

How the Zika Virus Affects Global Health in the United States

Zika virus is a global health issue affecting the United States and international health communities (Centers for Disease Control, 2019). The Zika virus primarily spreads through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito. Additionally, Zika can be spread from a pregnant woman to her unborn child through sexual intercourse with an infected male. If a woman is pregnant and gets infected with the Zika virus, her baby could have specific congenital disabilities, such as microcephaly, brain damage, scarring on the back of eyes, and limited range of motion in joints. The symptoms of having the Zika virus include fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes (CDC, 2019). Many people never know they are infected and do not have symptoms. Testing for Zika is through a urine or blood test. However, there is currently no medicine and no vaccine for the Zika virus.

Integrated Mosquito Management

Local governments and mosquito control programs often use Integrated Mosquito Management (IMM) to prevent and control mosquitos. This system can control the number of mosquitos by understanding the biology, life cycle, and the way they spread viruses. To help control mosquitoes, professionals from government departments develop mosquito control plans, perform tasks to control larvae and adult mosquitoes, and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions (CDC, 2019).

Surveillance and Control of Mosquitoes

For data reporting, the CDC has developed a website for Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) called MosquitoNET.

Stakeholders responding to Zika virus infections included clinical, scientific, operational, and public health leaders. The strategic areas for possible solutions were improved health record support, specialty centers and referral systems, standardized forms, centralized testing databases, and joint academic/public health task forces (Morain, 2018).

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (n.d.). *Zika Virus*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/dotw/zika/index.html>

Morain, S. R., Eppes, C. S., Fisher, J. W., et al. (2018). Stakeholder Insights from Zika Virus Infections in Houston, Texas, USA, 2016–2017. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 24(11), 2049-2055. <https://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid2411.172108>.