

## Original Article

# Investigation of Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Recipients with Ferret-Badger Exposures in Taiwan, May 2012-October 2013

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### Abstract

In response to the outbreak of enzootic ferret-badgers rabies in Taiwan since July 2013, we conducted an investigation and compared the characteristics between exposures in rabies enzootic and rabies nonenzootic zones. We enrolled persons in the rabies postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) registry who were exposed to ferret-badgers during May 2012-October 2013 and received  $\geq 1$  dose of rabies vaccine. We collected information on demographics, exposure circumstances, behaviors of ferret-badgers, and medical management received from rabies enzootic zones identified as of October 31, 2013. The Council of Agriculture defined rabies enzootic zones as towns where rabid ferret-badgers were identified. We used chi-square test and nonparametric test to analyze categorical and continuous variables, respectively. Fifty-six recipients met the criteria. The median age was 52 years (range 9–86). Forty-five (80%) exposures occurred in rural area; 35 (63%) occurred in rabies enzootic zones. The most frequent circumstance leading to exposures was provoked attacks ( $n = 30$ , 54%). Appearance in the daytime or lighted place was the most common abnormal behavior of ferret-badgers. PEP recipients in rabies enzootic zones had a higher odd of having wounds irrigated adequately (57%) than those in nonenzootic zones (21%) (odds ratio [OR] 5.3, 95% confidence interval [CI] 1.5–19.3), and the odds of seeing ferret-badgers wandering into residential areas were higher in rabies enzootic zones than nonenzootic zones (43% versus 14%, OR 4.5, 95% CI 1.1–18.1). People, especially those live in rabies enzootic zones, should be cautious about abnormal behaviors of ferret-badgers. Because provoked attacks are the leading cause of exposures, the public should be warned against approaching ferret-badgers and should contact professionals to handle the animals if necessary.

**Keyword:** rabies, postexposure prophylaxis, ferret-badger