

# Competing Theories on Zika Virus Scare

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By Dr. Derek Conte

When the Zika virus scare in Brazil was announced more than a year ago, the first explanation was offered by a group of Argentine and Brazilian physicians in the affected areas. Much worry surrounded the mosquito-spread Zika virus because there seemed to be a correlation between pregnant women who contracted the virus and some of the children born to them with a severe developmental condition called microcephaly or "Tiny Head".

The doctors observed that the region in Brazil where the cases of microcephaly were concentrated were in the same areas where a chemical "larvicide" (larvae-killer) was added to the water supply to kill the larvae of the species of mosquito that carried the Zika virus. The larvicide was introduced to the water supply in 2014. Significantly, the physicians noted that nearby countries with higher rates and more cases of Zika virus than Brazil had no cases of microcephaly. The chemical larvicide is called "Pyriproxyfen" and is a "growth inhibitor" intended to cause disabling or fatal malformations of mosquito larvae.

Zika, first identified in 1947, has been around for decades. The virus produces mild, cold-like symptoms and is easily resolved with rest and time.

The doctors said: *"Malformations detected in thousands of children from pregnant women living in areas where the Brazilian state added Pyriproxyfen to drinking water are not a coincidence, even though the Ministry of Health places a direct blame on the Zika virus for this damage." There have been well over 400 cases of microcephaly in Brazil and only a small fraction, less than 5%, seemed to involve the Zika virus"*

The relationship between pesticides and birth defects is well known, for example developmental malformations caused by thalidomide in the 1950's and, in the 1990's, by depleted uranium in ordinance the US dropped on Iraq which have caused horrible birth defects in Iraqi children.

The other side of what has become an important argument was advanced by some scientists who criticized the water supply theory and defended the safety of the chemicals. They assert it is the Zika virus itself that causes microcephaly. They also contend that in tests, pyriproxifen has caused no developmental deformities in rats and has a very short half-life, rendering it inert relatively quickly.

Now, the Zika scare has reached the US with an epicenter in a square-mile sized Miami neighborhood and extensive chemical spraying in south Florida has commenced, as you've seen on the news. In rainy Florida it will take no time at all for it to reach the water supply there, but there is the assurance of the loudest scientific voices that it will be safe for the public. Our news reports here maintain the same phrase, "it is the Zika virus that causes microcephaly".

Additionally, the relationship between high frequencies of Zika infection and primitive, unsanitary living standards is not being openly discussed. Many of these countries have large water collection tanks for their drinking water making a very hospitable site for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. One non-toxic solution being used in some locales is to place fresh-water fish in the tank to eat the mosquito larvae.

President Obama is asking Congress for billions of dollars to develop a vaccine for Zika, which has historically produced only mild symptoms. It is interesting to note that the larvicide was produced by a close Japanese partner of Monsanto.

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