

c Zika virus update

Following the Zika virus disease (ZVD) outbreak in north-eastern Brazil in February 2015, the virus dramatically expanded its geographic boundaries and is now actively transmitted in more than 60 countries in South, Central, and North Americas, the Caribbean region and Pacific Ocean islands. It has also recently been reported from the Cape Verde islands and Guinea-Bissau in West Africa. It is yet unclear if the ZVD cases in West Africa resulted from the introduction of the Asian lineage of the virus on African continent.

Zika virus (ZIKV) infection causes mostly asymptomatic or mild febrile illness, and it has been positively identified as a cause of microcephaly and Guillain-Barre syndrome. Zika virus is usually spread from human to human by the bite of infected mosquitoes, but it can also be transmitted sexually, through blood transfusions and from mother to child.

Sixty-five persons with a travel history to a Zika virus endemic country have been investigated by the NICD from December 2015 until 15 August 2016. One case was confirmed by PCR and serology testing, two cases were positive by PCR on acute sera, and two additional cases had antibodies against Zika virus.

The state of Florida in the United States is currently reporting increased ZVD cases, including non-travel associated cases, which resulted from either bites of local *Aedes aegypti* and *A. albopictus* mosquitoes or from sexual transmission. The state of Texas reported 108 cases associated with travel to areas with active ZIKV transmission but so far there is no evidence of local transmission by indigenous mosquitoes.

Source: Centre for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases, NICD-NHLS; (januszp@nicd.ac.za)