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Rabies in Henan Province, China, 2010–2012

To the Editor: Rabies is considered a reemerging zoonosis in China because many cases have been reported in recent years (1). The first case of rabies in Henan Province was reported in 1951. No more than 10 cases were reported per year during 1995–2001. However, beginning in 2002, the number of cases increased exponentially each year, and reached >100

in 2005 (2). To identify the epidemic characteristics of rabies in Henan Province, we examined the archived data of cases during 2010–2012. The surveillance data were collected by the Henan Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through systematic reporting and reports from sentinel hospitals.

Henan Province is situated in the mid-eastern region of China between northern latitudes 31°23′–36°22′ and eastern longitudes 110°21′–116°39′. The climate zone spans from warm temperate to subtropical, is humid to semi-humid with risk for monsoons, and has average annual temperatures ranging from 12°C to 16°C. The province occupies an area of 165,994 km² divided into 18 municipalities, which are subdivided into 159 county-level divisions. Its population was reported to be ≈94 million in 2010 (3).

During 2010–2012, a total of 94 cases of rabies in humans were reported in Henan Province. Rabies was diagnosed in almost all of those cases in sentinel hospitals on the basis of clinical features of the disease. Rabies was

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Dirofilaria [di-ro-fī-lar'e-ə]

From the Latin *dīrus* (“fearful” or “ominous”) + *filum* (“thread”), *Dirofilaria* is a genus of nematodes of the superfamily Filarioidea. The first known description of *Dirofilaria* may have been by Italian nobleman Francesco Birago in 1626 in his *Treatise on Hunting*: “The dog generates two worms, which are half an arm’s

length long and thicker than a finger and red like fire.” Birago erroneously identified the worms as a larval stage of another parasite, *Diectophyme renale*. The dog heartworm was named *Filaria* by American parasitologist Joseph Leidy in 1856, and the genus was renamed *Dirofilaria* by French parasitologists Railliet and Henry in 1911.

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