A Dog Bite Injury after the Fukushima Nuclear Accident

Masaharu Tsubokura¹, Jinchii Mori¹, Tetsuya Tanimoto²,³ and Tomoyoshi Oikawa¹

**Key words:** the Fukushima nuclear accident, abandoned pets, animal bites, rabies

(Intern Med 51: 2493, 2012)

(DOI: 10.2169/internalmedicine.51.8338)

An 84-year-old female was referred to our hospital on May 8, 2011. She was bitten by a pet dog left behind by her neighbor, who had evacuated after the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident in March, 2011 (1). A skin examination of her left hand revealed wide lacerations with tissue tearing (Picture 1, 2). After irrigation and suturing, she was treated with antibiotics. We withheld further vaccinations because Japan is rabies-free.

An increased incidence of animal bites has been observed after natural disasters (2). The Fukushima nuclear accident resulted in an increased number of abandoned pets in the evacuation zones, which has led to unfavorable behaviors by such animals. Animal bites can cause serious systemic diseases such as cellulitis, and can transmit zoonotic infections. Local residents and medical providers should be made aware of the increased potential for animal bites, and abandoned pets should therefore be carefully monitored for any aggressive behaviors, such as poor obedience and excitability.

The authors state that they have no Conflict of Interest (COI).

**References**