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4Spatiotemporal analysis of human rabies exposure in Colombia during ten
5years: A challenge for implementing social inclusion in its surveillance and
6prevention

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25Abstract

26Based on reported cases of human rabies exposure to Colombia public health surveillance system
27between 2007 and 2016 we conducted a spatiotemporal analysis to identify epidemiological
28scenarios of human rabies exposure by dog, cat, bat or farm animal (n= 666,411 cases).
29Spatiotemporal analysis, incidence rate, cluster and outlier analysis were conducted for all
30Colombian cities (n= 1122). The incidence rate of human rabies exposure by dogs and cats
31showed an increasing trend while aggression by bats and farm animals fluctuated throughout the
32analyzed period. Human rabies transmitted by cat and bat occurred in Andean and Orinoquia
33region, where the larger scenario was observed. There, urban scenario showed high risk to human
34rabies exposure by cat and dog in cities characterized for having the highest human population
35density and greater economic development. In contrary, rural area where was observed high risk
36of human rabies exposure by farm animals in workers from agroforestry area (42.7%). exposed to
37rabies by contact of mucosa or injured skin with saliva infected with rabies virus (74.5%)
38composed rural scenario. In Inequality scenario, exposure by farm animals showed some outlier
39cities with high risk principally in Pacific region, where was observed the lowest incidence rates
40to human rabies exposure in all years studied and the highest poverty rates in Colombia. There,
41afro-descendant (55%) and indigenous (8.2%) people were mostly affected. High risk of
42exposure by bat bite was observed in indigenous (98.5%) located in cities of Amazon region with
43dispersed population (Amazonian scenario). Analysis presented here can encourage surveillance,
44care and prevention programs to focus both on ethnic, dispersed populations and areas with rabies
45viral circulation, since each scenario requires different approach strategies.

46

47 Author Summary

48 Worldwide, rabies is transmitted by saliva contact contaminated with the rabies virus through a
49 bite, scratching or licking of bat, dog, cat and other mammals. If disease is not treated in time is
50 going to cause death. In Colombia, 14 deaths have been reported due to Classical Rabies Virus
51 (RABV) in the last 10 years, but no spatial analysis has been carried out to determine different
52 geographical risk factors. In this study, we analyzed people who were exposed to RABV or died
53 between 2007 and 2016, showing a relationship between age group, sex, occupation, ethnicity
54 and illness. Considering these variables were possible to identify four different epidemiological
55 scenarios where high migratory effect of the population takes the animals to areas with high
56 population densities and also detect municipalities with very poor and vulnerable populations,
57 located far from the health centers increasing the risk to die by rabies virus. Another contribution
58 is the location of human rabies exposure in distinctly agricultural or indigenous areas, where
59 exposure is clearly high and worrying.

60

61 Introduction

62 Rabies is an infectious disease known around the world for its transmission through dog bite to
63 human, being the cause of viral encephalitis of high mortality in humans. Rabies virus belong to
64 order *Mononegavirales*, family *Rhabdoviridae*, genus *Lyssavirus*, and genotype 1[1]. It is
65 believed that RABV appeared more than 4000 years ago with the bat as a reservoir and in its
66 evolutionary process was adapted to each geographical area and to new hosts. [2]. Probably
67 RABV and its transmission by dog bites, is the most heard news and the greatest interest in the
68 human population. The numbers also support this type of transmission as the main global risk;
69 with 95% of deaths due to human rabies caused by dog bites, mainly in the African and Asian

70continents[3,4]. A remaining 5% of human deaths from rabies are caused by wild animal's bites
71and are of high concern in public health, especially in the Americas, where they are considered as
72the main transmitters of the disease [5]. The wild animal most important in South America is
73hematophagous bats in the Amazon region comprised by Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, French Guiana,
74Suriname and Colombia[6]. Human rabies transmitted by bat bites is more recent, mainly
75occurring outbreaks in highly vulnerable human populations [7] and in areas where
76geographically exist the hematophagous bat species that are only found in America: *Desmodus*
77*rotundus*, *Dyphilla ecaudata* and *Diaemus young* [8].

78Historically; Colombia, like other countries of Latin America, presented outbreaks of human
79rabies caused by dog bite, showing a considerable decrease from 1981 to 2004 [9]. Between 2005
80and 2006; Chocó department reported 14 human deaths in indigenous population and three in
81Afro-descendant communities, all by bat bites and bat variants. After 2005, human deaths by
82rabies have been mainly caused by bat variant transmitted by bat and domestic cat [10,11]. From
832004 to 2016, there were 33 deaths due to rabies in Colombia. Of these, 8 (24.2%) were attacked
84by cats, 21 (63.6%) by bats and 4 (12.1%) by dogs. The variants found were correlated in cases
85of aggression by cat and bat to variants belonging to bats (V4, V3 and atypical) and bites to dog
86variants (V1)[9]. The most recent case of human rabies in Colombia occurred in 2017. It was
87related to cat aggression confirming the transmission of the atypical variant related to bat[9].

88To prevent human rabies and to monitor rabies exposure, Colombian government uses a
89surveillance system in public health (SIVIGILA) where it is possible to obtain information for
90control and prevention action realized by National Health Institute (INS) and Health and Social
91Protection Ministry (MSPS). Control and prevention are focus on public politics generalized for
92entire country impacting mainly large areas of population concentration and not integrating the

93complexity of the Colombian territory [12]. On the other hand, studies of distribution and spatial
94analysis of human rabies or rabies exposure in humans in Colombia are few but frequently found
95about livestock rabies [13,14].

