



THE ZIKA VIRUS

A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES?

Addressing five common myths

WHAT IS THE ZIKA VIRUS?

Zika fever is a *flavivirus* (transmitted by mosquitoes) that is known to cause birth defects, pain, vomiting, skin irritation and other symptoms (September, 2016 data).

1947

First reported case

UGANDA

Origin: The Zika forest

61

Nations reporting a case of the virus¹



0.011%

% of Americans infected

FLORIDA

Zika hotspot in U.S.

1

Death from Zika (U.S.)

THE SYMPTOMS OF ZIKA

If you contract the Zika fever, what actually happens to you?³



HOW SERIOUS IS THE THREAT?

Many people believe that Zika is a major threat to the health and well-being of people in the United States. But the data shows that the fear is *relatively* unfounded. Consider the **top five myths** concerning the virus compared to the facts.

1 "Zika is rampant within the United States!" **False**

Zika is **not rampant** within the United States. In fact, there have only been 3,625 reported cases as of 28 September 2016.²

Most patients acquired it while traveling and Florida has the highest concentration of cases stemming from mosquito bites.

3,625

Total reported cases of Zika in the United States

3,565

From traveling

59

From mosquitoes

1

From laboratories

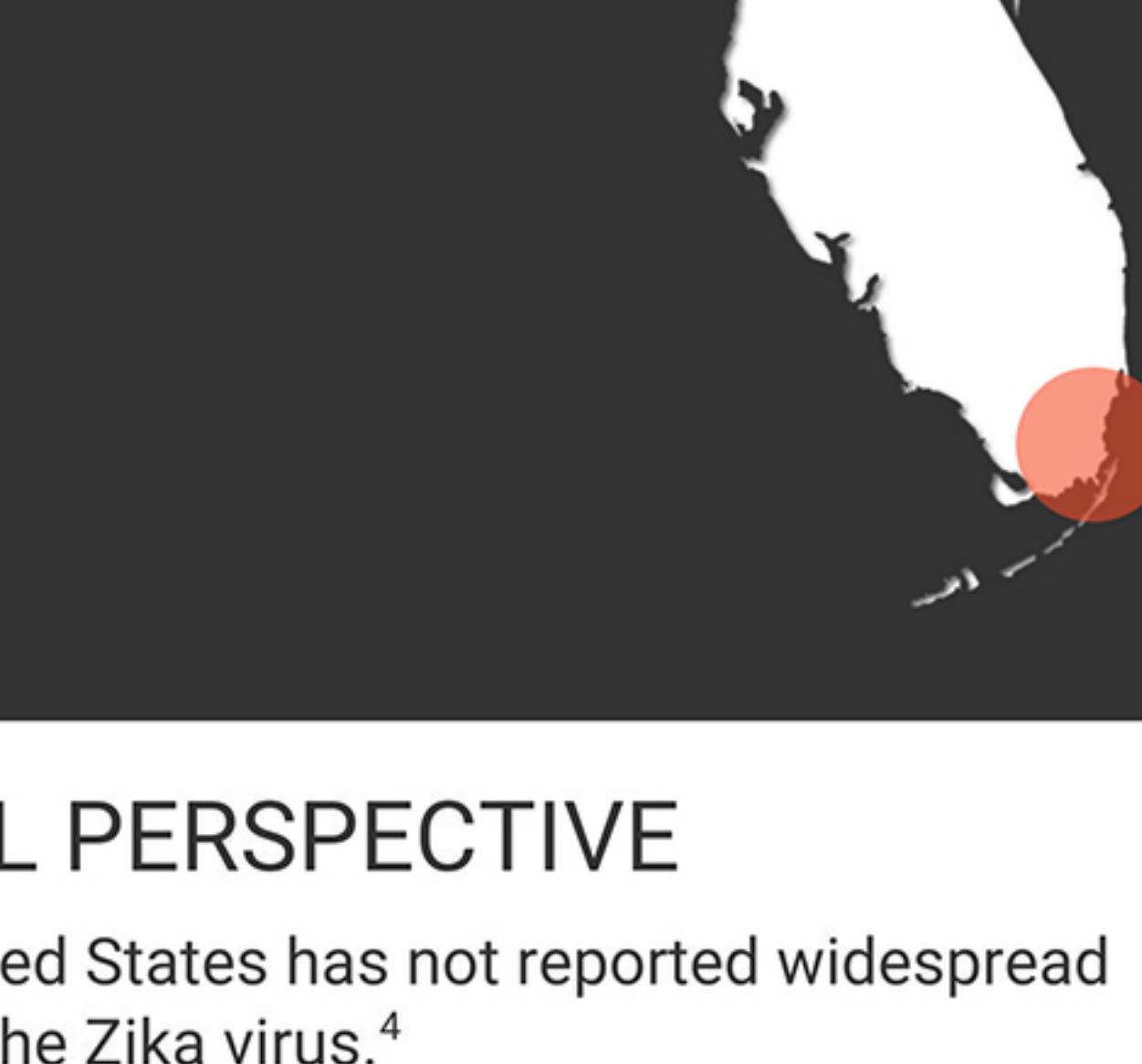
Florida accounted for all 59 mosquito-borne cases

