

Mexico to erect statue to swine flu 'patient zero'

25 May 2009

A state in eastern Mexico is to erect a statue to a small boy suspected as being the first patient of swine flu here, to be modeled on the famous Manneken Pis statue of a child urinating in Brussels.

Five-year-old Edgar Hernandez appeared in media across the world after the health ministry in April confirmed that he had contracted, and overcome, the A(H1N1) virus at the start of the epidemic's outbreak here.

Hernandez's role in putting his poor village of La Gloria on the map merited recognition in the shape of a small statue -- resembling the famous Belgian landmark -- Fidel Herrera Beltran, the governor of Veracruz state in eastern Mexico, told local media on Sunday.

"La Gloria is now an important tourist destination. Next week we'll inaugurate a statue of the child Edgar Hernandez that resembles the Manneken Pis in Brussels, Belgium, for having carried out a similar exploit," Beltran said.

There are several legends behind the Manneken Pis, including one in which an infant lord urinated on enemy troops, who were eventually defeated.

The statue of Hernandez would be erected on one of the country's highest mountains, the Cofre de Perote, Beltran said.

Suspicious that La Gloria -- which lies near a large pig plant -- could have been the launching point of the swine flu virus prompted a wave of media attention on the boy.

It is still unclear where the virus originated -- after initial cases in both the southern United States and Mexico.

The global [swine flu](#) cases stood at 12,515, including 91 deaths, the United Nations' [World](#)

[Health Organization](#) said on Monday.

The figure included 80 deaths and more than 4,000 cases in Mexico.

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APA citation: Mexico to erect statue to swine flu 'patient zero' (2009, May 25) retrieved 24 January 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-05-mexico-erect-statue-swine-flu.html>

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