

Zika virus successfully diagnosed from semen

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Transmission electron micrograph (TEM) of Zika virus. Credit: Cynthia Goldsmith/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Research presented at ASM Microbe 2017 by experts at the Fertility and Cryogenics Lab shows a reliable clinical assay that can detect the Zika virus from semen samples.

"This assay can help reduce Zika infection rates and allow couples who are identified at risk due to travel or geographic location plan their pregnancy," said lead author Hisham Greiss M.D., Ph.D., HCLD at the Fertility and Cryogenics Lab.

A total of 100 [semen samples](#) were spiked with a recombinant Accuplex ZIKV (SeraCare Life Sciences) at 5 viral copies per ml and processed in Aptima Urine Transport medium (Hologic Inc.) and tested using Aptima ZIKV assay released under the FDA's emergency use authorization on the fully automated Panther system from Hologic, Inc. The samples were also tested for West Nile Virus, Chagas and Dengue, recombinant Dengue Virus, recombinant Chikungunya Virus, Human Papilloma Virus, Herpes Simplex Virus 1, Herpes Simplex Virus 2, Chlamydia, and Gonorrhea. The experiment was repeated three times and in triplicates each time.

The assay was found to be 100% sensitive and 100% specific to ZIKV RNA from semen samples with a limit of detection of 5 viral copies per mL of semen.

Zika fever symptoms are often misdiagnosed due to its nonspecific clinical symptoms, so an accurate diagnosis is of paramount importance for management of the disease and to prevent neonatal infections. Zika infection during pregnancy can also cause serious birth defects and is associated with other pregnancy problems.

Provided by American Society for Microbiology

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