MIAMI AREA

All of the cases came from the same area in Miami, where Zika-carrying mosquitoes are prevalent.

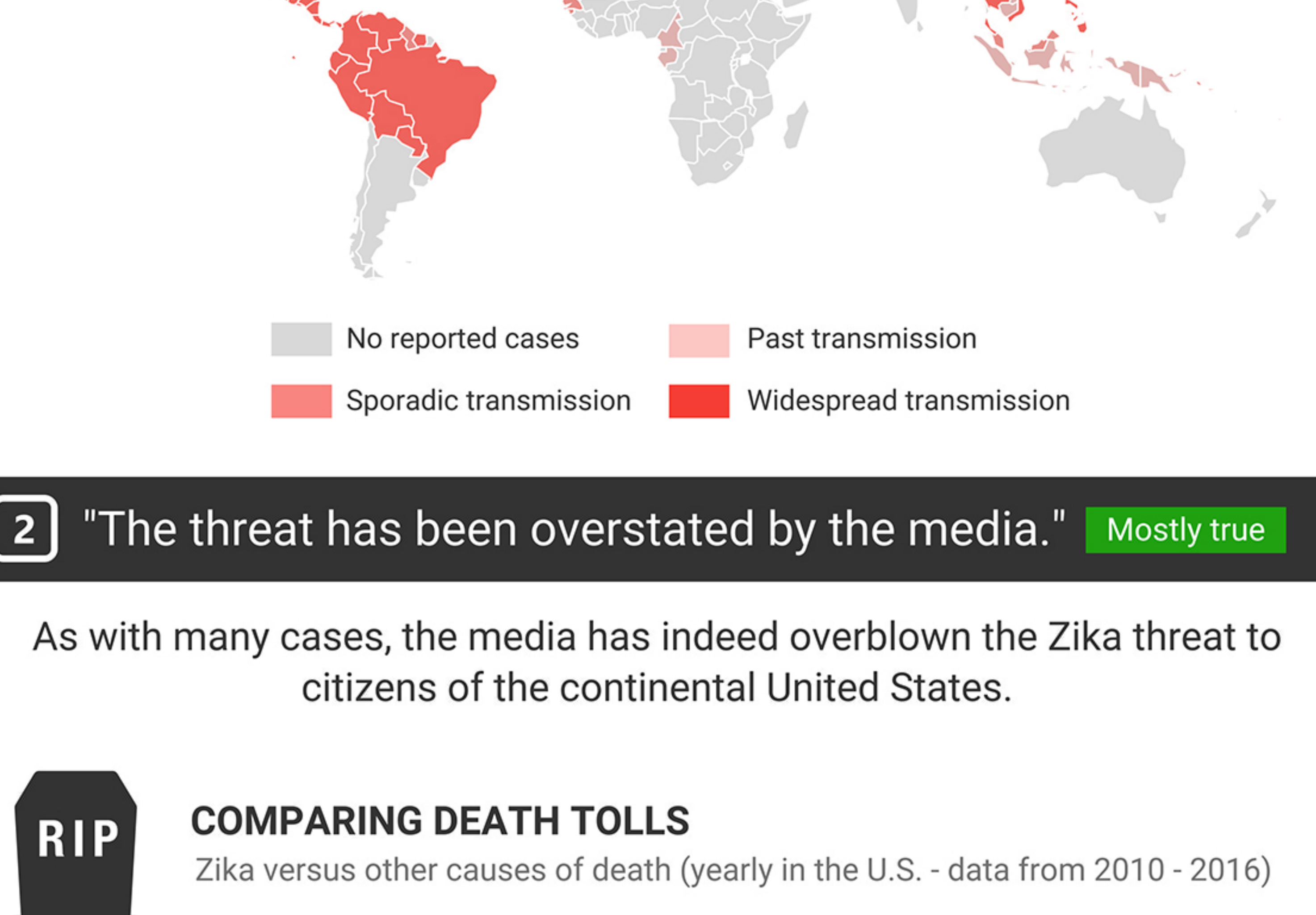
PROXIMITY TO CUBA

Cuba has a strong population of Zika-carrying insects and is only 90 miles from Florida.



ZIKA - THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Compared to the rest of the world, the United States has not reported widespread transmission of the Zika virus.⁴



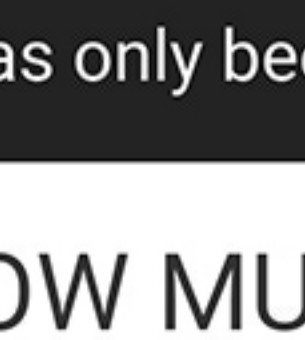
2 "The threat has been overstated by the media." **Mostly true**

