Welcome to Spotlight. I’m Anne Muir. And I’m Adam Navis. Spotlight uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand, no matter where in the world they live. A young boy cries out in pain. He wants water. His parents bring it to him. But he is afraid of it. Saliva flows out of his mouth. His mouth and chin are wet. His eyes roll with fear. His back lifts off the bed. He is struggling with fear and pain. He sees strange things. But they are not real. He does not understand what he is seeing. This young boy is suffering from rabies. And soon, he will die. Today’s Spotlight is on the disease rabies. Rabies is a very dangerous virus. It is especially damaging because it affects the body and the mind. Rabies affects a person’s brain and central nervous system. This is the system of nerves in the body. The first signs of rabies are often physical. A person may have a fever or a pain in the head. But soon, he or she will begin to experience neurological signs of the rabies virus. These are problems with the brain. Some people suffering from rabies cannot sleep. They may feel afraid, anxious, and confused. They cannot understand normal things. Some people also hallucinate - they see things that do not exist. Other people become paralyzed - they cannot move. Some people develop a very wet mouth. They may have problems swallowing. And they may also become afraid of water. Without treatment, people infected with rabies will die. Rabies is a problem in many countries, but countries in Asia, Africa and South America are the most affected. And world-wide, only a few countries are free of the disease. Experts say that almost 60,000 people die from rabies every year. And 30 to 50 percent of these are children. Almost all cases of rabies in humans come from animal bites. This can only happen if the animal has rabies. Animals infected with rabies do not feel fear. They become very violent. They attack other animals, spreading the disease. They also try to bite and attack people. This is how rabies spreads - through the bite and saliva of an animal. Dogs are the biggest risk in most countries. Rabies is a serious disease. But it can be prevented. Medical science is a big help. Vaccines are the most important step in preventing rabies. They protect people from the disease. People can get the rabies vaccine before or after an attack. If a person gets the vaccine before the attack, the rabies will not develop. But after an attack it is important to get the vaccine quickly. The signs of rabies do not appear immediately. Signs of the disease will usually appear within 20 to 60 days. After an attack, the vaccine will treat and cure rabies. But it is important to begin the treatment within two days of a possible infection. After symptoms develop, it is too late for treatment. Unfortunately, victims cannot always get the vaccine. In some places, it is difficult to get medical treatment. And sometimes people do not know that an animal has bitten them. This is often the case with bats. Bats are small flying animals. They are only active at night. If a bat becomes trapped in a house, it might bite a sleeping person. If the bat has rabies, this is very dangerous. A sleeping person might not know that something has bitten him. Knowing about rabies can help. If a bat is in your house, check yourself and your children for bites. The second step in preventing rabies is animal control. People can become infected through the dogs that they live with. People and their animals can be infected through wild animals. It is hard to control wild animals. So, many communities are finding creative ways to prevent the spread of rabies. In Jaipur India, as in many places, wild dogs were a big problem. They spread rabies to local people, and to other animals. So the authorities took action. They sterilized many of the wild dogs. That is, they stopped the wild dogs from having babies. This reduced the number of wild dogs. Authorities also treated the remaining wild dogs with an animal vaccine called V-RG. People can hide this vaccine in food. Animals eat it, and it protects them from rabies. This way, people do not need to trap the animals. These measures have prevented many human rabies cases. V-RG has also worked very well in Europe and in parts of the United States. In these places, authorities use V-RG on other wild animals, like foxes or raccoons. In the United States, there is another important prevention method. As in many countries, many people there like to own dogs. These pets bring their owners a lot of joy. The government requires that owners treat all young dogs with a vaccine. This protects the dogs, but it also protects the dog owners! Many local authorities also catch wild dogs. This helps prevent the disease from spreading. In the city of Beijing, China, the authorities have a similar plan. Rabies has greatly increased there over the last ten years. So, to help stop the disease, the government limits the number of dogs that people can own. Now, people can only own one dog. And dogs are also banned from public areas. The authorities hope that these actions will reduce the number of dogs in the city. Other cities have also followed this example. They believe fewer dogs should result in fewer dog attacks. But some people argue that limiting the number of dogs is not right. Many people do not want to give up their dogs. And they do not believe that these actions will reduce rabies. But the authorities hope that fewer dog attacks will result in fewer human cases of rabies. And some people claim that the remaining dogs will have better care. All people should be mindful of rabies. Be careful of animals that are acting strangely. If you own a dog, get your dog vaccinated. And encourage your local government to take care of wild dogs, and other wild animals. Finally, if you or someone you know is bitten by a dog or wild animal, get treatment immediately. What do you know about the rabies virus? Is rabies common where you live? You can leave a comment on our website. Or email us at radio@radioenglish.net. You can also find us on Facebook at Facebook.com/spotlightradio. The writer of this program was Christy VanArragon. The producer was Michio Ozaki. The voices you heard were from the United States and the United Kingdom. You can listen to this program again, and read it, on the internet at www.radioenglish.net. This program is called “The Rabies Virus”. Look for our free official app in the Google Play Store and in iTunes. We hope you can join us for the next Spotlight program. Goodbye!