

Rabies is an infectious disease that can affect all species of warmblooded animals, including man. This disorder is transmitted by the saliva of an infected animal and is caused by a virus (Neurotropic lyssavirus) that affects the salivary glands and the central nervous system. The symptoms may lead to serious complications if the virus is not treated immediately. Rabies in humans has been almost completely eliminated in most developed countries. The vaccinations of domesticated animals and elimination of stray dogs has helped control this problem. In the 1980's the U.S. Centers for Disease Control had one case per year reported. In the United States rabies is found primarily among wild animals such as skunks, foxes, bats, and raccoons. There were 49 cases of human rabies reported in the U.S. between 1960 and 1986. Only 7 of the 49 cases were acquired by exposure to rabid domesticated animals. The remainder were from wild animals.