

# Zika virus medical countermeasures, challenges and opportunities

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The Zika virus epidemic was not anticipated, and the world was not prepared. At the beginning of January 2016, a volunteer assembly of industry experts, infectious disease outbreak specialists, academics and thought leaders was assembled to assess current knowledge and provide non-affiliated recommendations. Key findings and discoveries include currently marketed drugs that appear to have anti-Zika virus activity, risks and obstacles to rapid vaccine development, initial epidemiologic analyses, and pragmatic actionable recommendations.

Organized as the Zika Response Working Group, operating under the non-profit Infectious Outbreak Response Group (iORG), these volunteers interviewed public health leaders, performed risk modeling and analysis, developed recommendations, and identified strategies and countermeasures that can be rapidly deployed. Group findings were then summarized as an academic manuscript, and is now being published by *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, a leading open-source academic journal. The working group selected PLOS NTDs to insure that the reviewed findings would be immediately available, free of charge, to the world health community.

Governments, scientists and public health specialists are confronted with the need to simultaneously study and understand a new disease, and to develop countermeasures. The Zika virus outbreak is a harbinger of future diseases driven by ecosystem change and global interconnectedness. Efficiently combating this outbreak will demand effort, resources, unparalleled collaboration, and above all, open

mindedness in formulating responses. With these principles in mind, the Zika Response Working Group and PLOS NTDs hope that this publication will help facilitate an efficient and coordinated world response to the threat of Zika virus infection and disease.

**More information:** *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pntd.0004530](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pntd.0004530)

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