

Chikungunya Virus Threatens the Americas, says Cuban expert



Havana, May 28 (RHC) — Latin America is now exposed to a new disease known as Chikungunya virus, as many countries of the region are reporting cases of the virus, which is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, said doctor Lilia Ortega, head of the intensive care unit at Havana's Pedro Kouri Tropical Medicine Institute.

The virus causes high fever and pains in the articulations, headache, tiredness and skin rash, and it might be wrongly taken for Dengue fever do to the similarity of their clinical symptoms, said the specialist as quoted by Prensa Latina news agency.

Cuba has not yet reported any case, said the doctor, although she alerted that the carrier of the virus is present on the island, where health authorities maintain epidemiological an alert and update protocols to face any possible Chikungunya outbreak.

Most patients suffering from the virus may completely recover, some could be affected without noticed, but some others could suffer from pains in their articulations for a long time, she noted.

Chikungunya virus is detected through blood and molecular biology tests, though the clinical check up is the first thing to do. There is not specific treatment for the disease, it all focuses on dealing with the symptoms, like relieving pain in articulations through analgesic drugs, the most important element is reducing and eliminating mosquito breeding sites in water deposits.

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