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Ecuador : The Epidemics

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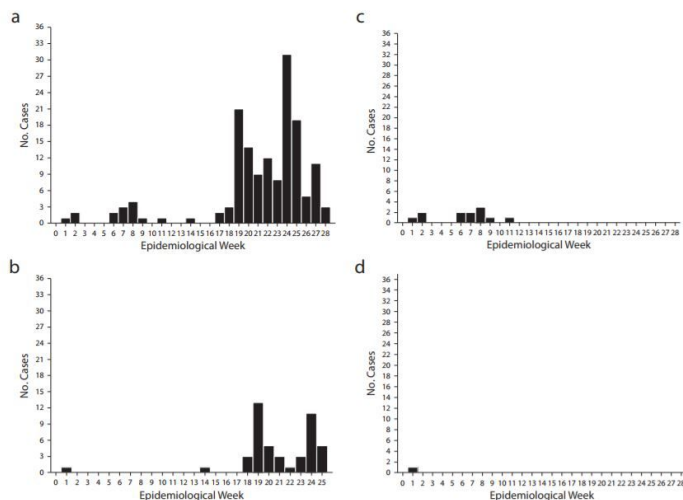
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Ecuador: The Epidemics

Ecuador is a country located in South Africa. Ecuador has a representative democracy as their government. With a representative democracy, they elect a group of officials to represent the population. The majority of the population is Spanish speaking. Within Ecuador’s population of 16.39 million people, there are Mestizos, Amerindians, and Afro-Ecuadorians. Even with all of the different ethnicities, the primary religion in Ecuador is Roman Catholic. Ecuador is challenged by the amount of epidemics in the country. Some of them are ZIKV, strokes, and rabies, however ZIKV seems to be the most prevalent.

The public health issue at hand is being able to handle the large amount of epidemics Ecuador has been facing over the years. Most recently, the Zika Virus has become more prevalent. The Zika Virus became an epidemic after the earthquake in April of 2016. According to the American Journal of Public Health (2017) approximately 2234 people were suspected of having the Zika Virus after the earthquake due to a rise in the mosquito population. More than half of the confirmed Zika virus cases were pregnant woman.

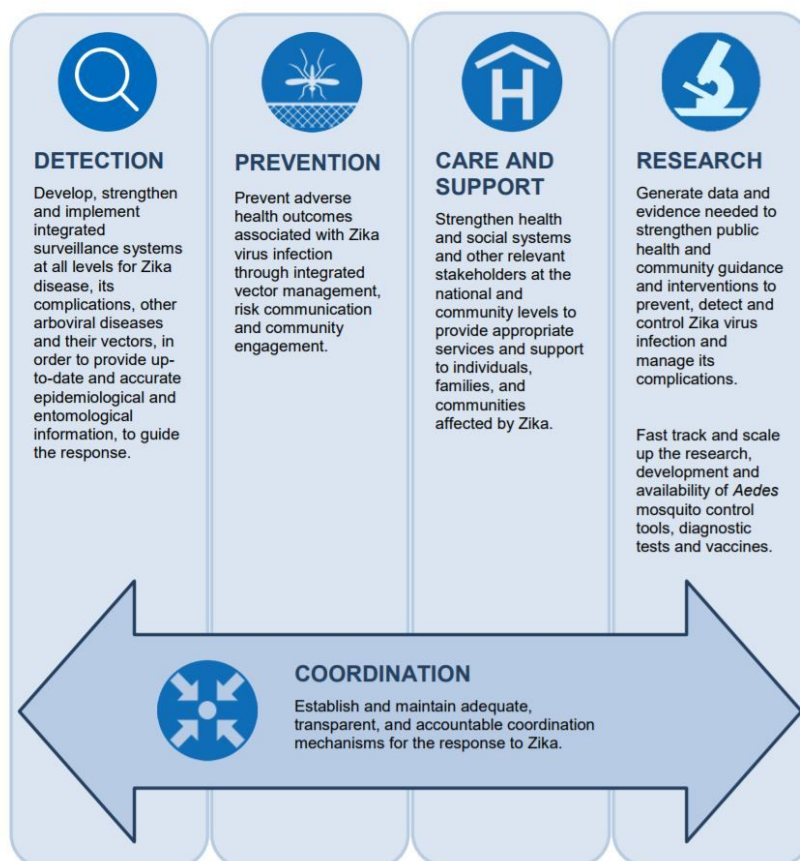


(photo from AJPH, 2017)

FIGURE 1.—Number of Confirmed Zika Virus Patients by Epidemiological Week Before and After the Earthquake for (a) All Cases in the Affected Area, (b) Pregnant Women in the Affected Area, (c) All Cases in the Control Area, and (d) Pregnant Women in the Control Area: Ecuador, January–July 2016

The Journal of Neuroimmunology stated that the Zika Virus is identified through similar symptoms of the flu. These symptoms could be anything from arthritis, low-grade fever, vomiting, or even hearing difficulties. One of the interventions that have been attempted was educating people on how the Zika virus can be transmitted through semen and that practicing safe sex is incredibly important in order to prevent a potential child from being born with birth defects. However, Zika can also be transmitted through saliva. Woman that are already pregnant have a risk of contracting the virus if their spouse or loved ones have it.

Since this virus is hard to contain, there are many challenges in addressing it. Not being able to terminate all Zika carrying mosquitos is a huge issue within addressing this epidemic. Also, not being able to reach everyone on how to take preventative measures and not having endless resources or treatment options.



(photo from WHO 2016)

My suggestion for addressing the Zika epidemic in Ecuador would be to work on raising more funds for research and funds for spray to repel and/or kill the mosquitos in the area. I would also suggest having an educational forum in the areas where the virus has affected the most people. This forum would have topics ranging from avoiding contracting Zika while pregnant, avoiding the virus during travel, and how to get tested for Zika. Having a disclosure agreement for people traveling into areas where they are at a higher risk for the Zika virus would be very beneficial. It would allow us to keep personal liberties intact while avoiding potential harm to those who have yet to be exposed.

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