



Michaela Naidoo, 21, is being treated for rabies after getting bitten by a stray rabid dog when she was trying to stop a bloody brawl between the stray and her canine trio on Monday.

Rabies outbreak on the KZN North Coast – vet

KARINDA JAGMOHAN

A NORTH Coast vet confirmed there was an outbreak of rabies in the area after six cases of the disease were reported there this month.

“We’ve never had something like this before,” said Ballito-based vet Dr Jeremy Lamb.

His comments came on the back of recent alarm about rabid dogs in the northern KwaZulu-Natal region.

The rabies virus is transmitted via the saliva of infected animals.

Lamb said: “The virus affects the brain and changes behaviour, causing dogs to become aggressive.

“However, in some cases the symptoms may surface only after a period of time.”

According to the vet, while people could be treated following contact with rabies this might not be the case for dogs that have not been vaccinated as the virus could be fatal.

Michaela Naidoo, 21, has been on edge awaiting test results after her three dogs were attacked by a stray dog last week.

The SPCA has since confirmed that the stray was rabid and had been roaming the streets of Seatides, north of Durban, when it clashed with Naidoo’s dogs.

“The dogs were fighting with each other through the gate when one of my dogs pulled the stray dog into the yard and I had to intervene,” she said.

Naidoo managed to separate the brawlers and contacted the SPCA which did tests and found that the stray dog had rabies.

“They only have a 50% chance of survival because I had not been able

to take them for their vaccinations which were due recently,” she said.

The stray dog was euthanised.

Naidoo was being treated for rabies because she was bitten while trying to separate the fighting dogs.

She said: “I hope they (her dogs) make it and I hope this doesn’t happen to anyone else.”

Kloof and Highway SPCA’s Barbara Patrick urged dog owners to get annual rabies vaccinations for their pets.

“KZN is a high-risk area for rabies.

“It has always been prevalent, possibly because of the number of stray dogs that are not vaccinated,” she said.

The KZN Department of Agriculture meanwhile confirmed the spike of rabies in KZN, particularly in the areas between Eshowe and Richards Bay moving towards iLembe, where early this month a two-year-old succumbed to the virus after being attacked by a rabid dog.

Spokesperson Khayelihle Nkwanyana said: “The province is now on a massive drive to eliminate rabies completely in order to prevent more human deaths.

“What we are targeting is to vaccinate more than 70% of the dogs in various districts.”

Meanwhile, Animal rescuer Tashya Giyapersad urged the public to remain calm.

“I would encourage people who want to assist to seek the help of the SPCA and not to approach any stray animal until the authorities can confirm that indeed there is an outbreak versus a few sporadic cases,” she added.