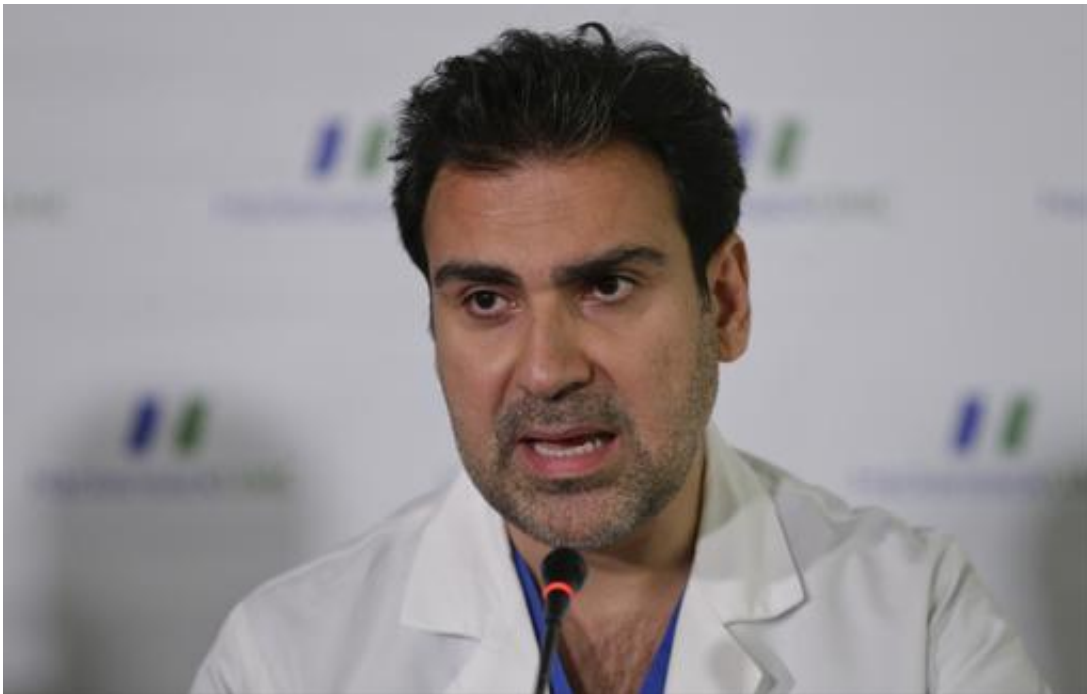


# Baby born in US to Honduran mom with Zika has birth defect

June 1 2016, by Patrick Mairs

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Dr. Abdulla Al-Khan, director of the Center for Abnormal Placentation, speaks during a news conference at the Hackensack University Medical Center, Wednesday, June 1, 2016, in Hackensack, N.J. Doctors say a baby born to a mother with the Zika virus appears to be affected by the disease. Officials at Hackensack University Medical Center say the 31-year-old woman from Honduras delivered the baby girl through a cesarean section on tuesday. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)

A Honduran woman infected with Zika gave birth in New Jersey to a

baby girl with birth defects caused by the virus, her doctor said Wednesday.

The infant is the second born in the United States with birth defects from the mosquito-borne virus. The first was born in Hawaii to a woman who had lived in Brazil, where the Zika epidemic began in the Americas.

The Honduran woman's baby was delivered premature by cesarean section Tuesday at Hackensack University Medical Center, said Dr. Abdulla Al-Khan, the hospital's director of maternal-fetal medicine and surgery.

The doctor said the 31-year-old mother was diagnosed with Zika in her native Central American country, where the virus has spread. She traveled to New Jersey, where she has family, to seek further treatment, he said. Hospital officials stressed that neither the mother nor the baby poses an infectious risk to others.

Al-Khan said the mother had a normal ultrasound early in her pregnancy, and that another one last week showed birth defects, including microcephaly, in which the baby's head is smaller than expected because the brain hasn't developed properly. He said there was a "medical need" for delivering the baby at about 35 weeks of gestation, more than a month shy of full term.



Dr. Julia Piwoz, chief of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the Joseph M. Sanzari Childrens Hospital speaks during a news conference at the Hackensack University Medical Center, Wednesday, June 1, 2016, in Hackensack, N.J. Doctors say a baby born to a mother with the Zika virus appears to be affected by the disease. Officials at Hackensack University Medical Center say the 31-year-old woman from Honduras delivered the baby girl through a cesarean section on Tuesday. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)

"It was very sad for us to see a baby born with such a condition," he said.

Al-Khan said the prognosis for babies born with microcephaly, which also can signal underlying brain damage, is "generally very poor."

The mother is "hanging in there" said Al-Khan. "But of course what human being isn't going to be devastated by this news?"

The Zika virus causes only a mild and brief illness, at worst, in most

people. In April, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said there was enough evidence to declare that Zika causes microcephaly and other brain defects.

Ten countries have reported cases of microcephaly linked to Zika, which is spread primarily through mosquito bites and can also be transmitted through sex. The baby born in Hawaii also had microcephaly.



Cars pass the Hackensack University Medical Center, Wednesday, June 1, 2016, in Hackensack, N.J. Doctors say a baby born to a mother with the Zika virus appears to be affected by the disease. Officials at Hackensack University Medical Center say the 31-year-old woman from Honduras delivered the baby girl through a cesarean section on Tuesday. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)

The CDC and the World Health Organization have recommended that

pregnant women avoid traveling to Zika-affected countries.

So far, all the nearly 600 cases of Zika infection reported in the United States have been connected to travel to outbreak areas—none were locally transmitted. Of that tally, 168 are pregnant women. The CDC has not released details about those pregnancies or any outcome.

Scientists are still trying to determine how risky a Zika infection is for pregnant women. In a study last week, CDC researchers estimated that the risk of microcephaly is in the range of 1 percent to 14 percent.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest said the case underscored the need for Congress to act on President Barack Obama's request for \$1.9 billion in emergency funds to battle the virus. Lawmakers still must reach agreement on funding after both houses approved different amounts: \$1.1 billion in the Senate and \$622 million in the House.

Earnest said it was unclear whether the steps the White House has called for would have prevented this case, but said it's a reminder of the seriousness of the situation.

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