

ZIKA VIRUS RAISES ALARM

Zika virus, which is present in Brazil and in Central America and Mexico, now may jump to the United States. Zika virus infection is not lethal. It typically causes minor or even no symptoms, but in pregnant women the virus is extremely dangerous. The reason is clear: it has been linked to a birth defect called microcephaly, which leaves babies with abnormally small heads and partially developed brains. This is why the rapid spread of Zika virus in the Americas raises alarm.

The mysterious tropical virus is transmitted by mosquitoes. Travellers have already brought Zika to Texas, Hawaii and Illinois, though the virus doesn't seem to have infiltrated U.S. mosquitoes yet. But the United States, with its warm and humid regions, has all the right ingredients for an outbreak of the virus, says Peter Hotez, a paediatrician and microbiologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Scientists first collected Zika virus in 1947 from a monkey that was part of an infectious-disease study in the forests of southern Uganda. For decades, the virus affected monkeys and mosquitoes, infecting humans only rarely — and until 2007, never outside of Africa and Asia. In 2013, the virus was detected in French Polynesia. Then, two years later, in 2015, Zika infected nearly 1.3 million people in Brazil. Zika virus has now spread through 18 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Brazil is fighting the virus in different ways. The government has sent army soldiers on a mission to stop Zika. The soldiers have provided insect repellent to 400,000 pregnant women and distributed leaflets door to door in the fight against the epidemic.

Adapted from <https://www.sciencenews.org>

READING COMPREHENSION.

Add TRUE or FALSE and copy the evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. The Zika virus may kill the infected person.
2. The virus has already affected U.S. mosquitoes.
3. In 2015 in Brazil the virus infected more than 1.3 million people.
4. The Brazilian government has sent troops to fight Zika.

LEXICON. Find words or phrases in the text that mean the same as these given.

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|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. provokes | 3. eruption |
| 2. insignificant, unimportant | 4. combating |

PHONETICS.

1. Write a word from the text that includes the sound /ɔ:/ as in "port".
2. Is the "ed" in "developed" pronounced as /t/, /d/ or /ɪd/?
3. How is the "th" pronounced in "though", /θ/ or /ð/?
4. How is the "-s" pronounced in "leaflets", /s/, /z/ or /ɪz/?