As with many cases, the media has indeed overblown the Zika threat to citizens of the continental United States.

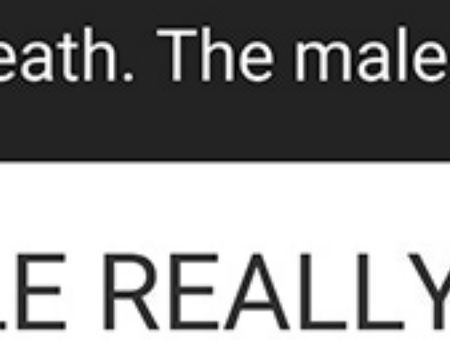
RIP

COMPARING DEATH TOLLS

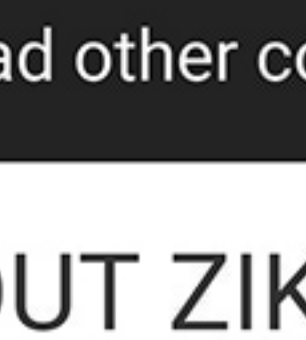
Zika versus other causes of death (yearly in the U.S. - data from 2010 - 2016)



1 ZIKA DEATH (TOTAL)



31,076 GUN DEATHS⁵



29,989 VEHICLE DEATHS⁶



300,000 OBESITY DEATHS⁷



614,348 HEART DISEASE DEATHS⁸

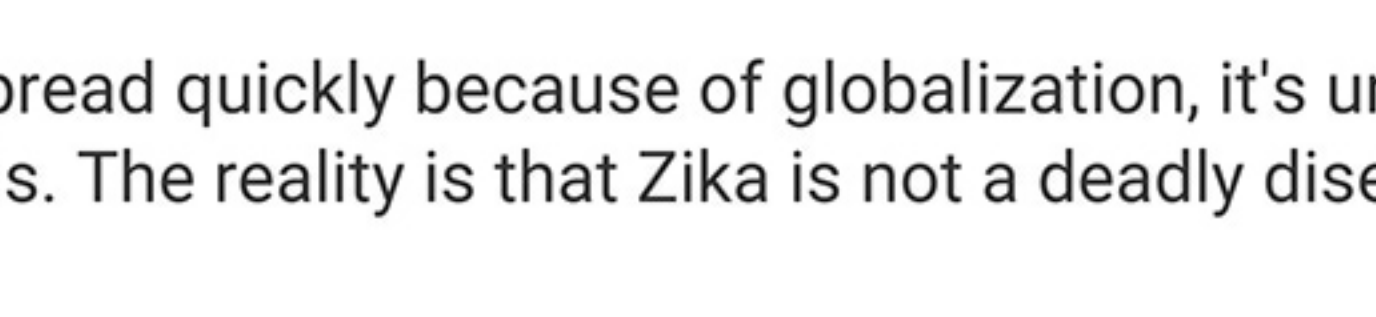


591,699 CANCER DEATHS⁹

There has only been one Zika-related death. The male was elderly and had other conditions.

HOW MUCH DO PEOPLE REALLY KNOW ABOUT ZIKA?

