MICR 4990 PEER review Science writing class

Newspaper article

**“What is Zika, and how we can protect ourselves.”**

It is almost impossible to turn on the TV or read something on the web, without Zika being the hot topic. But what is Zika, and where did it come from, and what can we do to protect ourselves from this potential viral epidemic?

Zika was first discovered, by accident, in the Zika forest of Uganda in 1947. This virus was only known to infect rhesus monkeys but many scientists believe the 2007 strain of Zika has mutated from the original virus, with increased virulence. Alexander Haddow was the man who discovered the virus in 47.

So what do science and researchers know about this virus?

1. They know is it a mosquito born virus, from the same family as:

* Yellow fever
* West Nile Virus
* Chikingunya and
* Dengue Fever

1. As of right now there is no vaccine, no medical treatment to treat the infection.
2. Symptoms include:

* Fever
* Rash
* Headaches and
* Red eyes.

But 80% of people who get Zika, won’t even know they have the virus. Symptoms show in one in five people.

1. Its spreading quickly across central and south America and in the Caribbean. What makes this virus so scary? Its connection to the birth defect, Microcephaly, a condition where babies are born with heads and brains too small.
2. In Brazil, and other Latin American countries, health officials are so worried about this outbreak, that they have asked women not to get pregnant until 2018. Because there is no cure, the Brazilin government is focusing on eradicating the mosquitos, sending armed forces to areas known for the outbreak with foggers to kill the mosquito swarms. U.S. officials are telling pregnant women to postpone travel to any of the countries known for outbreaks.
3. The mosquito that is responsible for the virus, is the female, Aedes Aegypti. She, because only the females draw blood, is an aggressive bitter and is unlike other mosquitos. What sets her apart is that she feeds during the day. Most mosquitos are nocturnal, which means they only feed at night. This is a problem, because bed nets won’t help much here.
4. The best way to protect yourself from getting bitten is to:

* Use insect repellent with DEET
* Wear thick clothing
* Stay inside an area that is screened off and air conditioned.
* Stay inside as much as possible.

So the next big question is, “Will Zika virus become a problem in the U.S.?” So far several dozen travelers infected abroad have been diagnosed with Zika in the U.S., and experts believe it is inevitable that we will see more cases in this country, in fact, three cases have been confirmed right here in Oklahoma as of March 2016. The Oklahoma Health Department released a statement on their webpage saying “These are the first laboratory confirmed cases of the virus in Oklahoma.” For more information on what you can do to protect yourself and loved ones, OHD has said they will release updated information on their sites every Thursday by 10:00 am.

**Work cited:**

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