

Scientific Magazine The Nature Highlights Cuba's Success in Fighting Zika Virus



Havana, August 22 (RHC)--In an article devoted to Cuba's fight against the Zika virus, the British scientific magazine *The Nature* says that the island's success in fighting the epidemic outbreak to Cuba's excellent health-care system and an extensive surveillance program for vector-borne diseases that has been in place for 35 years.

Experts quoted by the magazine argue also that one of the most effective measures introduced by Cuba to deal with the Zika virus was a heavy fine for people found to have mosquitoes breeding on their property.

Ileana Morales, director of science and technology in the Cuban Public Health Ministry, tells the prestigious scientific publication that when in 1981, Cuba saw the first outbreak of haemorrhagic dengue fever in the Americas, it turned that epidemiological event into an opportunity. Cuba sent medical workers to affected areas and began intensively spraying pesticides to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that carries the disease.

It also created a national reporting system, as well as a framework for cooperation between government agencies and public-education campaigns to encourage spraying and self-monitoring for mosquito bites, even among children, said Morales. Now, when another outbreak threatens, Cuban health authorities simply reinforce the surveillance system.

The Zika virus is especially insidious because most people who have it show either no symptoms or only common ones such as fevers, which could be attributed to other illnesses. Yet, with the exception of a three locally acquired cases, Cuba has managed to keep Zika out.

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