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**Rachana BHATTARAI**

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**Home Country**  
Nepal

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**Degree**  
PhD in Biomedical Sciences

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**Expertise**  
Epidemiology

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**Research Focus**  
Burden of Zoonotic Diseases

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**Host University**  
Texas A&M University,  
United States

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**Fellowship Awarded**  
2013

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Rachana Bhattarai was born and raised in Nepal, and is the third child in a family of two boys and two girls. She has been interested in science since primary school.

Rachana graduated in 2007 with a Bachelor degree of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (BVSc & AH) degree from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. She also completed a six-month internship at Nepal's Central Veterinary Laboratory, where she researched mycotic infections of broiler chickens from in and around the Kathmandu Valley. The findings of the study revealed the most common fungal agents and their associated hepatic, renal, and respiratory lesions. Supported by several scholarships, including an International Fellowship from the American Association of University Women, Rachana moved to Texas A&M University, where she completed MS in Epidemiology in 2010.

Rachana's PhD research focuses on the application of geographic information systems (GIS) and burden of disease estimation methods to evaluate the epidemiology of zoonotic and infectious diseases. Her internship with the Central Veterinary Laboratory made her familiar with the activities of government agencies working on disease surveillance and control, and taught her the importance of epidemiology. Better understanding of the disease dynamics, natural history, and other determinants are the most useful tools to control and manage diseases—which is important for both human and animal health. Advanced technologies such as GIS provide increased capability for research aimed at addressing these issues.

After she finishes her studies, Rachana plans to further her research in the field of zoonotic disease epidemiology, and to teach at an institution of veterinary or human medicine.