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Study of rabies virus circulating in Azerbaijan

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Rabies is estimated to cause at least 55,000 deaths per year worldwide. Azerbaijan is located in the South Caucasus, a region of geopolitical importance located at the gateway between Europe and Asia. This geographical location makes the region of central importance to epidemiological study and the control of transboundary infectious diseases such as rabies. According to reports from the Azerbaijan State Veterinary Control Service, rabies cases are observed among animals and fatal cases occur sporadically among people in Azerbaijan annually. However, despite all the research conducted, there is still a lack of information regarding the circulation of rabies in Azerbaijan. Therefore, the goal of this study is the continuing study of rabies positive samples for further identification of the circulation of the virus in Azerbaijan in order to plan a vaccination program. The statistical information regarding rabies cases in animals 2016 – 2017 was collected from the Azerbaijan State Veterinary Control Service. The National Reference Laboratory under the Food Safety Institute (FSI) tested the collected samples. A total of 48 animals tested positive for rabies (18 domestic and 3 stray dogs, 17 cattle, 1 donkey, 5 cats

and 3 jackals) from 26 villages in Azerbaijan in 2016. In 2017, 73 animals (17 domestic and 14 stray dogs, 32 cattle, 2 small ruminants, 1 horse, 1 donkey, 2 cats, 1 wolf and 3 jackals) tested positive from 33 villages in Azerbaijan. The results were mapped to identify the rabies foci. The samples confirmed as positive were officially transferred to the FSI in triple packages following BS&S guidance. These strains were stored in a BSL-2 laboratory freezer at -80°C at the Azerbaijan FSI. The work on the stored samples will commence in November 2018. A PCR analysis will be conducted on the 12 stored positive samples. Afterwards, samples confirmed as positive will be sequenced with the help of the OIE Veterinary Control Central Research Institute in Ankara in 2019. This laboratory provided training on rabies diagnosis to the research team participants in 2017.

Biography

Chichak Suleymanova completed Master Degree at the age of 23 from Azerbaijan State Agrarian University.

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