Zika Virus and Neurological Disease

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Zika virus has suddenly evolved into a global pandemic. It was first identified over 50 years ago in Africa and spread to various geographic areas of Asia, the Pacific Islands, and South America, especially Brazil¹, and it has been at the center of global attention. In Rio de Janeiro, a study prospectively enrolling 88 pregnant women stated that Zika virus infection during pregnancy seems to be associated with fetal death, placental insufficiency, fetal growth restriction, and central nervous system injury.² The outbreak of the virus in French Polynesia was followed by an increased number of central nervous system malformations.³ A case-control study conducted in French Polynesia involved 42 patients who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS); serological investigations confirmed that all patients had experienced Zika virus infection.⁴

The public consciousness, especially in high-income-countries, is currently alerted on this theme, but do at-risk populations really know how to prevent Zika virus? By asking—in the field—people who contracted the infection or those who traveled in at-risk countries, it seems that Zika virus, as well as its complications, is undervalued.

Efficient and effective interventions at the community level should encompass the following: (1) empowering vulnerable...
populations to be agents of their health, (2) strengthening inter-sectoral relationships, (3) understanding the culture and beliefs of the populations to build trust, and (4) integrating experts in the field for risk communication and community engagement working groups.

The main goal is to orient operational research funds as well as public interest toward prevention, which represents the key measure for controlling Zika virus infection.

In this scenario, the World Health Organization published an operational resource package, “Risk Communication and Community Engagement for Zika Virus Prevention and Control,” which proposed key messages (Box 1). The messages are based on preventive actions that are grouped according to each level of action so that they can be put into practice.

Now that scientific consensus that Zika virus is a cause of microcephaly and GBS has been reached, it is time to act. The virus is spreading uncontrollably across the world: since 2015, a total of 70 countries or territories have reported vector-borne Zika virus transmission, and at-risk countries need to be prepared to manage patients with neurological disorders. However, effective and joint strategies between all stakeholders worldwide focusing on prevention are most urgently required.

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Zika-Virus-Related Photo Sharing
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The publication of “Zika-Virus-Related Photo Sharing” on Pinterest and Instagram is very interesting. Fung et al concluded that “Pinterest and Instagram are similar platforms for Zika virus prevention communication.” In their study, Fung et al tried to search the photo record on Pinterest (San Francisco, CA) and Instagram (Menlo Park, CA).