

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Rabies in Southeast Asia: a systematic review of its incidence, risk factors, and mortality
AUTHORS	Ling, Miaw Yn; Halim, Ahmad Farid Nazmi Abdul; Ahmad, Dzulfiteer; Ramly, Nurfatehar; Hassan, Mohd Rohaizat; Syed Abdul Rahim, Syed Sharizman; Saffree Jeffree, Mohammad; Omar, Azizan; Hidrus, Aizuddin

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Seetahal , Janine F R The University of the West Indies
REVIEW RETURNED	07-Oct-2022

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The study successfully collated essential data for the development of more effective rabies control programs within Southeast Asia. It can potentially be a major contribution to the existing literature on rabies in this region. The study methodology was very well thought out and explained in detail which included an extensive search that appeared to result in a great deal of information from various sources. Nevertheless, the inclusion criteria for this study was also very strict, so it is possible that more study data could have been captured if for instance the publication years included were broadened to include older articles. This may have allowed for example the examination of trends over time within the region and how this may have changed with any particular interventions implemented or in relation to other factors. Although the results do address the research questions in theory perhaps they can be reworded to better reflect the information that is derived from the reference papers. For example, it is known that rabies is nearly always fatal and mortality is expected to be high, maybe the case fatality of reported possible exposures (e.g. dog bite cases) might be more applicable and reflective of the risks. There are also other impacts of rabies that could have been discussed in the results under the section "Impact of rabies in Southeast Asia countries". For a more comprehensive regional view, the results for each country may be compared and contrasted within the results section with inclusion of possible reasons for variations in the discussion examining factors between the countries themselves. Some of the information provided in the introduction could provide evidence in the discussion for results of the study. The discussion could have benefited from the inclusion of more thoughts on/ possible explanations for some of the information presented in the results e.g. seasonal patterns observed in Vietnam or the high number of cases in Bali over the two-year period. English proof reading may be useful to correct some minor errors.</p>
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REVIEWER	Salomao, Cristolde
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	National Institute of Health Maputo
REVIEW RETURNED	20-Jan-2023

GENERAL COMMENTS	Congratulations to the authors for the manuscript. Human rabies is a serious public health issue. Although the results do not represent what happens in other regions or continents, they could be used for the elaboration of policies and programs that can improve the control of human rabies infections in several developing countries.
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REVIEWER	Lim , Chien Joo Tan Tock Seng Hospital
REVIEW RETURNED	23-Jan-2023

GENERAL COMMENTS	The rabies situation in Southeast Asia is a great concern especially in countries where rabies prevalence remained high due to the lack of public awareness and limited accessibility of rabies vaccine. Little studies were done in Southeast Asia region, therefore it is crucial for this study to fill the gap and update the rabies situation in the region. The manuscript was well written with clear search strategy, the only comment to the author is the study could be better if study team could include more database for a more comprehensive search.
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer 1	The study successfully collated essential data for the development of more effective rabies control programs within Southeast Asia. It can potentially be a major contribution to the existing literature on rabies in this region. The study methodology was very well thought out and explained in detail which included an extensive search that appeared to result in a great deal of information from various sources. Nevertheless, the inclusion criteria for this study was also very strict, so it is possible that more study data could have been captured if for instance the publication years included were broadened to include older articles. This may have allowed for example the examination of trends over time within the region and how this may have changed with any particular interventions implemented or in relation to other factors.	Thank you for this comment. We limit the publication date to 2012 until 2023 so that we can build our systematic review on the recent literature. The included study used data as far back as 2006, which can serve as a comparison for the rabies trend over time.
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	<p>Although the results do address the research questions in theory perhaps they can be re-worded to better reflect the information that is derived from the reference papers. For example, it is known that rabies is nearly always fatal and mortality is expected to be high, maybe the case fatality of reported possible exposures (e.g. dog bite cases) might be more applicable and reflective of the risks.</p>	<p>Thank you for this comment. We have made the necessary changes to the research questions to accurately reflect the results derived from the included articles. We have included the case fatality of dog bite cases in the result section as reported by Sim et al 2021 & Susilawathi et al 2012.</p>
	<p>There are also other impacts of rabies that could have been discussed in the results under the section "Impact of rabies in Southeast Asia countries".</p>	<p>Thank you for this comment. However, we only reported mortality due to rabies based on our research question.</p>
	<p>For a more comprehensive regional view, the results for each country may be compared and contrasted within the results section with inclusion of possible reasons for variations in the discussion examining factors between the countries themselves.</p>	<p>Thank you for this comment. The results for each country have been compared in the results section and discussed accordingly.</p>
	<p>Some of the information provided in the introduction could provide evidence in the discussion for results of the study. The discussion could have benefited from the inclusion of more thoughts on/ possible explanations for some of the information presented in the results e.g. seasonal patterns observed in Vietnam or the high number of cases in Bali over the two-year period.</p>	<p>Thank you for this comment. Explanations for the seasonal patterns observed in Vietnam have been added in the discussion.</p>
	<p>English proof reading may be useful to correct some minor errors.</p>	<p>Thank you for this comment. The article has been proofread. The grammar and spelling errors have been rectified.</p>
Reviewer 2	<p>Congratulations to the authors for the manuscript. Human rabies is a serious public health issue. Although the results do not represent what happens in other regions or continents, they could be used for the elaboration of policies and programs that can improve the control of human rabies infections in several developing countries.</p>	<p>Thank you for this comment.</p>

Reviewer 3	<p>The rabies situation in Southeast Asia is a great concern especially in countries where rabies prevalence remained high due to the lack of public awareness and limited accessibility of rabies vaccine. Little studies were done in Southeast Asia region; therefore, it is crucial for this study to fill the gap and update the rabies situation in the region.</p> <p>The manuscript was well written with clear search strategy, the only comment to the author is the study could be better if study team could include more database for a more comprehensive search.</p>	<p>Thank you for this suggestion. The three databases (Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed) are commonly used and had reliable peer-reviewed articles. Some databases such as Google Scholar was not used as some of the works contained in it are not peer-reviewed. Despite the fact that we only used three databases, we believe our review is comprehensive and thorough. This is based on the AMSTAR 2, a critical appraisal tool for systematic reviews, which states that at least two databases should be used when conducting a systematic review (1).</p>
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References:

1. Shea BJ, Reeves BC, Wells G, et al. AMSTAR 2: a critical appraisal tool for systematic reviews that include randomised or non-randomised studies of

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Seetahal , Janine F R The University of the West Indies
REVIEW RETURNED	22-Mar-2023

GENERAL COMMENTS	Thank you for collating the data on rabies in South east Asia in this paper. Minor grammatical and formatting changes needed.
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