According to a Pew Research Center⁹ study, most Americans know **little to nothing** about Zika. Almost half of all Americans are aware of the illness, but don't know the symptoms, global reach and other important information.

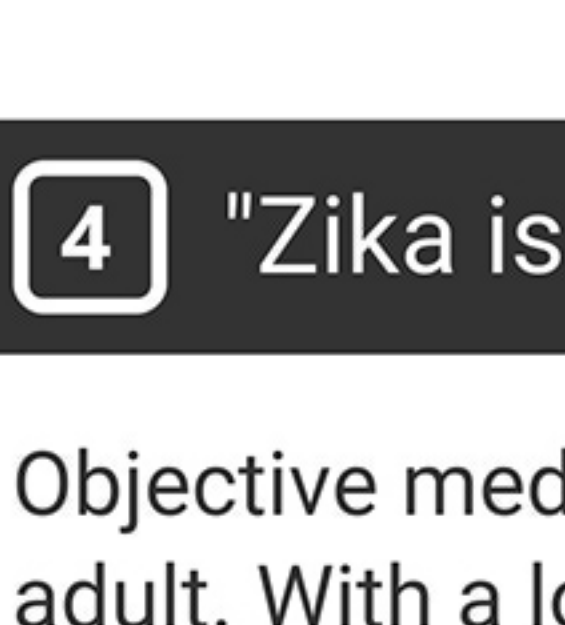


● Nothing ● A little ● A lot

3 "Zika has serious pandemic potential." **Maybe**

Many folks are concerned that Zika can turn into a global pandemic, much like the plague or other atrocious diseases.

While the illness may spread quickly because of globalization, it's unlikely to cause a lot of havoc in terms of deaths. The reality is that Zika is not a deadly disease, all things considered.



EXPERTS WEIGH IN

Daniel Lucey and Lawrence Gostin on Zika in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*¹⁰

"Zika virus infection usually is asymptomatic or causes mild illness, such as fever, rash, muscle/joint pain, and conjunctivitis; severe disease and fatalities are uncommon"

Anthony Fauci - director of the *National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease*¹¹

When asked about the pandemic danger of Zika, he reported that it would likely impact minor locales and "fizzle out."

"We're not going to be cavalier about it...it's highly unlikely."

4 "Zika is deadly for the average adult." **Mostly false**

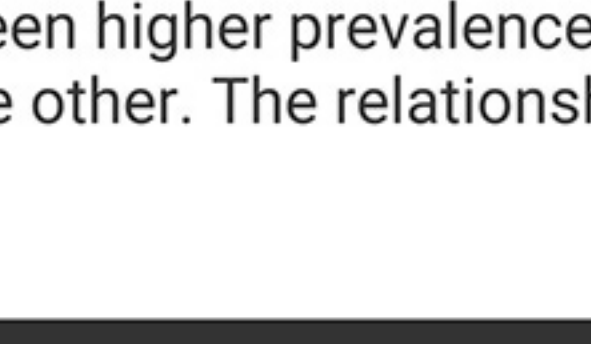
Objective medical evidence shows that Zika **is not deadly** for the average adult. With a low death toll and relatively mild symptoms, this is a myth.

While Zika is not deadly, there are two important considerations that are exceptions to the rule: microcephaly and Guillain-Barre syndrome.

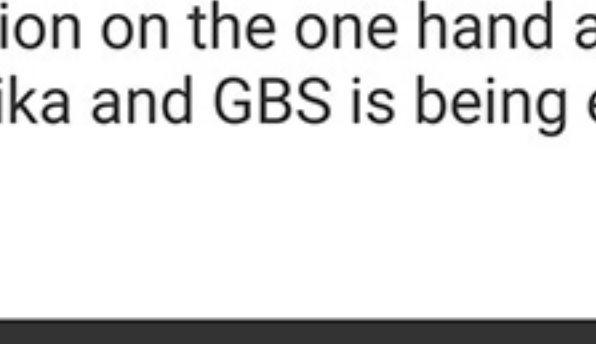
CASE 1 - MICROCEPHALY

WHAT IS MICROCEPHALY?

