

Puerto Rico reports 1st death from paralysis linked to Zika

August 19 2016

Puerto Rico is reporting its first death from a paralysis condition that developed from a Zika infection.

State epidemiologist Brenda Rivera said Friday that the victim is a man between 35 and 45 years old from the San Juan metro area who died from Guillain-Barre syndrome. The condition can cause temporary paralysis and death in rare instances.

The U.S. territory has 13,186 confirmed Zika cases, including 1,106 pregnant women. A study published Friday in JAMA Pediatrics estimates up to 270 babies in Puerto Rico could be born with severe birth defects because of Zika.

The United States has declared a public health emergency in Puerto Rico because of the mosquito-borne virus. Officials have warned that up to 25 percent of Puerto Rico's nearly 3.5 million people could become infected.

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Citation: Puerto Rico reports 1st death from paralysis linked to Zika (2016, August 19) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-08-puerto-rico-1st-death-paralysis.html>

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