Dominican agency: 2 new deaths from Zika-related syndrome

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In this Jan. 27, 2016, file photo, an Aedes aegypti mosquito is photographed through a microscope at the Fiocruz institute in Recife, Pernambuco state, Brazil. The Dominican Republic on Thursday, May 19, reported two new deaths from Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare illness of the nervous system that can cause paralysis, linked to the mosquito-borne Zika virus that is spreading through the hemisphere. (AP Photo/Felipe Dana, File)

The Dominican Republic on Thursday reported two new deaths from a

paralyzing disorder linked to the mosquito-borne Zika virus that is spreading through the hemisphere.

In its latest weekly update, the health ministry's epidemiological office added to the four previously reported deaths from Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare illness of the nervous system that can cause paralysis.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says about one in 20 patients die.

Dominican health officials have reported 100 cases of Guillain-Barre in recent months.

Raquel Pimentel, director of the Dominican Republic's Epidemiology Center, said four of the six Guillain-Barre fatalities were people in their 60s. There was also an 83-year-old man and a 42-year-old woman. At least one of the patients was diabetic.

The World Health Organization says based on research to date there is now scientific consensus that Zika is a cause of the nervous system syndrome.

Zika is mainly a threat to unborn children and can cause microcephaly and other severe birth defects.