

How Zika made its way from Uganda to the US

February 10 2016, by Debora Lima, Miami Herald

Beginning with the first incidence occurring in monkeys in Uganda in 1947, the Zika virus has trickled across the globe until the recent outbreak in Brazil and many other Latin American and Caribbean countries and territories. A look at the origins of Zika:

1. Uganda - 1947

Medical researchers first identified the Zika virus in 1947 in rhesus monkeys of the Zika Forest in Uganda. Testing data retroactively gathered in 1952 detected Zika in humans for the first time in Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria and Senegal. The first real-time detection in a human occurred in Nigeria in 1954.

2. Island of Yap - 2007

Faced with several residents experiencing denguelike symptoms, physicians in Yap, a Pacific island just north of Australia, sent samples to the U.S. CDC for testing. Forty-nine cases were eventually confirmed, the virus' first major outbreak.

3. Colorado - 2008

The first sexually transmitted case originated in Northern Colorado in 2008. The wife of Colorado State University biologist Dr. Brian Foy experienced symptoms after having sex with him. Foy had been in Senegal studying malaria and was bitten by mosquitoes. When he

returned home, he didn't realize he had contracted the virus. Blood tests confirmed the virus for both.

4. French Polynesia, Pacific Islands - 2013-2014

Health professionals confirmed 294 incidences in the islands of French Polynesia, after a family of three experienced symptoms associated with the virus - mild fever, headache, joint pain and pink eye. By 2014, Zika had jumped to other islands, including New Caledonia and Cook Islands in the South Pacific and Easter Island, off the coast of Chile, the first cases in the Western Hemisphere.

5. Brazil - 2015

The Pan American Health Organization announced the first cases of Zika in Brazil in May 2015 after noticing a spike in severe [congenital birth defects](#) caused by microcephaly. There are theories that major sporting events hosted by Brazil - the Va'a World Sprint Championship in Rio de Janeiro and the World Cup, both in 2014 - ushered in the [virus](#). However, scientists can't point to one or the other with certainty. Dr. Paola Lichtenberg, director of tropical diseases at UHealth, said, "We just know for sure that the outbreak in Brazil can be traced back to French Polynesia."

6. Texas - Feb. 2, 2016

The second case of human-to-human transmission in the U.S. was confirmed in Dallas. Texas [health](#) officials reported that a Dallas resident contracted Zika after having sex with someone who had recently returned from Venezuela.

7. Florida

As of Tuesday, there were 16 confirmed cases of Zika in Florida, six of them in Miami-Dade County and two in Broward. All incidences are travel-related and none involve pregnant women.

8. China

Chinese state news agency Xinhua confirmed Tuesday the first Zika case in the Jiangxi province, a 34-year-old man.

Sources: World Health Organization; Dr. Paola Lichtenberger, director of tropical medicine, UHealth; U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institute of Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Miami Herald; Florida Department of Health; Xinhua News Agency

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