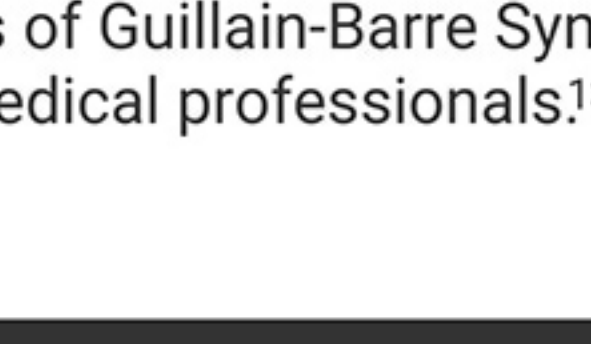
The medical terms translates to "small head" and is a condition where a baby's head doesn't grow properly to be the correct size and shape. The birth defect has been linked to a wide range of developmental disabilities, including vision, hearing and diminished functionality of the bodily senses.



Typical head size



Baby with microcephaly



Baby with severe microcephaly

HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN WITH RELATION TO ZIKA?

If pregnant women contract Zika, they may pass it on to their unborn child, causing the birth defects shown. While this condition is not deadly, it is still harmful and should be avoided at all costs.

CASE 2 - GUILLAIN-BARRE SYNDROME

WHAT IS GUILLAIN-BARRE SYNDROME?

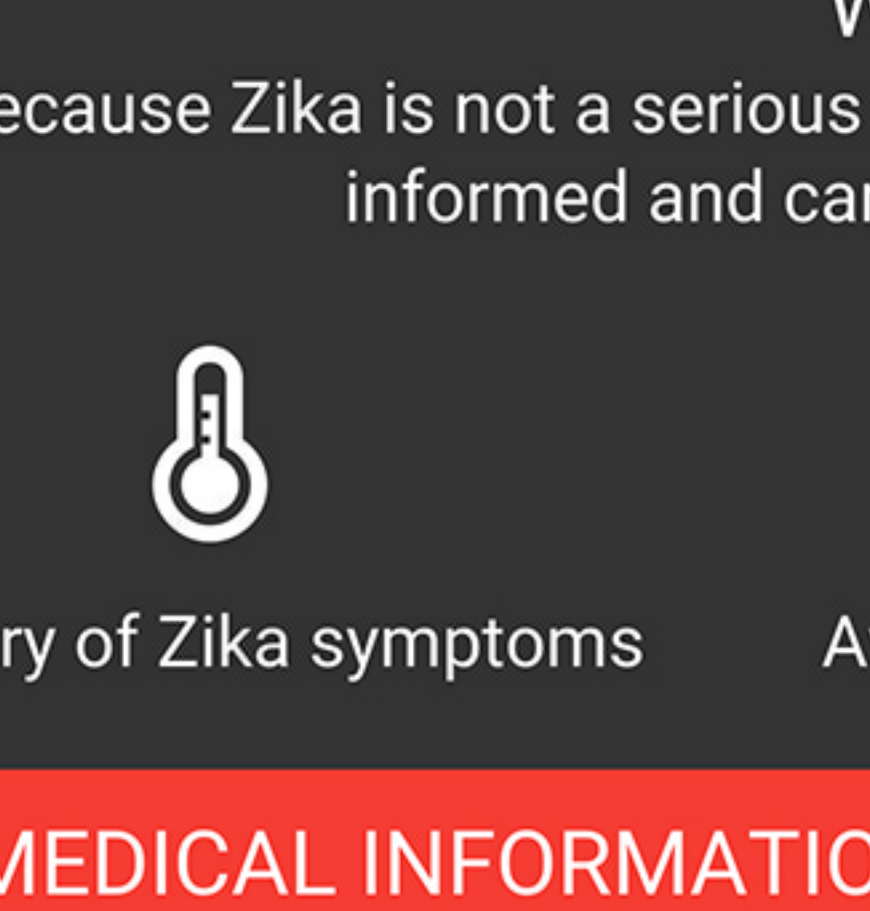
Guillain-Barre Syndrome is a poorly understood disorder in which the patient's nervous system begins attacking itself. According to the CDC and other health agencies, some correlation has been found between higher prevalence of Zika infection on the one hand and higher rates of Guillain-Barre Syndrome on the other. The relationship between Zika and GBS is being evaluated by medical professionals.¹³

