

African Zika cases under control on Cape Verde: health chief

May 24 2016

The only African cases of the Zika virus strain linked to surging cases of neurological disorders and birth defects are under control on Cape Verde, the Atlantic island's health chief has said.

The World Health Organization on Friday announced that the Zika [virus](#) strain circulating in Cape Verde had been shown to be the same as the one behind an explosion of [cases](#) in the Americas.

Tiny Cape Verde is the only African nation affected by the so-called "Asian strain", detected through the sequencing of the 7,500 Zika cases confirmed there.

National director for [health](#) Tomas Valdez told AFP on Monday night there had been an abrupt drop in the number of cases since the first recorded in October 2015 thanks to a series of successful public health campaigns.

"The epidemic has been progressively curbed," Valdez said.

"In January suspected cases went down, in February and March even more, and in the last week we have counted just four cases, with zero cases some days," he added.

The internationally renowned Institut Pasteur in Dakar, Senegal had helped set up a laboratory in Cape Verde's capital, Praia, to track all the pregnant women on the archipelago infected with the virus, he said,

while extra travel precautions were in place.

"We are doing everything according to international health regulations to guard against the spread of the virus to neighbouring countries and beyond," he said.

Three cases of microcephaly have been recorded on Cape Verde but none of the rare but serious neurological disorder Guillain-Barre Syndrome, also caused by the Zika strain.

In Brazil, the hardest-hit country, more than 1.5 million people have been infected with Zika, and nearly 1,400 cases of microcephaly have been registered since the outbreak began last year.

Researchers estimate that a woman infected with Zika during pregnancy has a one-percent chance of giving birth to a baby with the birth defect.

© 2016 AFP

Citation: African Zika cases under control on Cape Verde: health chief (2016, May 24) retrieved 10 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-05-african-zika-cases-cape-verde.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.