96Spatial analysis help to understand behavior of diseases in a geographic view to identify
97information on significant clusters and the associated factors [15]. Based on the reported cases of
98exposure to rabies in humans by SIVIGILA between 2007 and 2016, we conducted a
99spatiotemporal analysis to identify epidemiological trends and areas of high risk of being attacked
100by a dog, cat, bat or having contact with a production animal diagnosed with RABV. Then we
101determined scenarios of epidemiological risk characterized by their sociodemographic conditions
102that expose population to RABV to make difference in prevention programs where effective
103resource utilization and social inclusive becoming relevant.

104

105**Materials and Methods**

106**Study area**

107 Colombia is located at northwest of the southern region of American continent with a
108population of 49,291,609 and an area of 1,143,407 km²; divided into 33 departments included
109Bogotá D.C. and subdivided into 1122 cities (1102 municipalities and 20 non-municipalized
110areas called *corregimientos*) [16] Cities are organized into six regions: Amazonian, Andean,
111Orinoquia or Eastern plains, Caribbean, Pacific and Insular regions classified according to
112topography, biota, soil type, vegetation and geology [17] (**figure 1**).



113

114 **Figure 1. Political Division and Natural Regions of Colombia.** Amazonian region (green),
115 Orinoquia region (violet), Andean region (brown), Pacific region (blue), Caribbean region
116 (white) and Insular region (orange).

117 **Data collection and analysis**

118 Data of reported cases of human rabies exposure since 2007 to 2016 were obtained from
119 SIVIGILA. For the analysis, we used demographic information (age, sex, occupation and
120 ethnicity) and rabies exposure information (city where aggression or contact occurred, aggression
121 type, aggressor species, patient final condition and variant detected), classified according to
122 Rabies surveillance protocol [18]. Reported human rabies cases and variant detected were
123 confirmed from final report of human rabies in Colombia in 2016 [9]. Data without the aggressor
124 species, aggressions by other animals and also people who was exposed to rabies in a different
125 country were excluded (12,232 cases related). For each variable the number of valid cases varied
126 since only the correctly filled fields were considered, resulting in 666,411 valid cases.

127 For descriptive statistical analysis, ages were categorized by ten-year intervals, occupations were
128 categorized according to International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic

129Activities (ISIC) adapted to Colombia DANE [19]. Gender, area and ethnicity remained
130classified as found in the Rabies surveillance protocol [18]. All data were inserted and analyzed
131in the IBM SPSS® software version 20.0, Univariate analysis was performed and considered
132significant when $p < 0.05$. Aggressor species was considered as a dependent variable.

133Spatiotemporal analysis

134The population distribution file by year/municipalities [20] and Colombia municipalities shape
135file were obtained from Colombian National Department of Statistics (DANE)[16] and used as a
136basis for spatial analysis.

137The incidence means of human rabies exposure by dog, cat, bat and farm animals were estimated
138and included in the spatiotemporal analysis (incidence rate of human rabies exposure by
139aggressor species/100,000 hab. and incidence rate of human rabies exposure/year/100,000 hab.).
140The incidence rates was subdivided in levels according to quartiles (Q), denominated: 0: No
141incidence; Q1: Low incidence; Q2: Moderate Incidence; Q3: High Incidence and Q4: Very high
142Incidence [21].. Maps were confectioned in ArcGIS® 10.3 software and temporal graphics were
143developed in Microsoft Excel 2010.

144In relation to the spatial statistical analysis, Moran's global index and the spatial autocorrelation
145by Cluster and Outlier Analysis Anselin Local Moran's I were realized for determining the
146statistically significant clusters and outliers ($P < 0.05$) of human rabies exposure by aggressor
147species. [22,23], both analyzes were conducted in ArcGIS® 10.3 software.

148

149Results and Discussion

150 Descriptive statistics

151 Between 2007 and 2016 incidence ranges of human rabies exposure increased from 40.9/100,000
 152 hab. in 2007 to 234.90/100,000 hab. in 2016. Human rabies exposure by dog was the most
 153 reported with 58,613/666,304 cases (87.4%) following by cat with 73,272/666,304 cases
 154 (10.9%). All variables showed a significant difference in relation to aggressor species (table 1).
 155 The age group more frequently exposed to human rabies was 0-9 years old, especially after being
 156 bitten by a dog. In less proportion, human's rabies exposure by cats and bats was also more
 157 frequent to 0-9 years old while for farm animals 30-39 years was more reported. Although most
 158 rabies exposure cases occur in men, principally in human rabies exposure by dog, women were
 159 more exposed to human rabies by cat with 61% of cases reported of all cases of human rabies
 160 exposure by cat (44,811/73,281). Student was the occupation more reported (35.5%-
 161 236,372/666,304) and bite was the more frequent aggression type (89.6% - 601,178/666,304).
 162 Within the ethnic population reported, afro-descendant population was the most affected (3.9%
 163 26,344/666,411), principally by human rabies exposure by dog, however representing less than
 164 5% of the total population exposed to human rabies (3.5% - 23,180/666,304).