5 "Zika can be sexually transmitted." **True**

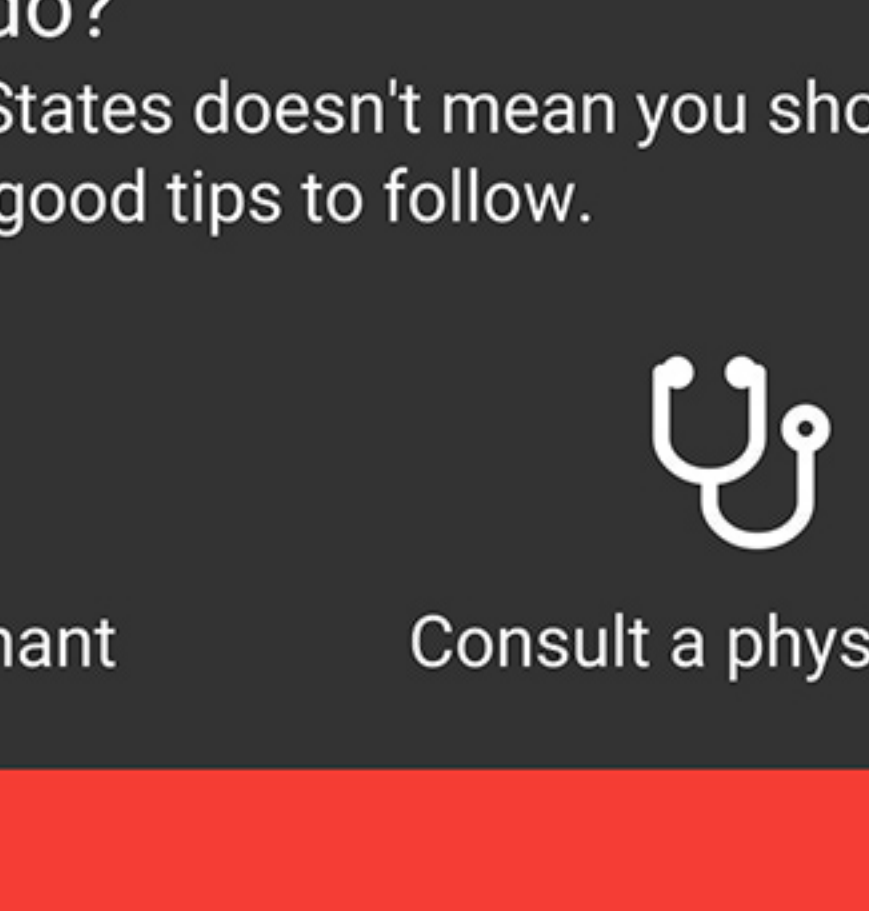
The Zika virus can be sexually transmitted through the exchange of bodily fluids, although it's relatively uncommon.

Should Americans be overly worried about contracting Zika from a sexual partner? Let's compare it to the rational fear of contracting a common STD - herpes.

Americans with herpes¹⁴



Americans who know they have herpes¹⁴



● Without herpes ● With herpes ● Aware of infection ● Unaware of infection

COMPARING APPLES TO APPLES

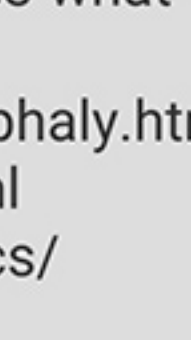
According to this data, almost 18% of Americans **have herpes** but **don't know** they have it. Taking into account the total percentage of people infected with Zika in the United States (0.011%), you should be more concerned with herpes than Zika.

What should you do?

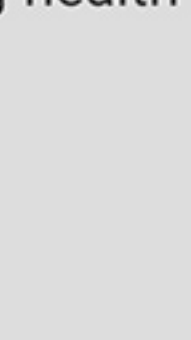
Just because Zika is not a serious threat to the United States doesn't mean you shouldn't be informed and careful. Here are some good tips to follow.



Be wary of Zika symptoms



Avoid traveling if pregnant



Consult a physician

MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLAIMER

This infographic and its contents are for reference and informational purposes only. It is not intended to be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional.

This infographic first appeared on the Ultius blog and is part of a longer blog post about the threat of Zika to the United States. To read the full post, please visit <https://ultius.co/zikaUSA>

Sources

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6. <http://www.ihs.org/ihs/topics/t/general-statistics/fatalityfacts/state-by-state-overview>

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14. <http://www.ashsexualhealth.org/stdsstis/statistics/>