Wild Tiger Health Centre Information Sheet

Disease threat: Lepromatous mycobacteria

Hazard description: Leprosy is a condition caused by non-tuberculous lepromatous mycobacteria. In domestic cats, feline leprosy is a cutaneous disease commonly caused by *Mycobacterium lepraemurium* (causative agent of rat leprosy), but molecular typing has shown other related mycobacterial species to be involved (Gunn-Moore et al. 2011; McIntosh 1982; Gunn-Moore 2014). Cats most likely acquire infection from rodent bites or from digging around in infected soil/earth.

Host species: Rodent species and domestic cats. No reports of disease were found in wild felids.

Pathogenesis: Infection may cause cutaneous nodules on the head and limbs mainly, which may ulcerate.

Diagnosis: Clinical signs, culture, PCR.

Vaccination: None.

Free-ranging tiger occurrence: No reports found.

Distribution: Disease is more common in temperate climates, hence in free-ranging tigers infection would perhaps be most likely in RFE/China range states. Infection may be more likely in winter months in RFE/China when rodent prey may be more frequently consumed.

Assumptions: Assume low prevalence and low pathogenicity in free-ranging felids.

Limitations: Prevalence data.