

Bat Conservation Trust



16 February 2011

Dear Sirs

A small number of bats in the UK carry a rabies-like virus called European Bat Lyssavirus (EBLV). There are two strains, EBLV1 and EBLV2. Classical rabies virus (strain usually found in terrestrial mammals including dogs) has never been found in bats in the UK or the rest of Europe.

To date, ten infections with EBLV2 have been confirmed in UK bats, all from a species called the Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*). The risk of EBLV infection to humans is thought to be low, however the Bat Conservation Trust works to raise awareness and manage the potential risk.

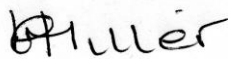
Since the death of an unvaccinated bat handler in Scotland in 2002, the Department of Health has agreed that all individuals working with and handling bats (in a voluntary or professional capacity) should be vaccinated against rabies, and furthermore that these vaccinations should be offered free of charge to the individual.

The vaccine is provided by the Health Protection Agency and can be obtained by GPs free of charge (hence the reason it should be free to the patient). Please contact the Health Protection Agency on 020 8200 4400 to obtain the vaccine.

Please note that although the vaccine and subsequent boosters can be obtained free of charge, titre tests are not currently free and must be paid for by the patient.

Further information is available in chapter 27 of the Green Book.

Yours faithfully



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