

Philippines seeks to end rabies deaths in two years

March 10 2014

The Philippines plans to vaccinate seven million dogs within two years to end its status as one of the world's most rabies-prone nations, the health department said Monday.

By making at least 70 percent of the country's 10 million dogs resistant to the [rabies virus](#), the department hopes to remove the disease as a cause of human death by 2016, four years earlier than originally targeted, [health officials](#) said.

"The focus will be on vaccinating as many dogs as possible," Raffy Daray, manager of the department's rabies control programme, told AFP.

The disease is transmitted largely by animal bites, and has claimed well over 200 lives annually in the Philippines in recent years, according to World Health Organization and Philippine health department data.

This makes the Philippines among the top 10 countries in the world in terms of rabies prevalence, according to the WHO.

The WHO says rabies remains a "[high risk](#)" to humans across most of Asia and Africa.

Health undersecretary Teodoro Herbosa told AFP immunising a dog costs only about 20 pesos (45 US cents) if the medicine is purchased in bulk.

By contrast, treatment for an infected person could cost 5,000 pesos, he added.

Herbosa said that it was impossible to eradicate rabies completely, since it still occurs among wild animals.

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