

Hawaii reports first US case of Zika-linked brain damage

17 January 2016

The United States has reported its first case of a newborn suffering from brain damage linked to the mosquito-borne Zika virus that has caused birth defects in Latin America.

The baby, born in a hospital in Oahu, suffers from microcephaly, a rare condition that means its brain and skull are abnormally small, the Hawaiian state health department said late Friday.

The mother was probably infected with the virus early in her pregnancy while living in Brazil in May 2015 and transmitted it to the fetus, the health department said.

It added that neither mother nor child is still infected and that there is no danger to anyone in Hawaii. There is no vaccine to prevent the disease.

The Zika virus, which can impair normal intellectual development in newborns, has affected several thousand babies in Brazil in recent months.

The case in Hawaii was confirmed by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"We are saddened by the events that have affected this mother and her newborn," said Sarah Park, a Hawaiian state epidemiologist.

She said it underscored the warning issued Friday by the CDC for pregnant women to avoid traveling to regions or countries where Zika has been found. Most are in Latin America, including Brazil, and the Caribbean.

The Zika virus, which is transmitted by mosquitos, cannot spread between humans. It often produces flu-like symptoms (fever, headaches and joint pain) as well as skin rashes and conjunctivitis.

Those symptoms appear within three to 12 days of the mosquito bite. In 80 percent of cases, the

infection goes unnoticed, and it is very rarely fatal.

In Brazil, more than 3,500 cases of microcephaly were recorded between October and January, just as the Zika epidemic was spreading.

Tests indicated that in at least four cases, the fetus developed the malformation during pregnancy because of the [virus](#), the CDC said.

It said that 26 cases of Zika infection have been diagnosed in the United States since 2007 among people who contracted the disease outside the country.

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