165 **Table 1. Aggressor species distribution according to independent variables of human rabies**
 166 **exposure in Colombia (2007-2016).**

VARIABLES	AGGRESSOR SPECIES								p value
	DOG		CAT		BAT		FARM ANIMALS		
AGE N= 666,304	n=582,539	(%)	n=73,272	(%)	n=3,051	(%)	n=7,442	(%)	0.000
0 -9 year	157,018	(23.6)	14,670	(2.2)	589	(0.1)	819	(0.1)	
10-19 years	126,489	(19.0)	11,709	(1.8)	576	(0.1)	1,254	(0.2)	
20-29 years	77,776	(11.7)	10,778	(1.6)	559	(0.1)	1,287	(0.2)	
30-39 years	58,487	(8.8)	8,156	(1.2)	366	(0.1)	1,303	(0.2)	
40-49 years	51,574	(7.7)	8,371	(1.3)	327	(0.1)	1,171	(0.2)	
50-59 years	47,946	(7.2)	8,025	(1.2)	311	(0.0)	838	(0.1)	

60-69 years	33,136 (5.0)	5,525 (0.8)	167 (0.0)	517 (0.1)	
70-79 years	21,133 (3.2)	3,822 (0.6)	112 (0.0)	184 (0.0)	
80 years and over	8,980 (1.3)	2,216 (0.3)	44 (0.0)	69 (0.0)	
GENDER N= 666,411	n=582,636	n=73,281	n=3,051	n=7,443	0.000
Female	253,919 (38.1)	44,811 (6.7)	1,267 (0.2)	1,949 (0.3)	
Male	328,717 (49.3)	28,470 (4.3)	1,784 (0.2)	5,494 (0.8)	
AGRESSION TYPE					0.000
N= 666,411					
Bite	536,277 (80.5)	581,71 (8.7)	2,811 (0.4)	3,919 (0.0)	
Scratch	443,54 (6.7)	14,857 (2.2)	188 (0.0)	224 (0.0)	
Contact of mucosa or skin injured with saliva infected with rabies virus	1,655 (0.2)	160 (0.0)	28 (0.0)	2,262 (0.0)	
Contact of mucosa or injured skin, with nervous tissue, biological material or secretions infected with rabies virus	101 (0.0)	36 (0.0)	10 (0.0)	793 (0.0)	
Inhalation in charged environments or rabies virus	4 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	13 (0.0)	
Transplant of organs or tissues infected with rabies virus	1 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.0)	
Other	244 (0.0)	55 (0.0)	13 (0.0)	229 (0.0)	
OCUPATION N=666,411					0.000
Student	210,340 (31.6)	22,898 (3.4)	959 (0.1)	2,175 (0.3)	
Housewife	84,658 (12.7)	13,954 (2.1)	418 (0.1)	1,025 (0.2)	
Underage	55,839 (8.4)	6,290 (0.9)	303 (0.0)	640 (0.1)	
Professionals, technicians and others from the agroforestry and livestock area	26,511 (4.0)	2,574 (0.4)	144 (0.0)	1,171 (0.2)	
Professionals, technicians and others in organization, financial analysis and related	16,692 (2.5)	2,647 (0.4)	91 (0.0)	175 (0.0)	
Professionals, technicians and workers of the biological sciences, medicine and health	13,975 (2.1)	2,275 (0.3)	102 (0.0)	207 (0.0)	
Model, seller and demonstrator	13,232 (2.0)	1,889 (0.3)	64 (0.0)	114 (0.0)	
Officers, workers and operators of mining, construction and transport	11,125 (1.7)	1,220 (0.2)	69 (0.0)	138 (0.0)	
Pensioner	7,511 (1.1)	1,156 (0.2)	60 (0.0)	98 (0.0)	
Unemployed	8,685 (1.3)	1,164 (0.2)	42 (0.0)	80 (0.0)	
Others	134,068 (20.1)	17,214 (2.6)	799 (0.1)	1,620 (0.2)	
ETHNICITY N=666411					0.005
Indigenous	10,409 (1.6)	748 (0.1)	460 (0.1)	388 (0.1)	
Romany	1,474 (0.2)	193 (0.0)	4 (0.0)	26 (0.0)	

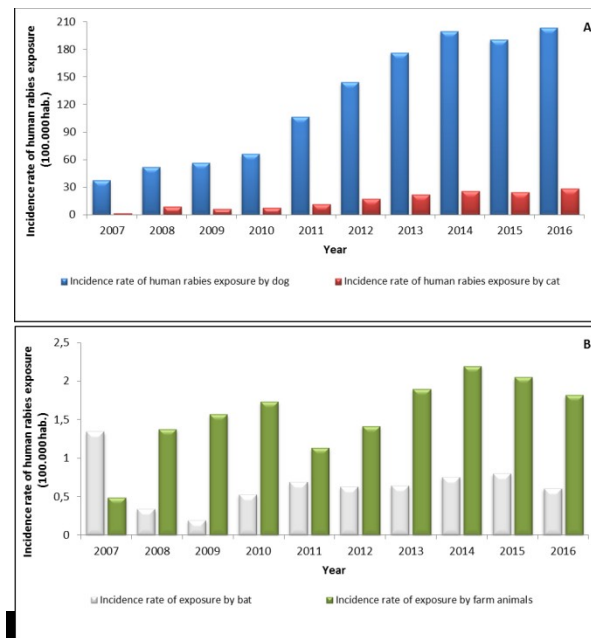
Raizal	1,870 (0.3)	202 (0.0)	16 (0.0)	40 (0.0)
Palenquero	241 (0.0)	23 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	2 (0.0)
Afrodescendant	23,180 (3.5)	2,144 (0.3)	300 (0.0)	720 (0.1)
Population without ethnic group	545,462 (81.9)	69,971 (10.5)	2,270 (0.3)	6,267 (0.9)

