

Number of Zika, dengue and chikungunya cases drop in Brazil

March 15 2017

The number of cases of Zika, dengue and chikungunya reported in Brazil during the first 6 ½ weeks of the year is nearly 90 percent less than in the same period in 2016, the Health Ministry said Wednesday.

The ministry said in an email that 60,124 cases of the three diseases were reported between Jan. 1 and Feb. 18, against 549,510 cases one year earlier.

The ministry attributed the drop to increased efforts to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that carries the three diseases. Well-adapted to humans, it lives largely inside homes and can lay eggs in even a bottle-cap's worth of stagnant water.

Brazil is also battling an outbreak of yellow fever, with Rio de Janeiro state's Health Department confirming the first two cases of the disease in the state. It said that one of the patients died and the other is hospitalized.

More than 370 cases of yellow fever have been confirmed since the beginning of this outbreak, the Health Ministry has said. Of those, more than 130 have died.

Even before it had confirmed its first case, Rio's Health Department announced that it planned to vaccinate its entire population as a preventative measure. The state said it will need 12 million doses to reach a 90 percent vaccination rate by the end of the year.

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