

# Zika virus challenges for neuropsychiatry published

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A new study, published in the *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment* journal, examines this by critically reviewing the literature.

The Zika virus is an arbovirus spread by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, and has been strongly linked to [congenital malformations](#) in infants born to mothers who contracted the disease while pregnant. However, not a great deal is known about the mechanisms underlying the disease's neurological complications and what further research is required, an undertaking sought by the authors of this recent study.

The review, entitled "Zika virus challenges for neuropsychiatry", examines emerging evidence largely from in vitro studies to better investigate the Zika virus' effect on neuronal cells. The authors also looked at a temporal association between Zika infection and an increase in cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome.

The lead author of the paper, Antonio Teixeira from the McGovern Medical School, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, said "The literature reveals that further studies addressing the mechanisms underlying Zika-induced neuronal damage are warranted. In particular, ongoing longitudinal cohort studies can show the long-term neurological and psychiatric consequences of congenital and after-birth Zika infection. Reliable diagnostic criteria for the identification of cases of microcephaly are also still required."

He continues, "There is a clear temporal association between the

increased reporting of cases of microcephaly and of GBS and the Zika virus outbreak. In the short term, as neither pharmacological treatment nor vaccines are available, prevention of Zika infection relies on protective measures against mosquito bites."

**More information:** Antonio Teixeira et al, Zika virus challenges for neuropsychiatry, *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment* (2016). [DOI: 10.2147/NDT.S113037](https://doi.org/10.2147/NDT.S113037)

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