167Univariate analyses considered significant when $p < 0.05$. Aggressor species was considered as a
168dependent variable

169

170Temporal Analyses

171The incidence rate of rabies exposure by dogs, cats, farm animals and bats can be seen in figure
1722. While human rabies exposure to companion animals increased from 2007 to 2016; being the
173highest incidence presented in 2016 for rabies exposure by dog (203.81 x 100.000 Hab.) (Figure
1742A), the incidence rate of rabies exposure by bat and farm animals fluctuated throughout the
175period analyzed with peaks occurring in 2007 (1.33x 100,000 Hab.), 2011 (0.68 x 100,000 Hab.)
176and 2015 (0.79 x 100,000 Hab.) for rabies exposure by bat and 2010 (1.73 x100,000 Hab.) and
1772014 (2.19 x 100,000 Hab.) for rabies exposure by farm animals (Figure 2B). It is possible that
178human rabies exposure by dog and cat showed a trend to increase as a result of dog and cat
179population's growth in Colombia [24,25] principally in urban areas. The incidence of human
180rabies exposure by farm animals and bat may have fluctuated for two reasons. First, notification
181of exposure to farm animals occurs when a person at risk of becoming infected with rabies virus
182is identified. Usually when one animal is confirmed with rabies virus both human health public
183surveillance system and animal health surveillance system do an active search of people who was
184in contact with the animal. In fact, human rabies exposure by farm animal showed similar trend
185than focus of animal rabies in Colombia during the same period of time [26,27]. Second, human
186rabies exposure by bat usually is difficult to be notified because people affected live and work in
187rural areas far from health centers [28].

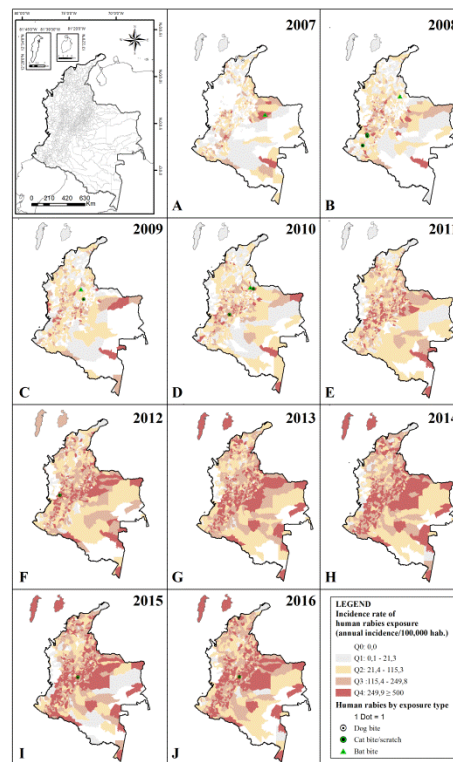


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189**Figure 2. Temporal distribution of incidence rate of human rabies exposures by dog, cat,**
190**bat and farm animals x 100.000 Hab. in Colombia, 2007-2016. (A) Incidence rates and cases**
191**of human exposure by cat and dog. (B) Incidence rates and cases of human exposure by farm**
192**animals and bat.**

193Overall incidence rate of human rabies exposure showed an increase in all cities in the period
194analyzed (figure 3). The lowest incidence rate was observed in most of the cities of Chocó
195department during every year studied (25/30 municipalities between 0 and 21.3/100,000 hab.).
196This area also presented the highest multidimensional and monetary poverty rates and the
197lowest index of access to health service in Colombia during the study period [29]. So this low
198incidence could be the result of a population with high vulnerability that may not be receiving
199medical attention for their levels of poverty and difficult access to health. [7] Indeed, some cities
200of Amazonas, Guainia and Chocó departments registered absence of incidence during all period
201analyzed.

202 Human deaths by rabies transmitted by dog bite occurred in 2007, when two cases were notified
203 in Magdalena city (Caribbean region) with V1 variant involved (figure 3A). This region did not
204 have an increase as would be expected in incidence rate of human rabies exposure in the first
205 years of analysis in spite of having presented cases of human rabies. Four human deaths by rabies
206 transmitted by bat bite occurred in cities of Andean and Orinoquia region, with the V3 and the V
207 atypical variants registered between 2007 and 2010 (Figure 3A, B, C, D). Ten human deaths by
208 rabies transmitted by cat were recorded in cities of Andean region, with the V3, V4 and V
209 atypical variants for the years 2008-2010, 2012, 2015 and 2016 (figure 3B, C, D, F, I, J).



