Society & Social Justice · GS - II

“Underreporting of rabies deaths in India highlights the limitations of disease surveillance and equitable access to healthcare.” Examine the causes and suggest measures to address the problem.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 16/10/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Rabies, zoonotic diseases, underreporting, disease surveillance, mandatory notification, One Health approach, post-exposure prophylaxis, rural healthcare, public awareness, National Rabies Control Programme.

Model Answer

Introduction

Rabies is a vaccine-preventable zoonotic disease that is almost invariably fatal after the onset of clinical symptoms. The substantial gap between officially recorded deaths and epidemiological estimates in India highlights weaknesses in disease surveillance and access to preventive healthcare.

Main Body

Causes of underreporting

1. Weak surveillance: Incomplete reporting and inadequate integration of health records obscure the actual disease burden.

2. Limited diagnosis: Deaths occurring at home or in remote rural areas may remain unconfirmed and unrecorded.
3. Healthcare inequalities: Delayed treatment and limited access to vaccines and rabies immunoglobulin increase preventable mortality.
4. Low awareness: People may underestimate animal bites or fail to seek timely medical care.

Measures to address the problem

1. Strengthen mandatory reporting and reliable death registration.
2. Improve access to post-exposure prophylaxis, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
3. Expand dog vaccination, responsible animal management and public awareness.
4. Adopt a One Health approach integrating human health, veterinary services and animal surveillance.

Conclusion

India needs reliable surveillance, accessible preventive treatment and coordinated human-animal health interventions to reduce rabies deaths. Better reporting, combined with timely post-exposure prophylaxis and sustained dog vaccination, is essential to achieving the goal of eliminating dog-mediated human rabies deaths.

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