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Assessment of Rabies Control in Rural Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

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Rabies is a fatal disease caused by bites from infected animals, with dog bites incriminated for up to 99% of all rabies transmissions to humans. Successful rabies control programs thus rely on adequate vaccination of the dog population. Working with local partners in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe; our project aims to determine the rabies immune status of a sample of rural dogs and collect information to better understand behaviours and interactions between dogs, people and wildlife. From October – November 2020, blood was collected from a sample of 500 dogs for initial immunity testing and rabies vaccinations were administered. One year following initial vaccination, these dogs will have their blood re-accessed to measure their protective immunity against rabies which will guide the process to re-vaccinate these animals. This project motivates me because our work will have a positive impact in protecting dogs against rabies and thus prevent human infections.

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