



Press Information

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WSAVA Calls for Quarantine not Euthanasia for Dogs Exposed to Ebola

The [World Small Animal Veterinary Association](http://www.wsava.org) (WSAVA), a global veterinary association, has called for the testing and quarantine of dogs exposed to the Ebola virus in countries not endemic for the disease, not automatic euthanasia. It has spoken out following the euthanasia on 8 October 2014 of a pet dog belonging to an infected woman in Spain on the government's orders and against her wishes.

The infection of a nurse in Spain with Ebola after caring for an infected priest has caused international concern and people who have come into contact with her are in quarantine. The Madrid regional government also obtained a court order to euthanise her dog, claiming that 'available scientific information' could not rule out 'a risk of contagion.' Quarantine was not considered as an alternative and the dog has been now been destroyed.

Dr Shane Ryan, Chair of the WSAVA's Animal Wellness and Welfare Committee, says this sets a dangerous precedent: "While it is possible that dogs may harbor the virus, particularly in endemic areas where they may have access to infected animal carcasses, domestic pets, potentially exposed in developed countries, represent a very different scenario. A precedent for automatic euthanasia is both unnecessary and a significant breach of animal welfare.

"The dog in question was not tested for the virus and it is our view that available technology should allow for testing and quarantine as the first line response."

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WSAVA
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Professor Michael Day, Chairman of the WSAVA's One Health Committee, added: "Zoonotic diseases, particularly those transmitted through pets, are concerning to the pet-owning public, but there have been no scientific reports indicating that Ebola virus has been isolated from or directly transmitted by dogs. One investigation has shown that dogs may develop antibody to Ebola virus consistent with exposure, but dogs do not develop any symptoms of the disease.

As the virus spreads into more developed regions, we are likely to see increasing concern and media interest as to the role of dogs in the transmission of disease and, as a profession, we must respond to pressure to euthanize pets as the exposure levels increase and fear escalates."

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) is an association made up of 92 veterinary organizations from all over the world, representing 145,000 individual veterinarians globally. Full scientific evidence to support its views is available at www.wsava.org.

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