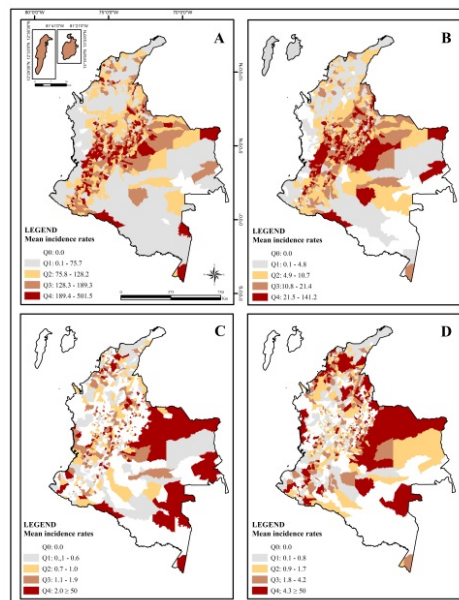
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211 **Figure 3. Spatiotemporal distribution of incidence rates of human rabies exposure and**
212 **human deaths by rabies in Colombia (2007-2016).** Incidence rates of human rabies exposure
213 and cases of human rabies by animal aggressor in (A) 2007, (B) 2008, (C) 2009, (D) 2010, (E)
214 2012, (G) 2013, (H) 2014, (I) 2015, (J) 2016. Colored dot of human rabies by aggressor specie

215representing variant involved: White for V1 variant of dog and Green for variants of bat (V3, V4
216and atypical).

217Spatial Analyses

218Geographic distribution of incidences rates of human rabies exposure by dog and cat showed a
219concentration from moderate to very high in municipalities located in Andean Region, north of
220the Orinoquia region and some municipalities of the Amazon and Caribbean region (Figure 4A
221and B). Low incidences were present in some cities located in Pacific, Amazon and Caribbean
222region. Very high, high, moderate and low incidence ranges of human rabies exposure by bat and
223farm animals were observed in all regions (Figure 4C and D). The highest incidence rate of rabies
224exposure among all animals' species was observed in exposure by bat in Taraira municipality of
225Vaupés Department, Amazon region (1,100.5/100,000 Hab.).



226

227**Figure 4. Spatial distribution of the mean incidence of human rabies exposure by aggressor**

228**species from 2007 to 2016 in all 1122 Colombian cities. (A) Mean incidence rates of human**

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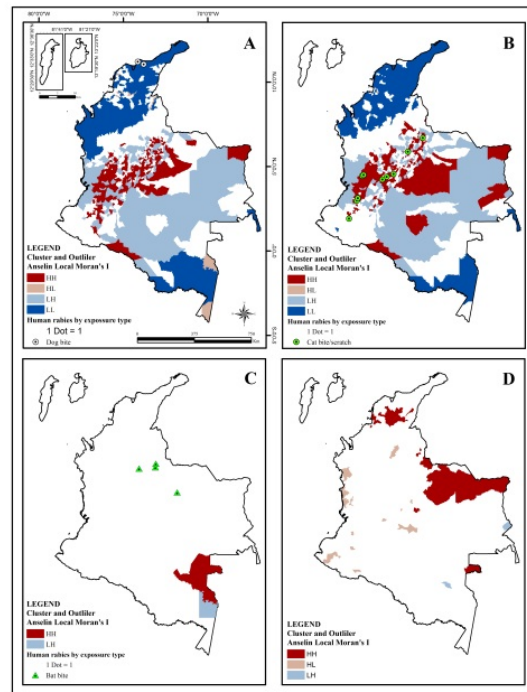
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229rabies exposure by dog (B) Mean incidence rates of human rabies exposure by cat (C) Mean
230incidence rates of human rabies exposure by bat. For this map section, Q4 presents 3 cities with
231incidence between 50 and 1,100/100,000 hab. (D) Mean incidence rates of human rabies
232exposure by farm animals. For this map section, Q4 presents 10 cities with incidents between 50
233and 142.8/100,000 hab. Incidence levels according quartiles (Q): Q0 - No incidence; Q1 - Low
234incidence; Q2 - Moderate incidence; Q3 - High incidence and Q4 - Very high incidence.

235Moran's global index indicated significant spatial clustering of incidence rates for all aggressor
236species (Dog exposure Moran's $I=0.006$ z-score: 77.9 p-value 0.000, Cat exposure Moran's $I=$
2370.07465 z-score:93.3 p-value 0.000, Bat exposure Moran's $I=0.0036$ z-score:7.284 p-value 0.000
238and Farm animals exposure Moran's $I=0.0140$ z-score:18.66 p-value 0.000). High-High cluster
239was observed mainly for human rabies exposure by dog (Figure 5A), cat (Figure 5B) and farm
240animals (Figure 5D) in cities of Andean and Orinoquia region and few cities in Amazonian
241region. In Caribbean region registered only high-high clustering for farm animals (Figure 5D)
242and some outliers High-Low for dog exposure (Figure 5A). Pacific region recorded outliers High-
243Low for farm animal's exposure, specifically in Chocó department (Figure 5D). Cluster High-
244High for bat exposure was exclusive in cities of Vaupés department (Amazon region) (Figure
2455C), moreover, were observed two High-low outliers for dog exposure (Figure 5A). All Low-
246Low clusters were observed in the Caribbean, Amazonian and north part of Pacific region in
247human rabies exposure by dog and cat (Figure 5A and 5B). In Low-Low cluster of human rabies
248exposure by dog occurred in Caribbean region with two human deaths related to dog aggression
249(Figure 5A), all deaths by human rabies transmitted by bat bite occurred in cities without
250statistical significance for human rabies exposure by bat (Figure 5C) and all deaths by human

251rabies transmitted by cat bite or scratch occurred in cluster High-High for human rabies exposure

252by bat located in Andean region (Figure 5B).



