**Supplementary Information**

1. **Compilation of historical animal rabies incidence in British India**

Owing to how disease statistics were presented in annual administration reports of the Civil Veterinary Department in British India, it is not straightforward to collate animal rabies statistics. The reports include disease statistics in three possible forms – the most accessible form was a table of summary statistics (Table II) of all major infectious diseases of animals appearing at the end of annual reports; there were also descriptive summaries of individual diseases in the main text; and summaries of cases presented to or diagnosed at regional veterinary colleges, where these existed. In later years, there are also reports of number of brain samples tested and confirmed rabies positive at regional diagnostic laboratories.

Statistics from all sections often do not match or are difficult to disentangle. Table II did not include rabies cases from veterinary colleges – for instance in Madras Presidency, the first case of rabies (one dog from Madras city) is reported in Table II only in 1922-23 [1], although rabies was diagnosed at the Madras Veterinary College over a decade earlier (1911-12) [2]. Later reports further complicate matters by splitting cases into those that were confirmed by laboratory diagnosis (detection of Negri bodies in brain samples), those for which laboratory confirmation was not sought due to characteristic rabies symptoms, as well as the number of animals which died during or after a course of post-exposure prophylaxis [3].

In addition, reporting of animal rabies cases was not mandatory [4]. Consequently, many provinces did not collect rabies statistics systematically or explicitly include case numbers, despite an acknowledgement that it was a problem within their administrative boundaries. In many instances, rabies cases are combined with cases of other less common animal diseases under the broad heading of ‘Other’ diseases. Finally, entire annual reports or statistical tables from those reports were not available for some years on the Medical History of British India website.

Table S1 presents the annual number of rabies cases diagnosed in all domestic and wildlife species - dogs, cats, cattle, buffalo, goats, sheep, camels, horses, donkeys, mules, pigs, elephants, mongoose, jackals and foxes. These numbers include cases reported in Table II of CVD annual reports, additional cases mentioned in the main text of reports that have not been included in Table II, number of confirmed cases (by diagnostic tests or based on symptoms) reported from veterinary colleges / schools and other districts that have not been included in Table II, and the number of samples reported to have tested positive from diagnostic laboratories. While every attempt has been made to avoid double-counting of cases and to include all reported cases, it is possible that the true rabies incidence is slightly different from those presented in Table S1 (and consequently, Figures 1 and 2).

British provinces where veterinary colleges / schools functioned are:

1. Bombay province – Bombay Veterinary College
2. Punjab province – Lahore Veterinary College
3. Madras presidency – Madras Veterinary College
4. Bengal province – Bengal Veterinary College, Calcutta
5. Bihar province – Bihar Veterinary College, Patna
6. Burma province – Insein Veterinary School, Rangoon

**References**

1. (360) Page 12. In: Annual Administration report of the Civil Veterinary Department, Madras Presidency for 1922-23 [Internet]. 1923 [cited 21 Jul 2020] p. 22. Available: https://digital.nls.uk/indiapapers/browse/archive/75699817

2. (48) Page 19. In: Report on the operations of the Civil Veterinary Department, Madras. Recording, with remarks, the - during 1911-12 [Internet]. 1912 [cited 21 Jul 2020] p. 23. Available: https://digital.nls.uk/indiapapers/browse/archive/75698863

3. (371) Page 63. In: Annual Administration Report of the Madras Civil Veterinary Department for the year 1928-29 [Internet]. 1929 [cited 21 Jul 2020] p. 98. Available: https://digital.nls.uk/indiapapers/browse/archive/75718016

4. (53) Page 7. In: Annual report of the Civil Veterinary Department Bihar and Orissa for the year 1923-24 [Internet]. 1924 [cited 23 Jul 2020] p. 17. Available: https://digital.nls.uk/indiapapers/browse/archive/75900869

**Table S1.** Annual rabies incidence in all animal species between 1887-1888 and 1950-51 (denoted 1888 and 1951, respectively) in all British provinces in India and the princely state of Manipur. Statistics were compiled from annual reports of the Civil Veterinary Department of the colonial British Government of India, available at <https://digital.nls.uk/indiapapers/>

