

Spain Reports First Case of Pregnancy Infected with Zika



Madrid, February 5 (RHC)-- A pregnant Spanish woman has been found to be carrying the Zika virus in the first such case to hit Europe. Spain's Health Ministry reported the case on Thursday, sending alarm throughout the continent, where all those tested positive for the virus so far have likewise caught it abroad, but none are pregnant.

"One of the patients diagnosed in (the northeastern region of) Catalonia is a pregnant woman, who showed symptoms after having traveled to Colombia," the ministry announced.

It added that the patient is one of the seven cases in Spain, all of whom are in good condition, and further downplayed fears of the spread of the virus, saying, "Up to now, the diagnosed cases of Zika virus in Spain ... don't risk spreading the virus in our country as they are imported cases."

The mosquito-borne virus has been associated with birth defects, given the coincidence of its outbreak in the Americas and a worrying rise in cases of microcephaly in the continent. The fetal deformation gives infants brains that are smaller than normal.

It has already been detected in over 20 countries particularly in the Caribbean, North, and South America. Brazil, which has reported over 400 cases of the defect since October last year -- up from 147 in 2014 -- has said it would send at least 220,000 troops across the country to conduct a 'house-to-house' operation for uprooting the virus.

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