

250 thousand people have been treated in the last year for rabies

ISTANBUL

Veterinarian Prof. Dr. Serkal Gazyağcı, head of BUIATRİ Association in Türkiye and faculty member of Kırıkkale University, has said that 250 thousand people received treatment for rabies in the last year across Türkiye.

Gazyağcı stated that 59 thousand people died from rabies in the last 11 years.

"If we look at animals, especially dogs, the asymmetry in the eyes is important. If the eyes are not symmetrical, the first thing to come to mind is that it may have rabies," he said.

"In case of drooling, aggression or paralysis, if it is known that it is a stray and unvaccinated, the suspicion of rabies should arouse", he added.

The death of Mustafa Erçetin, aged 10 who was diagnosed with rabies after a dog bite in the Adilcevaz district of Bitlis province, has brought questions about rabies cases.

Expressing that rabies cases are seen every year, Gazyağcı said, "The last time we encountered it, was in Kırıkkale four times in 2014."

"It is known that cases also occur in different parts of Türkiye from time to time", he added.

Gazyağcı conveyed that rabies has a cycle and that there is a transmission system. He said that the most important one is wildlife.

"In the wild, cases such as wolves, jackals, foxes and underground ferrets can be transmitted either by directly biting people or by biting households and farm animals", he said.

Noting that the dogs kept in the farm are faced with wild animals, Gazyağcı pointed out that rabies can be transmitted from all mammals.

He stated that farm animals are not vaccinated against rabies and that rabies vaccination is also a legal requirement, especially for dogs that are kept on the farm.

"It is useful to have this vaccine repeated every year for cats and dogs or other mammals at home", he said.

Gazyağcı also stated that foxes are the main source for rabies in Türkiye.

He also said that the animals with tags on their ears which are neutered and vaccinated should be also paid attention to.

"Sometimes you will see animals with tags in the streets. This does not mean that they are completely vaccinated. It means that they have been neutered and vaccinated, but as you know that the vaccine has a lifespan of 1 year," he said.

"After 1 year, even though the tag remains in place, this does not always mean that the animal is vaccinated", he added.

