Occupational zoonoses

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- Depending on social customs, economic status, habits, hobbies and occupation, different sections of society are likely to be exposed to different sets of zoonotic diseases.

- Although the risk of exposure to zoonoses is equal to all members of society, certain occupational groups are at special risk of contracting zoonoses.

- WHO Expert Committee on Bacterial and Viral Zoonoses (1982) categorized the occupational groups in seven categories depending upon the type of exposure.

Classification/categorization of occupational zoonoses

1) Agricultural

- Farmers, agricultural workers, veterinarians, livestock inspectors, transporters of livestock who are in close contact with animals at home or at work.
- e.g. Anthrax, leptospirosis, brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis and Q fever.

2) Animal product manufacturers

- Butchers, slaughtermen, meat inspectors, slaughterhouse personnel, persons working in cold storages and food processing plants.
- e.g. Tularemia, anthrax and tetanus.

3) Sylvan and Campestral

- Wildlife workers, foresters, hunters, trappers, fishermen, naturalists, ecological researchers, surveyors, resource explorers and developers, project construction workers, campers and tourists.
- The individuals are exposed to zoonoses during their occupational or recreational activities.
- e.g. Rabies and Kyasanur forest disease.

4) Recreational

- The group includes persons in contact with pet animals or wild animals in an urban environment like pet-dealers, pet-owners, their families, visitors and veterinarians.
- e.g. Psittacosis, campylobacteriosis and toxoplasmosis.

5) Clinical/Laboratory

- Physicians, nurses and other health personnel handling patients and laboratory workers concerned with the diagnosis of animal or human diseases (e.g. processing diagnostic specimens, performing autopsies on animals and keeping laboratory animals for diagnosis, research, biological manufacture and product safety assay).
- e.g. Brucellosis and tuberculosis.

6) Epidemiological

- Professional public health workers, veterinarians, other health professionals and paramedical personnel in contact with sick animals or people or highly contaminated surroundings during performance of epidemiological field investigations.
- e.g. Japanese B encephalitis, plague and yellow fever.

7) Emergency

- Refugees, disaster victims and participants in major pilgrimages. e.g. Plague and leptospirosis.

Thank you