



EPIDEMIOLOGY BULLETIN

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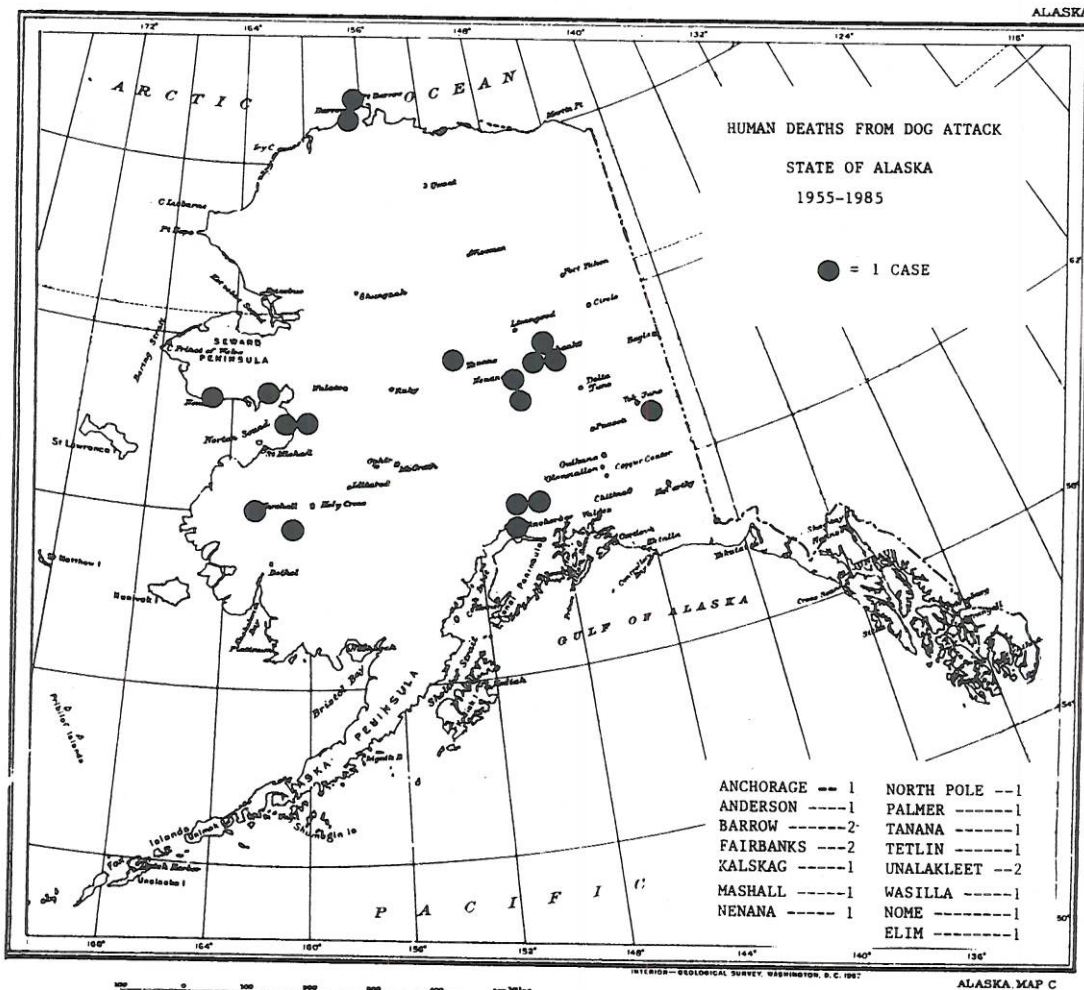
HUMAN DEATHS FROM DOG ATTACK--A PUBLIC HEALTH TRAGEDY

On June 23, 1985, a little boy was playing unattended late at night at his home in Fairbanks. The two-year-old child evidently wandered into a neighbor's yard, approximately 300 yards away. Several hours later he was found dead in the neighbor's yard, a victim of a 100-lb. malemute that was tied up in the yard. The child bled to death from a single bite to the throat. The dog was destroyed on June 24, 1985.

Between 1955 and 1985, 18 human deaths from dog attacks were documented in Alaska. Discussions with private physicians, private veterinarians, public health nurses, community health aides, and sanitarians strongly suggest that at least twice this number of human deaths from dog attacks occurred during this thirty-year period of time. Of the 18 documented cases, all occurred in children less than ten years of age. Seven deaths occurred in children two years old. All deaths occurred between the months of March and September.