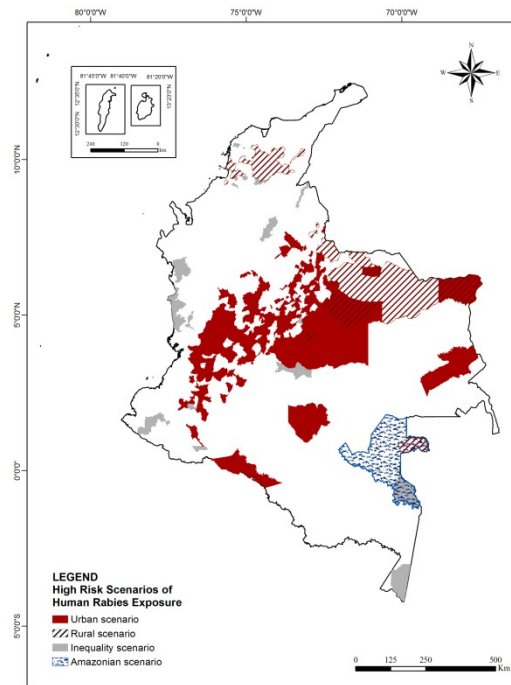
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254**Figure 5. Distribution of Cluster and Outlier Analysis Anselin Local Moran's I for human**
255**rabies exposure by aggressor specie and human rabies according to exposure type in**
256**Colombia (2007-2016).** (A) Cluster and Outlier Anselin Local Moran's I for human rabies
257exposure by dog with human rabies transmitted by dog bite. (B) Cluster and Outlier Anselin
258Local Moran's I for human rabies exposure by cat with human rabies transmitted by cat bite or
259scratch. (D) Cluster and Outlier Anselin Local Moran's I for human rabies exposure by bat with
260human rabies transmitted by bat bite. (E) Cluster and Outlier Anselin Local Moran's I for human
261rabies exposure by farm animals. Cluster and Outlier levels according to Anselin Local Moran's I
262classification: HH (High-High Cluster), HL (High-Low Outlier), LH (Low-High Outlier) and LL
263(Low-Low Outlier). Colorless areas have no statistical significance. Colored dot of human rabies

264representing variant involved: White for V1 variant of dog and Green for variants of bat (V3, V4
265and atypical).

266Cluster and Outlier Analysis Anselin Local Moran's I showed various scenarios of high-risk
267exposure of human to rabies by animal aggressor (Figure 6) (table 2). Urban Scenario presents
268the high risk of human rabies exposure by cat and dog observed in cities with the highest
269population density of Amazon, Andean and Orinoquia region. In this scenario, women presented
270the highest risk of rabies exposure to cat (61%) and students presented high risk to be exposed to
271dog (35.7%) and cat (26.1%) aggression. The most frequent aggression type was bite by dog with
27292% (168,224/181,540) and children of 0 to 9 years old composed de age group more frequently
273aggressed. All rabies human deaths caused by cat and bat aggression were registered in this
274scenario. This situation is similar worldwide where dog bite is the most reported in children and
275women more reported by cat bite [30]. Andean region reported the highest human population
276growth and the highest population density which would explain the greater concentration of
277animals in this region. Additionally, Andean and Orinoquia region reported the lowest
278multidimensional and monetary poverty rates and the highest index of access to health service in
279Colombia during the study period [29] showing a greater opportunity to receive medical attention
280and to notify in surveillance system when a human rabies exposure occurs. Human rabies
281transmitted by cat and bat bite could have increased the reports of human rabies exposure by cat
282and dog in this area like a population response to education programs and TV news about rabies.
283Basically, it happens in urban area of Andean and Orinoquia region because there is better access
284to information and because there all human deaths by rabies caused by cat and bat occurred in the
285time analyzed. Here we observed as important to stand out how the cat makes a difference in
286rabies transmission, becoming the main transmitter of wild rabies variants to humans in

287Colombia [11–13], different to others countries which are usually transmitted by bat bite [34].
288This is probably happening by the urban expansion in Andean and Orinoquia region that have
289modified the use of peri-urban and rural land. Two phenomena can be observed there: large
290population migrations to peripheral areas in search of job and low land costs for urbanization; and
291a high demand of rural land near Colombian principal large cities for construction of country
292houses and places to tourist and recreational activities [35,36]. In this urban-rural transition zone,
293the cat is in close contact with bats that inhabits Andean and Orinoquia region mainly in
294municipalities with less density population, where four humans' rabies deaths occurred by bat
295bite [9]. In these cities with dispersed population of rural area of Andean, Orinoquia and
296Caribbean region the rural scenario was observed. In this, a high-risk of human rabies exposure
297by farm animals was observed mainly among professionals, technicians and workers from the
298agroforestry and livestock area (42.7% - 957/2,241), presenting 30 to 39 years old (21.6% -
299485/2,241), with the most frequent aggression type contact of mucosa or skin injured with saliva
300infected with rabies virus (74.5% - 1,669/2,241). They were located principally in rural area
301(70.5% - 1,570/2,241) of cities with dispersed population (8.0 Hab./km²) of Orinoquia (1.4% -
30216/1,122), Andean (0.8% - 9/1,122) Caribbean region (2% - 22/1,122), and Amazon region
303(0.1% - 1/1,122). In the period studied, Orinoquia and Caribbean region presented the highest
304livestock population in the country [37,38] and also the distribution of wild rabies outbreaks in
305farm animals were principally presented in Caribbean, Andean and Orinoquia Region according
306to Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) [39,40] with similar trend to human rabies exposure by
307farm animals [26,27]. This evidences that people affected didn't have proper animals
308management practices, when these animals present nervous symptomatology or when wild rabies
309is present near of urban areas[39].



