

Collection and transport of samples for diagnosis of rabies in animals

Testing for rabies in animals - done only on postmortem specimens

- ✓ Brain tissue is the only postmortem sample for testing.
- ✓ Animal's head or if, in a case of a small animal the whole carcass should be sent to the MRI as soon as possible
- ✓ If there is a delay in transport of more than 8 hours -head/animal should be packed and sent in ice
- ✓ Do not fix the head in formalin or do not submit live animals

How to decapitate the head

(Idea is to prevent or minimize blood splashes and other body fluid contamination while cutting the head)

- ✓ Person who is performing this procedure should wear a polythene apron to cover cloths
- ✓ Mask or a piece of cloth can be used to cover the mouth and nose
- ✓ Heavy duty gloves could be worn
- ✓ Use a heavy and sharp knife (Kaththa) to cut the neck
- ✓ Preferably can wear boots to minimize direct contact of body fluid

How to send the sample to MRI

- ✓ Samples should be sent to MRI as earliest possible
- ✓ Head should be placed in leak proof polythene bag / container (primary package)
- ✓ If transport takes more than 8 hours following the animals death, head should be sent in ice
- ✓ Ice should be placed inside a box (secondary container) between primary and secondary container (head should not directly be in touch with ice)
- ✓ Ice need to be frosted until specimen reach the laboratory
- ✓ If it is a small animal such as squirrel, rat or bandicoot - whole animal can be sent
- ✓ MRI is open 24hrs to accept samples
- ✓ When submitting samples - test request form should be filled completely with history and correct contact details
- ✓ Remember to collect and keep the lab reference number which is needed for report collection (Laboratory results will be available within 48 hrs unless a public holiday or weekend falls)
- ✓ It is the senders responsibility to collect the lab results on time and showing it to the concerned medical officer