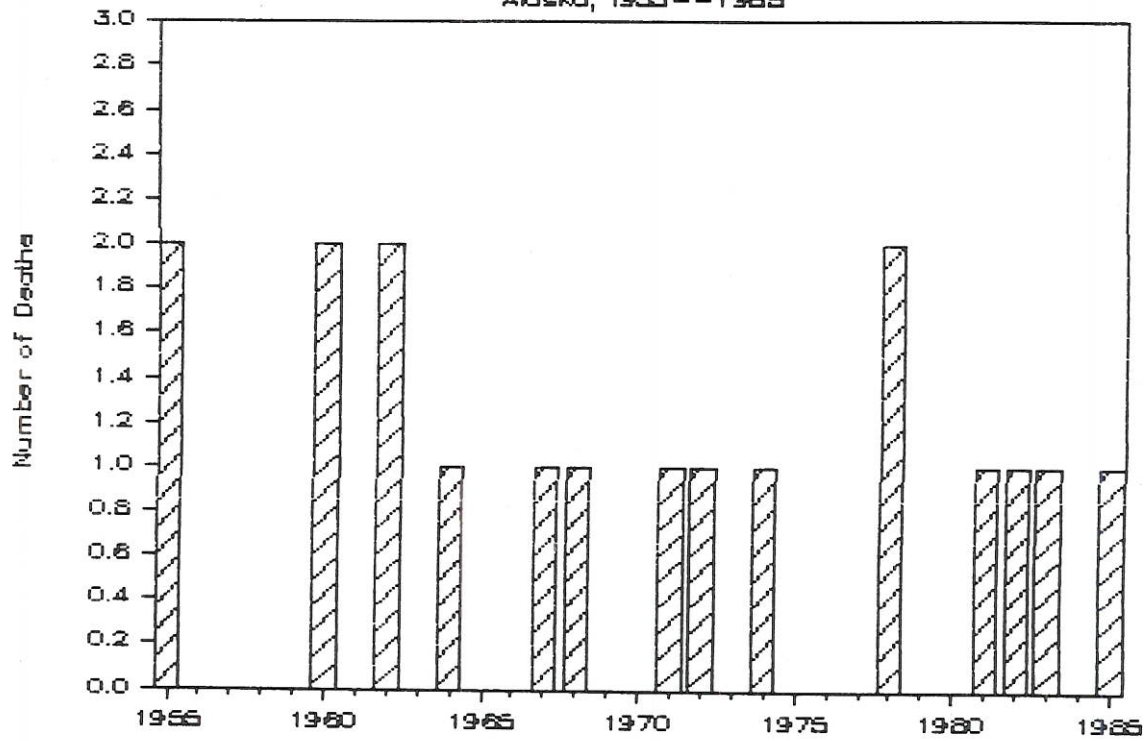
Dog bites and human deaths from dog attack currently constitute a major epidemic in Alaska and the United States. Between 1955 to 1985, there was an average of one documented human death in Alaska from dog attack every two years. Alaska's rate of documented human deaths from dog attacks is 90 times the national rate (1.78/million population/year in Alaska vs. 0.02/ million population/year in the contiguous United States).

Small children cannot defend themselves from large dogs. Only responsible dog ownership and an educated responsible public will reduce the needless suffering and tragedies caused by dog attacks in Alaska. Only a small proportion of dog bites are inflicted by ownerless strays. All human deaths in Alaska have occurred as a result of attacks by owned animals. Responsible dog ownership is necessary to control Alaska's epidemic of human injury and death from dog attacks.



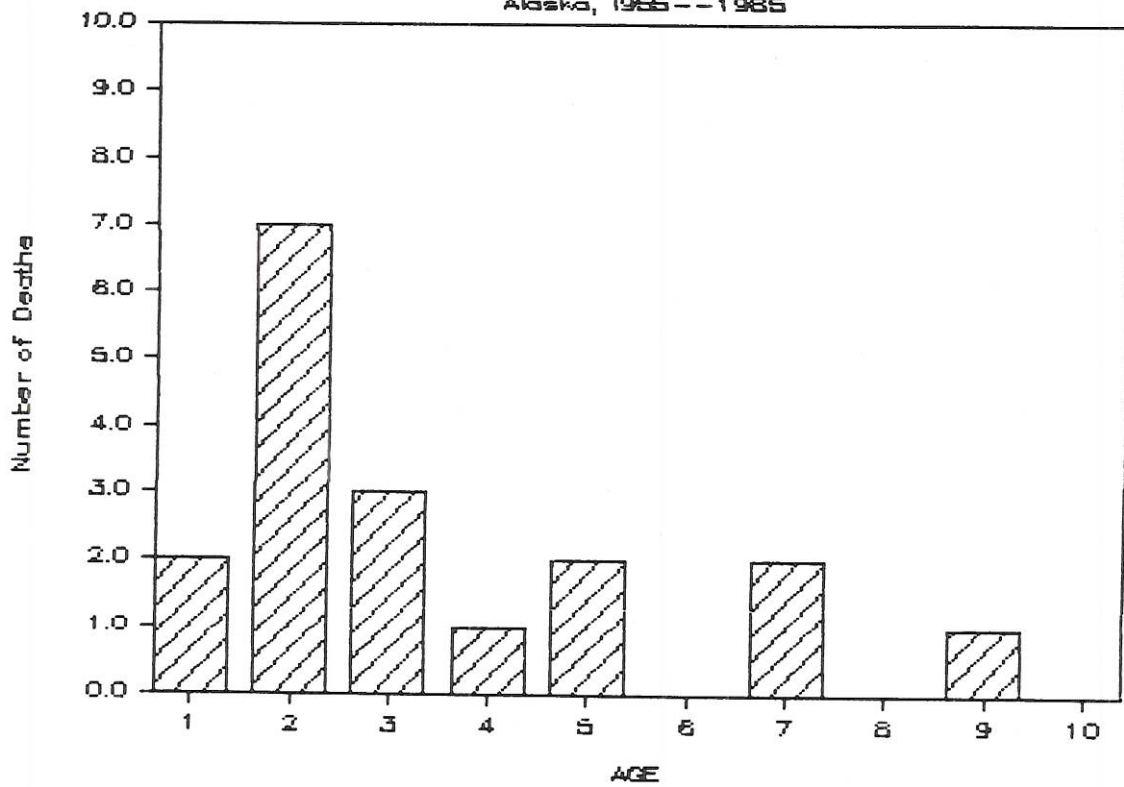
Human Deaths From Dog Attacks

Alaska, 1966--1985



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