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| Year | UP | P | Sind | R | Be | Bo | M | CP | Bu | Bal | NWFP | EBA\* | MS | BO\*\* |
| 1888 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1889 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 2 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1890 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 8 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1891 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 2 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1892 | NA | 18 | NA | NA | NA | 11 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1893 | NA | 10 | NA | NA | NA | 9 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1894 | NA | 14 | NA | NA | NA | 20 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1895 | NA | 13 | NA | NA | NA | 13 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1896 | NA | 9 | NA | NA | 3 | 15 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1897 | NA | 29 | NA | NA | 3 | 15 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1898 | NA | 40 | NA | NA | 3 | 21 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1899 | NA | 42 | NA | NA | 4 | 87 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1900 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 5 | 32 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1901 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 18 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1902 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 6 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1903 | NA | NA | 15 | NA | 20 | 7 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1904 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 25 | 10 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1905 | 0 | 4 | 24 | 0 | 36 | NA | NA | 2 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1906 | 30 | 17 | 4 | 7 | 11 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1907 | 12 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 55 | 1 | NA | 3 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1908 | 6 | 26 | 10 | 4 | 75 | NA | 12 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1909 | 22 | 0 | 54 | 4 | 25 | 77 | 15 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| 1910 | 2 | 0 | 21 | 6 | 48 | 86 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 0 | NA | NA |
| 1911 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 3 | 79 | 71 | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 224 | NA | NA |
| 1912 | 41 | 0 | 11 | 9 | 81 | 50 | 1 | NA | NA | 1 | NA | 42 | NA | NA |
| 1913 | 149 | 0 | 22 | 2 | 60 | 75 | 1 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 25 | NA | NA |
| 1914 | 85 | 0 | 43 | 5 | 95 | 72 | 12 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 39 | NA | NA |
| 1915 | 137 | 0 | 50 | 21 | 200 | 74 | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 144 | 3 | NA |
| 1916 | 175 | 0 | 51 | 14 | 107 | 59 | 37 | NA | 8 | NA | NA | 44 | 9 | NA |
| 1917 | 68 | 0 | NA | 4 | 62 | NA | 22 | NA | 11 | NA | NA | 49 | 7 | NA |
| 1918 | 98 | 0 | 48 | 0 | 74 | 73 | 70 | NA | 6 | 1 | NA | 302 | 7 | NA |
| 1919 | 104 | 0 | 52 | 5 | 121 | 54 | 143 | NA | 13 | NA | NA | 42 | 0 | NA |
| 1920 | 138 | 6 | 33 | 8 | 96 | 76 | 105 | NA | 2 | NA | NA | 94 | NA | 33 |
| 1921 | 102 | 0 | 13 | 3 | 91 | 48 | 113 | NA | 9 | NA | NA | 192 | 4 | 49 |
| 1922 | 126 | 0 | 15 | 1 | NA | 58 | 104 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 199 | 5 | NA |
| 1923 | 132 | 0 | 37 | 1 | NA | 65 | 103 | NA | 4 | NA | NA | 171 | 11 | 45 |
| 1924 | 134 | 2 | 42 | 4 | 182 | 90 | 111 | NA | 0 | NA | NA | 232 | 13 | 72 |
| 1925 | 193 | 0 | 28 | 16 | NA | 67 | 97 | NA | 3 | NA | NA | 232 | 16 | 62 |
| 1926 | 174 | 0 | 48 | 21 | 94 | 49 | 97 | 33 | 1 | NA | NA | 234 | 24 | 95 |
| 1927 | 170 | 0 | 32 | 5 | 100 | 30 | 108 | 25 | 4 | NA | NA | 297 | 29 | 108 |
| 1928 | 162 | 0 | 47 | 15 | 109 | 25 | 78 | NA | 3 | NA | NA | 376 | 13 | 64 |
| 1929 | 105 | 0 | 41 | 1 | NA | 28 | 109 | NA | 2 | NA | 40 | 232 | 0 | 79 |
| 1930 | 123 | 0 | 51 | 2 | 92 | 41 | 306 | NA | NA | NA | 103 | 283 | 2 | 68 |
| 1931 | 76 | 0 | 61 | 5 | 61 | 25 | 187 | NA | NA | NA | 60 | 200 | NA | 75 |
| 1932 | 138 | 0 | 36 | 10 | 60 | 75 | 138 | NA | 1 | NA | 45 | 210 | NA | 43 |
| 1933 | 159 | NA | 75 | 11 | 115 | 73 | 175 | 3 | 16 | NA | 80 | 398 | NA | 63 |
| 1934 | 196 | NA | 67 | 14 | 147 | 37 | NA | NA | 20 | NA | 82 | 138 | NA | 84 |
| 1935 | 143 | NA | 62 | 23 | 88 | 102 | NA | NA | 36 | NA | 95 | NA | NA | 59 |
| 1936 | 231 | NA | 85 | 29 | 950 | 69 | NA | NA | 22 | NA | 48 | 227 | NA | 65 |
| 1937 | 241 | NA | 32 | 32 | 123 | 88 | NA | NA | 11 | NA | 29 | 260 | NA | 65 |
| 1938 | 234 | NA | 50 | 8 | NA | 73 | NA | 9 | 12 | NA | 57 | 202 | NA | 62 |
| 1939 | 259 | NA | 56 | 58 | 241 | 54 | NA | 36 | 11 | NA | 98 | 150 | NA | 73 |
| 1940 | 277 | NA | 39 | 37 | NA | 54 | NA | 42 | 16 | NA | 67 | 223 | NA | 81 |
| 1941 | 241 | NA | 60 | NA | NA | 71 | NA | 42 | 11 | NA | 44 | 249 | NA | 41 |
| 1942 | 284 | NA | 53 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 56 |
| 1943 | NA | NA | 66 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 22 |
| 1944 | NA | NA | 55 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 49 | NA | NA | 35 |
| 1945 | NA | NA | 41 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 37 | 92 | NA | 43 |
| 1946 | NA | NA | 48 | NA | 68 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 9 | 113 | NA | 27 |
| 1947 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 60 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 165 | NA | NA |
| 1948 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 56 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 180 | NA | 34 |
| 1949 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 69 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 158 | NA | 12 |
| 1950 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 111 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 109 | NA | 25 |
| 1951 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 90 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |

British Provinces: UP – United Provinces, P – Punjab, R – Rajputana, Be – Bengal, Bo – Bombay, M – Madras, CP – Central Provinces, Bu – Burma, Bal – Baluchistan, NWFP – North-West Frontier Province, EBA – Eastern Bengal and Assam, BO – Bihar and Orissa; Princely states: MS – Manipur state; \*1907-08 to 1910-11 – Eastern Bengal and Assam provinces; 1912-13 to 1949-50 – Assam only; \*\*1911-12 to 1935-36 – Bihar and Orissa provinces; 1936-37 to 1949-50 – Bihar only