

Chile reports first case of sexually transmitted Zika

26 March 2016

Authorities Saturday reported the first sexually transmitted case of Zika in mainland Chile, where there is no known presence of the mosquito generally blamed for passing on the virus suspected of causing birth defects.

The Health Ministry said a 46-year-old woman contracted the virus from a man who had become infected in Haiti.

"This is the first documented case of Zika virus through sexual transmission in mainland Chile, where there is no presence of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that transmits the disease," the ministry said in a statement.

"To date, we have confirmed 10 cases of Zika contracted abroad and reported in the country, including eight in 2016."

In early March, Chile reported the first imported case of Zika in a pregnant woman whose son was born healthy.

While not present in mainland Chile, the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito has been detected on remote Easter Island in the Pacific.

Zika, which has been spreading through Latin America, has been linked to microcephaly in babies born to mothers infected while pregnant.

Microcephaly is a serious birth defect that leaves babies with small heads and incomplete brain development.

The World Health Organization has declared an international health emergency over the apparent link.

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