

New Survey on American Attitudes toward Zika Virus Finds Limited Awareness or Concern

Those aware of the virus are generally informed about how Zika is spread, but many lack information about the availability or unavailability of treatments and vaccines and options to test for the virus.

April 7, 2016, Chicago—A recent survey by [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#) finds that three-quarters of Americans who have heard at least a little about the Zika virus are aware that the virus is linked to birth defects in babies born to infected mothers. However, the survey found that most Americans are unclear about the availability of tests to diagnose Zika and whether or not preventative vaccines and effective medicines exist to treat it.

In February 2016, The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) both took steps to alert the public about the danger of the Zika virus. As of March 30, the CDC has reported 312 cases of the Zika virus in the United States and heightened its efforts in response to Zika and the cases of microcephaly and other neurological disorders associated with the virus.

“The Zika virus has the potential to become a critical problem in the United States. This survey shows that there is more work to be done to raise awareness among the public,” said [Trevor Tompson](#), director of The AP-NORC Center. “When it comes to responding to this public health threat, the results do show that the public is supportive of policy approaches designed to prevent the spread of Zika in the United States.”

Key Findings Include:

- Four in 10 Americans have heard only a little or nothing at all about the Zika virus.
- Ninety percent of those who have heard of Zika know that it can be spread through the bite of a mosquito carrying the virus; however, only 57 percent are aware that Zika can be spread through sexual intercourse with an infected person.
- Despite the ongoing Zika outbreak in Brazil, only a quarter of Americans believe that American athletes should withdraw from the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

“As the Zika virus unfolds, it will be critically important to communicate effective prevention strategies to Americans,” said [Caitlin Oppenheimer](#), senior vice president and director of public health at NORC at the University of Chicago. “This survey and other measures will help build understanding of Zika and identify areas requiring additional communication efforts.”

Survey Methodology

Interviews for this survey were conducted between March 17 and 21, 2016, with adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from

[AmeriSpeak®](#), and with 1,004 completing the survey—785 via the web and 219 via telephone. The final stage completion rate is 29.2 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 36.9 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 93.9 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 10.1 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

About the Survey

The nationwide poll of 1,004 adults used [AmeriSpeak](#), the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Interviews were conducted between March 17 and 21, 2016, online and using landlines and cell phones.

About The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

www.apnorc.org

The Associated Press (AP) is the essential global news network, delivering fast, unbiased news from every corner of the world to all media platforms and formats. Founded in 1846, AP today is the most trusted source of independent news and information. On any given day, more than half the world's population sees news from AP.

www.ap.org

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge.

www.norc.org

The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

About AmeriSpeak Omnibus

AmeriSpeak Omnibus is a once-a-month, multi-client survey using a probability sample of at least 1,000 nationally representative adults age 18 and older. Respondents are interviewed online and by phone from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel—the most scientifically rigorous multi-client household panel in the United States. AmeriSpeak households are selected randomly from NORC's National Sample Frame, the industry leader in sample coverage. The National Frame is representative of over 99 percent of U.S. households and includes additional coverage of hard-to-survey population segments, such as rural and low-income households, that are underrepresented in other sample frames. More information about AmeriSpeak is available at AmeriSpeak.org.

###

Contact: For more information, contact Eric Young for NORC at young-eric@norc.org or (703) 217-6814

(cell); Ray Boyer for NORC at boyer-ray@norc.org or (312) 330-6433; or Paul Colford for AP at pcolford@ap.org.