310

311 **Figure 6. High-risk scenarios of Human Rabies exposure in Colombia 2007-2016.**

312 **Table 2. Sociodemographic and geographical description of High Risk Human Rabies**

313 **Exposure by aggressor specie in Colombia 2007-2016.**

VARIABLES	AGGRESSOR TYPE							
	DOG		CAT		BAT	FARM ANIMALS		
	HH	HL	HH	HL	HH	HH	HL	
N= 224,051	n=181,540 (%)	n=4,670 (%)	n=34,370 (%)	n=134 (%)	n=391 (%)	n=2,241 (%)	n=705 (%)	
AGE								
0 - 9 years	47,423 (26.1)	1,389 (29.7)	7,242 (21.1)	23 (17.2)	153 (39.1)	125 (5.6)	183 (26.0)	
10 - 19 years	38,636 (21.3)	1,090 (23.3)	5,357 (15.6)	24 (17.9)	109 (27.9)	337 (15.0)	158 (22.4)	
20 - 29 years	22,813 (12.6)	484 (10.4)	4,690 (13.6)	19 (14.2)	50 (12.8)	407 (18.2)	108 (15.3)	
30 - 39 years	18,327 (10.1)	446 (9.6)	3,730 (10.9)	15 (11.2)	26 (6.6)	485 (21.6)	96 (13.6)	
40 - 49 years	16,668 (9.2)	394 (8.4)	3,877 (11.3)	19 (14.2)	17 (4.3)	417 (18.6)	69 (9.8)	
50 - 59 years	15,868 (8.7)	399 (8.5)	3,748 (10.9)	14 (10.4)	23 (5.9)	256 (11.4)	50 (7.1)	
60 - 69 years	11,294 (6.2)	238 (5.1)	2,694 (7.8)	8 (6.0)	9 (2.3)	152 (6.8)	29 (4.1)	
70 - 79 years	7,412 (4.1)	163 (3.5)	1,875 (5.5)	9 (6.7)	4 (1.0)	47 (2.1)	10 (1.4)	
80 years and over	3,073 (1.7)	67 (1.4)	1,151 (3.3)	3 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	15 (0.7)	2 (0.3)	

Without information	26 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
GENDER								
Female	79,932 (44.0)	1,853 (39.7)	21,019 (61.2)	76 (56.7)	171 (43.7)	357 (15.9)	244 (34.6)	
Male	101,608 (56.0)	2,817 (60.3)	13,351 (38.8)	58 (43.3)	220 (56.3)	1,884 (84.1)	461 (65.4)	
AGRESSION TYPE								
Bite	168,224 (92.7)	4,238 (90.7)	27,227 (79.2)	110 (82.1)	390 (99.7)	470 (21.0)	410 (58.2)	
Scratch	12,668 (7.0)	412 (8.8)	6,985 (20.3)	24 (17.9)	1 (0.3)	34 (15)	2 (0.3)	
Contact of mucosa or skin injured with saliva infected with rabies virus	639 (0.4)	20 (0.4)	156 (0.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1,669 (74.5)	261 (37.0)	
Contact of mucosa or injured skin, with nervous tissue, biological material or secretions infected with rabies virus	6 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	68 (3.0)	32 (4.5)	
Others	3 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
OCUPATION								
Student	64,770 (35.7)	1,926 (41.2)	8,978 (26.1)	40 (29.9)	135 (34.5)	324 (14.5)	192 (27.2)	
Housewife	26,856 (14.8)	721 (15.4)	7,928 (23.1)	43 (32.1)	37 (95)	179 (8.0)	60 (8.5)	
Underage	17,930 (9.9)	442 (9.5)	3,271 (9.5)	7 (5.2)	84 (21.5)	64 (2.9)	141 (20.0)	
Professionals, technicians and workers from the agroforestry and livestock area	9,842 (5.4)	375 (8.0)	815 (2.4)	3 (2.2)	66 (16.9)	957 (42.7)	182 (25.8)	
Others	62,142 (34.2)	1,206 (25.8)	13,378 (38.9)	41 (30.6)	69 (17.6)	717 (32.0)	130 (18.4)	
ETHNICITY								
Indigenous	3,184 (1.8)	519 (11.1)	221 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	385 (98.5)	69 (3.1)	58 (8.2)	
Afrodescendant	5,815 (3.2)	132 (2.8)	993 (2.9)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	105 (4.7)	376 (53.3)	
Others	1,260 (0.7)	16 (0.3)	237 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	36 (1.6)	3 (0.4)	
Population without ethnicity	171,281 (94.3)	4,003 (85.7)	32,919 (95.8)	133 (99.3)	5 (1.3)	2,031 (90.6)	268 (38.0)	
ZONE								
Urban	141,926 (78.2)	4,026 (86.2)	30,564 (88.9)	122 (91.0)	141 (36.1)	671 (29.9)	129 (18.3)	
Rural	39,614 (21.8)	644 (13.8)	3,806 (11.1)	12 (9.0)	250 (63.9)	1,570 (70.1)	576 (81.7)	
MUNICIPALITIES N=1122	304 (27.1)	12 (1.1)	282 (25.1)	3 (0.3)	4 (0.4)	47 (4.2)	12 (1.1)	
MUNICIPALITIES BY REGION*								
Amazonian	2 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	3 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.4)	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	
Andean	277 (24.7)	1 (0.1)	253 (22.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (0.8)	5 (0.4)	
Caribbean	0 (0.0)	9 (0.8)	(0.0)	3 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	22 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	
Orinoquia	25 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	29 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (1.4)	2 (0.2)	
Pacific	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.4)	
AREA Km² N:1,143,407	124,957 (10.9)	15,253 (1.3)	178,113 (15.6)	292 (0.0)	41,182 (3.6)	106,365 (9.3)	20,985 (1.8)	
POPULATION** N=46,322,690	7,896,000 (17.0)	160,891 (0.3)	11,873,761 (25.6)	54,002 (0.1)	38,001 (0.1)	852,829 (1.8)	218,274 (0.5)	
Population Density	63.2	10.5	66.7	185.0	0.9	8.0	10.4	

