

Asian performing monkeys virus carriers

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A University of Washington study shows some urban performing monkeys in Indonesia are carriers of retroviruses capable of infecting people.

Researchers say their study indicates contact with performing monkeys, which are commonplace in many Asia nations, might represent a little-known path for viruses to jump from monkeys to humans and eventually cause human disease.

Performing monkeys are animals that are trained to do tricks in public settings.

"People aren't looking at Asia, and they need to do so, because viruses are emerging on that continent," explained Dr. Lisa Jones-Engel, leader of the study and a research scientist at the university's National Primate Research Center.

The study's authors are urging more research on the different settings in Asia where people have contact with non-human primates -- zoos, animal markets, monkey forests, pet ownership, and urban street performances.

The research also involved scientists at Bogor Agricultural University in Bogor, Indonesia, and the Southwest National Primate Research Center in San Antonio, Texas.

The findings appear in the December issue of the journal *Tropical*

Medicine and International Health.

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