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Animal bites and tetanus prophylaxis

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Dear Editor,

In a recent article, Babazadeh *et al.* investigated the cost of postexposure rabies prophylaxis which is a significant issue on the epidemiology of acute animal bites[1]. However, I have some comments regarding to this article.

Animal bites are often dirty wounds. So, every patient suffered from an animal bite should be evaluated for the necessity of tetanus prophylaxis, which is also an important subpart of postexposure rabies prophylaxis[2]. So, the cost of tetanus prophylaxis also increases the economic burden. Information on how many patients received tetanus prophylaxis and the financial burden of this will bring a more comprehensive view.

Another important socioeconomic aspect of animal bites is that the persons suffering from animal bites have to stay away from work and they can not provide a positive contribution to the economy in the period because they are away from work. So, animal bite injuries also cause an indirect increase in the economic burden due to loss of labor force.

It is well known that rabies is almost always a fatal disease[3]. Four cases of rabies in animals were discovered in this study whereas no case of human rabies was reported. Information should be given regarding to the method used to diagnose rabies in these four animals and factors might have resulted in the survival of patients bitten by these animals.

Wounds owing to dog bites tend to be polymicrobial. The most common organisms causing infections in dog bite injuries are *Pasteurella*, *Streptococci*, *Staphylococci* and *Fusobacterium*. Anaerobic bacteria also pose an important risk for infection as they comprise 30%–40% of the canine mouth flora[4]. So,

antibiotic treatment is also given in animal bite injuries to prevent skin and soft tissue infection. This condition also increases the economic burden.

Rabies is transmitted to humans through the bites of rabid animals. Therefore, control of rabies in animals is at least as important as in humans. This means that physicians and veterinary doctors should participate together in rabies control programmes, since multidisciplinary studies by physicians and veterinary doctors are necessary to reduce the cost of animal bite injuries.

Conflict of interest statement

The author reports no conflict of interest.

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