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# Risk Communication Plans Against Zika Virus

## Introduction

Risk communication is the sharing of ideas and knowledge between two parties about the nature, purpose and control of the risk. Risk communication in public health means the involvement of audience and responding to the question and concern as well as providing the important public health messages. Risk communication assists the public in making decision about the risk relieve measures and also helps in improving the public knowledge of potential and actual health threats.

The outbreak of Zika virus was first reported in the Africa and Asia in 2007. Later on, there was the large outbreak in pacific Island in between 2013 and 2015 and In America Zika virus is still ongoing. In the South Asian countries like Thailand and Indonesia, there is the evidence of cases of Zika virus have been presents at the low levels for several years. Below the paper will discuss about the risk communication plans against Zika virus.

## What it Zika virus and how is it transmitted?

Zika virus is the mosquito-borne flavivirus which is affected by the virus transmitted originally by the Aedes mosquitoes. This mosquito usually bites during the day time, mainly during early morning and late afternoon/ evening. The same mosquitoes can also cause the yellow fever, dengue and chikungunya. Zika virus can be transferred through mother to the fetus during the pregnancy resulting in microcephaly, through sexual contacts, transmission of blood and blood products, organ transplanted and has been also detected in semen, urine, amniotic fluid, saliva along with the body fluid found in brain and the spinal cord.

## What are Sign and Symptoms?

It normally takes 3 to 12 days to appear symptoms once the person is infected by the Zika virus. Person infected by Zika virus may feels symptoms similar to flu like, fever, skin rashes, muscles ach, and joint pain, headache especially back of the eyes, conjunctivitis, weakness and lack of energy. These symptoms just last for few days so must people undergo with mild infection without any difficulties. However, it is generally accepted that, Zika virus is transfer from mother to their unborn babies resulting in small head and brain size known as Microcephaly. Scientist has proved that, Zika virus can induce the paralysis condition called Guillain- Barre Syndrome, which can be also caused by other viruses and bacteria.

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## Who are Vulnerable Group?

The women infected by the Zika virus during pregnancy are associated with the birth defect and unsympathetic pregnancy outcomes, so we can say that the women during the pregnancy are highly considered as vulnerable population group with additional needs. Zika virus is the key cause for the complications during the pregnancy which leads to miscarriage, stillbirth, fetal birth and preterm birth.

## What are Social Factors?

Social factors as well as environmental factors contribute in upgrading the emergence of the Zika virus. For example abundant people are exposing to the high density of infected mosquito due to the social change during and after the natural disaster. In addition, due to the earthquake that struck the Manabí province in April 2016, leads to the destruction of infrastructure, contaminated the source of water and compelled people to leave outdoor resulting in increased local Zika virus transmission and also increases the rate of human contact with infected mosquitoes. Similarly, people living in the poor urban area with inadequate sanitation, water access and infrastructure are susceptible for Zika virus.

## How to protect, prevent and manage the panic?

The main solution for the prevention of Zika virus infection is to protect against the mosquito bite during the day and evening time, especially attention is given to pregnant women, women of reproductive age and young children. For the personal protection people should wear the clothes that cover the body part which is exposure to mosquito bite as much as they can and use of physical barrier such as closing the windows and door, apply the insect protector creams to skin. Young children should always sleep under the mosquito net if sleeping during the day and evening time. Aedes mosquito mostly breeds in the small collection of water around home, school, and worksite, so the water storage container should always be covered and the surrounding area always need to keep clean and smells free. People should be updated with the information regularly to encourage the individual consistent of behavioral change and reduce the chance of confusion and panic.

## Who are the stakeholders and how to coordinate and communicate with communities?

Community leaders and members and the school leader play an important role. The information about the Zika virus can be provided through the town hall meeting, radio broadcasting, and

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community program. For example we can organize the community program and make people aware about the Zika virus through some activities like dramas. People lives with the different ethnicity and religion so need to be communicate with the referred language through popular TV channels, public survey, social networking sites press conference. Organized the health camp and laboratory testing facility near the community area with free of cost so that people would actively participate and grab some knowledge. Trust should be built between the communicator and the advisor. There should be the transparency that means the candid should easily understand and get the points what the health advisor is addressing about.

Potential PitfallsThe promises that are beyond the reach may results in the collapse and damage due to the poor risk communication and reflect the unfairness like unequal distribution of information, resources and medicines. The usual mistakes that could be done by the health worker and services are they reached to the destination at the end of an outbreak unprepared and uninformed, which results in reducing the trust. This may results in the possible release of the patient's identity and may leads to discrimination, stigmatization and humiliation to the community members.

## Conclusion

The main aim of risk communication is to addresses the detail knowledge, ideas, possible outcomes and remedies to the public about an outbreak of the different communicable, infectious and epidemic disease. There should be the understanding, transparency and trust between both the public and the health workers or advisors. Planning for the risk communication is not only the main concern but also should be aware about the possible drawbacks along with reliable backup plans.

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