

c Zika virus update

The geographic distribution of Zika virus (ZIKV) continues to expand, with most recent cases reported from the southern United States, South-East Asia and Western Pacific Islands. Since late July 2016, local mosquito-borne ZIKV transmission has been reported in Miami, Florida (USA). Autochthonous ZIKV transmission may also be occurring in South-East Asia—in Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam. It remains unclear whether Zika cases reported in Singapore are a result of re-introduction of ZIKV from South America or constitute re-emergence of endemic virus. Malaysia reported its first locally acquired mosquito-borne ZIKV infection on 3 September.

The role of ZIKV infection in development of microcephaly and Guillain-Barré syndrome is now officially recognized by the WHO. So far there is no available treatment or vaccine against ZIKV infection, which makes mosquito control and prevention

measures the only feasible interventions. The fear of possible ZIKV infection amongst pregnant women who reside in or travelled to affected areas is driving demand for more widely accessible laboratory testing. Moreover, there is an increasing evidence of person-to-person transmission of ZIKV, likely via the sexual route.

No locally-acquired ZIKV infections have been detected in South Africa, with all suspected, probable and confirmed cases occurring amongst travellers or South Africans returning from affected areas. To date Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau are the only African countries reporting active transmission of ZIKV.

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