

SPEAKERS BIOSKETCHES

MERACON: Returning to rabies elimination in 2021 webinar

February 26th, 2021

The Mérieux Foundation, on behalf of the MERACON organizing committee

-With profound appreciation for their time and valuable contribution to this event –



**Dr Louis Nel,
Executive Director,
Global Alliance for Rabies Control**

Louis Nel is a Professor of Virology (University of Pretoria, South Africa). Here he has launched a renowned lyssavirus research program focused on the prevention, control and elimination of rabies.

To date his work has been published in more than 200 papers and books and he has been honored with a distinguished academic achievement award six times (UP).

Prof Nel is also the Executive Director for the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (USA, UK, RSA). Central to his vision for GARC has

been the need for practical One Health planning tools and to address limited surveillance of the disease, aspects which are critical to break the neglect of rabies. New innovations from the GARC team include a unique Educational Platform (GEP), the Stepwise Approach to Rabies Elimination (SARE) and the Rabies Epidemiological Bulletin (REB).

Louis continues his work with the UAR towards the implementation of the global rabies elimination strategy, ZERO by 30, which was co-authored by the Tripartite and GARC.



**Dr Valentina Sanchez Picot
Public Health Initiatives & Expertise Lead,
The Mérieux Foundation**

Valentina Sanchez Picot is Doctor in Veterinarian Medicine specialized in applied and implementation research in developing and emerging countries, including crisis settings in refugee camps.

She joined the Mérieux Foundation in 2006, where she has held positions as Scientific & Research Advisor / Head of Clinical Research / Head of ARI – conducting numerous international multi-centre research trials with focus on infectious diseases primary related to Acute Respiratory Infections (e.g. Pneumonia / Covid19), also trials associated to other diseases -based on setting needs- such as (e.g. Ebola, HPV, Typhoid...).

She also participates in the management of Public Health Initiatives on Rabies, Cholera and Vaccine Hesitancy and in the development of Educational Programs related.

Her past work included positions in medical education and regulatory affairs in the biotechnology industry in the USA. Amongst her duties she participated in the conduct of national and international clinical trials and regulatory submissions.



**Dr Dan Horton,
Reader In Veterinary Virology, School Research Director**

University of Surrey, School of Veterinary Medicine

Dr Horton is a veterinarian with over 14 years' experience in research on zoonotic viral diseases. Prior to joining the University of Surrey in 2014 he worked at the Rabies Reference Laboratory at the UK Government's Animal and Plant Health Agency where he led research and surveillance projects on rabies and other zoonoses, was an advisor to Defra, Public Health England and the OIE and led multiple overseas assistance projects on rabies including in Africa and the Middle East.

Now a Reader in Veterinary Virology, he has over 60 peer reviewed papers in the field, currently supervises six PhD students and teaches at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Research in his group is focused on reducing the animal and human health burden caused by diseases that cross species barriers. He is Research Director and a member of the Senior Management Team School of Veterinary Medicine.



**Dr Terence Scott
Technical Lead Rabies, MERACON Steering Committee
Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC)**

Dr Terence Scott is a technical lead for rabies at the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC). His primary role is the coordination of the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and North Africa Rabies Control Network (MERACON) that works with national governments, partners and stakeholders to build capacity and facilitate the development and implementation of effective rabies elimination strategies aligned with the Global Strategic Plan.

Terence has also been involved in the development of various rabies tools, including the Rabies Epidemiological Bulletin, courses on the GARC Education Platform, the SARE tool and the GARC Data Logger.



**Dr Andre Coetzer
Technical Lead Rabies, PARACON Steering Committee
Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC)**

Dr Coetzer is GARC's technical lead for rabies in sub-Saharan Africa where he is involved in working with different national governments and organisation in the development and implementation of their rabies elimination strategies.

In addition, Dr Coetzer is involved in the planning and implementation of strategic dog vaccination campaigns, enhancing rabies surveillance systems and providing mechanisms whereby data-driven decisions can be made in rabies-endemic countries.



Ms. Anna Charinna Amparo
Public Health Research Officer
Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC)

Chari Amparo is the Public Health Research Officer of the Global Alliance for Rabies Control. Prior to working with GARC, she worked with the Philippines' Research Institute for Tropical Medicine in its surveillance programs for diseases for elimination/eradication.

Chari has been involved in different rabies field projects such as the Communities Against Rabies Exposure project and the Evaluation of Animal Bite Treatment Centers. She also helped in the development of the Stepwise Approach towards Rabies Elimination tool. Currently, she is overseeing the setting up of the Community-Based Rabies Surveillance in partnership with the Philippine local government.



Dr Fazia Mahiout
Head of the Department for Preventive Medicine and
Medical Analysis, Head of Rabies Center
Pasteur Institute of Algeria

Dr Fazia Mahiout is a Doctor in Medicine; in 2013 she joined Institut Pasteur Algerie (IPA) as a medical consultant at the International Vaccination Center. In 2014, she joined the National Rabies Control and Prevention Committee at the Health Ministry and in 2016 she became the IPA manager for rabies pool project.

Dr Mahiout then set up the Anti-Rabies Center for the care of people at risk of rabies for which she is the Head since 2017.

In 2020 Dr Mahiout took the position of Head of the Department for Preventive Medicine and Medical Analysis. In addition to her role at the Anti-Rabies Center.

Despite the identification of rabies in Algeria as a priority disease, benefiting from a national control program, current results remain below expectations. Each year, in Algeria 15 to 20 cases of human rabies and an average of 900 cases of animal rabies are recorded.

Faced with these alarming figures, the General Directorate for Prevention and Promotion of Health, Population, and Hospital Reform agreed to review its strategy.

In October 2019 a collaboration between the Institut Pasteur Algerie (IPA), the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) and the Mérieux Foundation resulted in a workshop for the development of a strategic plan to eliminate rabies in Algeria.



Dr. Victor Del Rio Vilas
Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network Coordinator (GOARN).
World Health Organization, Regional Office for South East Asia

Victor Del Rio Vilas (DVM, MBA, MSc (Epi), PhD) is currently at the World Health Organization (WHO), Regional Office for South East Asia, New Delhi, India, where he coordinates the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN).

He was previously at the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Surrey (UK), and at the Centre on Global Health Security at Chatham House, London.

He previously worked on the development of WHO's epidemic vulnerability evaluation framework (WHO-HQ), and as consultant with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) on zoonoses such as rabies, leishmaniasis, and echinococcosis. He also contributed to WHO's global response to the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in Liberia in 2015; worked in Uzbekistan implementing the Biological Threat Reduction Program, and as veterinary advisor and epidemiologist for UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency.