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French Polynesia: Chikungunya virus and fever

About the Region:

The nation of French Polynesia was at first inhabited by only Polynesians, and then European settlers began arriving in the 16th century. The islands are now an official territory of France, and they have been since 1843. The nation is made up of 118 islands spread over an area about the size of Europe. Technically speaking, these islands are located halfway between Australia and California, in a place commonly referred to as "Oceania." The nation's capital city is the city of Papeete, Tahiti. The islands come together to form 3,827 square kilometers of area, and consist heavily of many mountain masses and a single barrier reef. The highest point in French Polynesia reaches approximately 7,352 feet. As of the nation's last poll in 2012, there was a population of around 268,270 people on all of the islands altogether, which are divided into sections of islands called archipelagos.



As for the primary languages spoken by these individuals, nearly 78% of the population speaks fluent Polynesian, followed next by 12% of people that prefer to use Chinese.

Next off, the nation's religion is much more divided than the nation's language gap, with 54% of people practicing Protestantism and then 30% practicing Roman Catholic beliefs. In the mid-20th century, French Polynesia's

economy benefited significantly from highly upgrading their transportation facilities as well as shipping. This caused the "ancient subsistence economy" to be replaced with modern economics of tourism revenue, military employment, fishing, and pearl farming. Therefore, most of the nation's natives are proud of where they come from, raising all of their own foods and growing crops to harvest as well. Traditional exports for the area, such as vanilla, have really decreased, causing economic disruption.

As for leadership in French Polynesia, the nation's last elected president was chosen in September of 2014 and still remains in charge to this day, his name is Edouard Fritch. As far as other veteran politicians from French Polynesia, a man named Gaston Flasse, recently was convicted in a corruption scandal and sentenced to four years in jail. As for who's really under control on the islands, they are completely ruled by France and its government still. The nation has continued to see extreme revenue loss, calling for a great demand of fishing to make all ends meet. Last of all, all five archipelagos of the nation have recently faced outbreaks of a mosquito-borne illness known as Chikungunya.



The At-Hand Issue:

Chikungunya outbreaks across the nation are spread by mosquitoes and mosquitoes only. All island natives

<https://sugarandcloth.com/our-honeymoon-part-1-guide-to-moorea-french-polynesia/>

<http://fijione.tv/15-cases-of-chikungunya-found-in-french-polynesia/>

that are bitten could very well be at risk or exposed to the virus. “Chikungunya virus (CHIKV) is an emerging arthropod-borne alphavirus of the family *Togaviridae*” (Nhan, 1). Therefore, this virus is simply only transmitted through mosquitoes, as well as the Zika Virus, which affected pregnant women in the U.S. at one point. If possibly exposed to Chikungunya, one should not scratch any bug bites, drink any untreated water, or take any Aspirin at all, because these factors definitely could make things worse.

With this, there is a list of symptoms to especially watch out for as well. “Dengue fever and yellow fever viruses have been re-emerging in many tropical areas since the 1980s” (Riou, 1). The condition can oftentimes be identified as looking like a ‘blotchy rash,’ that can even contain bleeding or bruising. If a fever or joint pain occurs as well, the sickness is very serious, and it should be looked into immediately. The rash that comes with the virus has no preventative vaccine to avoid it yet, but there is a self-treatment option involving paracetamol, fluids, and lots of rest. As long as the patient doesn’t attempt using Aspirin for pain or headaches, this

would likely work. If a fever and joint pain follow the rash, then avoid all stiffening of tender joints in the body, take gentle exercises to regain any lost strength, try to rest inside for over a week, usually while inside of a ‘bug net,’ and definitely do not continue to get bitten by any mosquitoes.

If anything, use nets and repellent sprays to void off mosquitoes. If it were up to me to come up with a solution regarding the Chikungunya outbreaks, I would most likely attempt to control the area’s extreme climate by first focusing on the extreme pollution levels. In French Polynesia, much harm is done to the quality of water treatments services, air quality, public exposed green areas, and proper disposal systems. This is because tests have come back positive, relating the transmission of the virus to the weather conditions of the area. This model test looked specifically at rates of precipitation. It said that areas or islands that received 1 centimeter more of rainfall per week on average than usual, have 10% lower reduction rate of transmission of Chikungunya. With these islands being in the middle of the ocean, humidity rates are very high but rainfall is not.

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