Hepatitis B?
- 2) Hepatitis B: A healthy carrier among us!
- 3) Stigma towards people living with HIV
- 4) Poor HIV knowledge among youth
- 5) Ignoring TB-like symptoms in Malaysia
- 6) Antibiotic resistance: How doctors and pharmacist could help?
- 7) Are Malaysians forgetting about Malaria?
- 8) Search destroy the facts
- 9) Dog ownership in Malaysia: Licensing & vaccination practices
- 10) Dog bite injuries: Intention vs practise of good health seeking behaviour

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