



## Zika virus harmful to adult brains too new study finds

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<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G1QEwNcSbG14H4PhpBDIjjj04GbPiCh46B7IVuYv6mw/edit#>

As the Zika virus global health crisis continues to evolve, new data is suggesting that the virus attacks adult brain cells, not just children as previously thought.

A new study done by researchers from both the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Rockefeller University in New York, showed that because adult brains also contain immature cells (stem cells) in two regions: the subventricular zone of the anterior forebrain and the subgranular zone of the hippocampus, the virus may cause long term brain damage in adults.

The researchers published their findings in the journal "Cell" this month, which details their animal trials done on mice. Researchers said that because there is still a lot to learn about the long term effects of the Zika virus, it is unclear what type of effect the virus will have on adult brains. However, they expect that the damage may cause epilepsy, personality changes, depression and dementia.

The theory will require follow up studies over an extended period to confirm. The theory adds to the list of neurological conditions Zika is already responsible for, with others being: microcephaly, in children; and gillian barre syndrome in adults.

Health systems, regional and international organizations, and medical technologies companies all over the world have been exploring various options in response to the virus. Some have chosen to combat the virus by reducing the population of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which carries the virus.

In that regard, companies have produced genetically modified mosquitoes which in various means, sabotage the lifecycle of the mosquito so it does not reach the level of maturity needed to be able to spread the virus.

Others have taken on the role of trying to find a vaccine for the virus. Researchers in the United States are now seeking Federal approval to run “Human Challenge” testing, which entails intentionally infecting willing participants with the virus and then using them as a source for data collection, to develop a vaccine. Federal approval is still pending.

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