

# First exploratory Zika study in Suriname

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After the Zika virus appeared in Brazil in the spring of 2015, it was then discovered in Suriname last autumn. Will it also lead to congenital defects in babies there? Together with virologists from Rotterdam, Wageningen entomologist Sander Koenraadt travelled to Suriname in February for a first exploratory study.

The Zika [virus](#) has been known since 1947, when it was first found in a rhesus monkey in the Ugandan Zika Forest. It only became a major



early stage. A first priority is to capture mosquitoes in Suriname and determine the infection rate. We now aim to obtain financing for this research. In addition to serving as a form of development aid for organisations such as the European Union, studies like this are also relevant to European countries now that we know that the disease is probably sexually transmissible."

## **Vaccine or genetically modified mosquitoes?**

Alongside the fundamental research involving the biology of the virus and transmission, Koenraadt is also working with Gorben Pijlman from the Laboratory of Virology on possible control options. Koenraadt: "A vaccine would be the obvious choice, but it is not yet available. The Laboratory of Virology is currently carrying out its first studies in this regard. Another option is dealing with the mosquitoes that transmit the disease. This may involve the widespread control of mosquitoes using biological methods or insecticides, or possibly the application of genetically modified, sterile *Aedes* mosquitoes. While these types of measures may be a sensitive issue in Europe, such objections seem far less relevant when you actually encounter [congenital defects](#) in newborns."

Provided by Wageningen University

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