

# Awareness towards rabies and its management among residents from the origin of rabies outbreak in Sarawak

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** This study explored the awareness of rabies and its management among the residents at the origin of the rabies outbreak, Serian division of Sarawak. **Methods:** This was a cross-sectional survey conducted from April 2022 to June 2022. We invited patients who visited the outpatient pharmacy department during the study to participate. We developed a questionnaire through a literature review and experts' opinions. **Results:** A total of 390 respondents were included in the analysis. The majority were female (55.9%), aged 40-49 years (32.1%), were Bidayuh (56.2%), were dog/cat owners (87.4%), and had at least secondary education (76.4%). Most respondents obtained information related to rabies from the media (60.5%). Most of the respondents (95.6%) had heard of rabies, and 90.3% were aware that rabies can cause death. However, only 22.3% of them knew that human rabies is highly fatal after signs and symptoms appear. Besides, 222 (56.9%) were dog/cat owners. Among these dog/cat owners, most never vaccinated their dog/cat (n=114, 51.4%). Among those who vaccinated their pets (n=108), only 55.6% of them (n=60) had their pets vaccinated within the past 12 months. Regarding local wound management, only 76.2% knew that they had to wash the site of the wound immediately with running water. **Conclusion:** This study highlights the knowledge gap that healthcare authorities and practitioners must promptly address by formulating tailored and efficient health communication strategies.