

# Acute Zika virus infection associated with sensory polyneuropathy

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A group of researchers from Honduras, Venezuela and the USA has described the first case of sensory polyneuropathy associated with acute Zika virus infection. The scientific paper was published in the *Journal of the Neurological Sciences* online.

The new publication is part of the collaborate efforts of the World Federation of Neurology Work Group on Zika. Concerned about the increasing number of neurological complications related to the Zika virus, the WFN has recently established this forum to contribute expertise to the coordinated global response to the Zika crisis. A large percentage of people suffering from Zika virus infections are asymptomatic or show only mild symptoms. But potential neurological complications can be dramatic.

"Zika virus infection has become a new emergent neuropathological agent with several neurological complications", says Prof John England, Chair of the WFN Work Group and Chair of the Department of Neurology at the LSUHSC School of Medicine in New Orleans.

"Outbreaks of Guillain Barré Syndrome (GBS) associated with Zika virus infections have been reported as well as a high occurrence of a syndrome associated with congenital Zika virus infection, mainly microcephaly with brain malformations. Other [neurological complications](#) associated with Zika [virus infections](#) have also been reported such as meningoencephalitis, or acute myelitis."

"Clinicians should be aware that Zika virus infection can also cause an

acute infectious sensory polyneuropathy", says Prof Marco T. Medina, Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Honduras, also a member of the WFN Zika Work Group and first author of the new publication. "Our patient is the first confirmed Zika infection case report associated with an acute sensory polyneuropathy which began during the acute infectious phase. This suggests a probable direct viral inflammatory process affecting sensory nerves, but an autoimmune etiology cannot be definitely excluded."

Current WHO statistics reported an ongoing transmission of infections by mosquitoes in 70 countries and territories by the reference date of 25 August 2016. Since February 2016, eleven countries have reported human-to-human transmissions with a high probability that these transmissions were sexual. Microcephaly and other malformations of foetuses that can be connected to a Zika infection have been recorded already in 20 countries. In 18 countries, there has been a striking increase in the number of cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) or confirmed infections among GBS sufferers. All figures are increasing.

**More information:** Marco T. Medina et al. Zika virus associated with sensory polyneuropathy, *Journal of the Neurological Sciences* (2016).  
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