

# ZIKA: *Impacts*



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## Impacts of Zika Virus

The public health and economic implications of the ZIKV vector, *Aedes aegypti* and its associated complications are of great concern to the Caribbean government. The threat negatively affects the tourism sector on which many countries are dependent, and the financial stability of the region.

### Health Sector

The burden of the disease on the health sector adversely affects the financial stability of the region. The cost of care in instances of ZIKV infection, as well as long term care of babies with microcephaly or other special needs, which require prolonged medical and psychological care, incur large costs. The management and treatment of patients with GBS is very costly especially when they require admission to Intensive Care Units. Some CMS do not have sufficient ICU beds nor the medication or specialists to manage these cases. Additionally, there is the impact on workforce productivity which will decline with an increased disease burden.

The overall cost of the Zika epidemic includes the cost of direct care and treatment. The cost of care in instances of Zika virus infection as well as cases of microcephaly, which requires prolonged medical and psychological care, incurs large costs.

### Economy Implications

There is also the impact on workforce productivity which will decline with an increased disease burden. and the cost of lost revenue and productivity.

The economic implications of ZIKV and its associated complications are of great concern in the Caribbean region. The region consists of small island developing states, many of which are dependent on tourism for economic growth and thus extremely vulnerable to health threats. The threat of ZIKV in the region negatively affected the tourism sector. As travel advisories were issued, tourists became wary of contracting the disease and were less likely to travel to the region. The reduction of tourists diminishes the anticipated generation of revenue.

Zika, is found throughout the tropical world, including the Caribbean. The vector is not found in the United Kingdom (UK). However, 296 cases of ZIKV cases have been confirmed in the UK.<sup>1</sup> Most cases have been transmitted via travel to countries where the disease vector is present. Of the 296 cases reported, 295 were travel associated and 1 case was sexually transmitted.<sup>1</sup> The regions of travel associated with transmitted cases in the UK include; the Caribbean, Central America and South America to name a few. Approximately 72.9% of cases reported travelled to the Caribbean. The monthly incidence of travellers returning to the UK with ZIKV mirrored the pattern observed by CARPHA, with peak in the summer then rapid decline in the latter part of the year.

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/zika-virus-epidemiology-and-cases-diagnosed-in-the-uk/zika-virus-epidemiology-and-cases-diagnosed-in-the-uk> (23/03/2017)