

The Zika virus

The Zika virus, as we all know is dangerous and no cure or vaccine has been created but the Brazilian government are developing a kit that will identify infections quicker. As well as interviewing Herman Wynan, I also emailed some questions to a Brazilian bio-chemist.

I said who is most risk from the virus? She said, those most at risk live in or routinely visit areas where the mosquito is most commonly found, such as swamps, marshland and anywhere with still water are most at risk of being bitten by a mosquito and contracting the virus.

I also asked how could someone identify that they have contracted the virus. Her response was around 20% of infected people will show visible symptoms

I also asked in what areas the Zika virus has been detected. She said, recently it has been found in 25 countries, mostly in South and Central America.

I said could there be other impacts to health in addition to the microcephaly birth defect? She said, apart from vomiting and dehydration both of which can kill if left untreated there are no currently known major health issues

I said how has the press handled the outbreak of the virus? She said some people think that the international press has handled it badly, using sensationalist headlines that have misrepresented the known facts. Brazilian press outlets have been less panicked.

I asked what is being done to prevent the spread of the virus? She said the Brazilian health minister, Marcelo Castro, has said a new testing kit is being developed to identify infections quickly. He also said more money was being put into the development of a vaccine.

Also, Zika is now linked to brain inflammation which can, like all of the other symptoms, can kill if not treated.

To conclude, the Zika virus is as big an outbreak as the Ebola virus and we need to control and create a cure or vaccine soon before too many people die.

By Nathan Hill