*Insular region was excluded because no municipalities clustering or outlier were observed

**Population mean determined by municipalities and corregimientos of the census projection in Colombia during 2007-2016.

314Inequality Scenario (Figure 6) points to human rabies exposure by dog and farm animal present
315in outlier cities in Pacific, Andean, Amazonian and Orinoquia region. This scenario is present
316near the cities which reported the less incidence of human rabies exposure for all studied period,
317the less incidence for human rabies exposure by cat, dog and bat and also the cities with the
318highest multidimensional and monetary poverty rates and the lowest index of access to health
319service in Colombia (Pacific and Caribbean region) [29]. There, students were exposed to dog
320bite who live in isolated municipalities with dispersed population (10.5 Hab./km²) in Caribbean
321(0.8 % - 9/1122) and Amazonian region (0,2% - 2/1122) with 11.1% (519/4670) belonging to
322indigenous population. Also students (27.2% - 192/705) were exposed to bite and contact with
323mucosa or skin injured with saliva of farm animals infected with rabies virus in Pacific region
324(0.2% - 4/1,122) and Andean region (0.4% - 5/1,122) registering the most frequency in afro-
325descendant (55% -376/705). Human rabies exposure by dog showed here the efficiency of the
326epidemiological surveillance system in cities with less density population and low access to
327health. It is possible that local campaigns focused principally on rabies prevention transmitted by
328dog bite in these localities. Overall human rabies exposure by farm animals happens due to
329animal rabies' outbreaks. Population here is different to urban scenario because they are related
330to ethnic groups that are sustained by agricultural production carried out in forest area principally
331in Pacific region, who live far from health centers in areas with rabies viral circulation, with high
332poverty rate, with difficulty access to health information and probably with child labor involved
333to help in family economy[28]. These characteristics expose them to a high risk to be in contact

334with rabies virus and also answer why they are not looking for medical attention when they are
335exposed to human rabies by others animals.

336Amazonian Scenario (Figure 6) shows the high risk of human rabies exposure by bats to students
337(34.5% - 135/391) of indigenous ethnicity (98.5% - 385/391), 0- 9 and 10 -19 years old (39.1%
338and 27.9%, respectively). These cases were recorded in rural area (63.9% - 250/391) of
339municipalities with dispersed population (0.9 Hab./km²) in Amazon region where only family
340production systems are found. The increase of incidence rate of human rabies exposure by bat in
341Amazon region could be related to implementation of the strategy model of surveillance,
342prevention and control of wild rabies in high-risk communities where a pilot project was
343conducted with the objective of application of human rabies pre-exposure vaccination scheme in
344dispersed populations of difficult access in five departments of Colombia during the years 2012
345to 2015. The report indicated that people who lived in cities with dispersed population in
346departments of Cauca, Vaupés, Vichada and Nariño received human rabies vaccination and there
347were finding and notified people attacked by bat [41–43]. The execution of this project gave the
348opportunity to show a high risk of being exposed to rabies by bat bite in an area where access is
349difficult, without communication routes, with low access to education and information media,
350mainly inhabited by indigenous population in the Amazon rainforest and where access to health
351services is of high cost for population [28] This project was conducted only in Vaupés
352department of Amazonian region. So, the other cities that showed the most low incidence rates
353for all type of aggressor animal leave doubts about the real vulnerability of indigenous population
354who are part of more than 60% of the population present in the Amazon region [28]. This
355scenario shows an area that may have been displayed to human health surveillance system by a

356non-continuous prevention project realized in populations of difficult access that would be
357worthwhile to study more thoroughly.

358None high risk scenario of human rabies exposure was related to human rabies cases caused by
359dog aggression in the cities in Caribbean region. This can be due to the fact that this region is the
360second place of high multidimensional and monetary poverty rates, where people do not have
361economic capacity to looking for medical attention added to failures in the health surveillance
362system related to the second lowest index of access to health service in Colombia [29].

363

364**Conclusions**

365Spatiotemporal analysis allowed us to visualize cities and populations with specific
366characteristics, invisible in other studies reflecting little intervention of the different programs to
367avoid the spread of the disease out of principal cities in Colombia. Considering animal species
368aggressor, exposure type, ethnicity and demographic data we realized four epidemiological
369scenarios for human rabies exposure in Colombia. Since each scenario requires different impact
370strategies, this analysis can help to better target surveillance, care and prevention programs
371considering developed social inclusion policies where ethnic, dispersed populations and areas
372with rabies viral circulation can become relevant.

373Finally, taking in account the results of this study at national level, these analyzes should be
374conducted at a lower level of geographical division to determine the risk factors inherent to each
375region, including environmental and economic variables that may show other risks in human
376rabies exposure.

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381

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