

Viruses that force alliances

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By Roberto Morejon

Cuba has taken precautions to face the rapid spread and traces left by new viruses in the world, some of which inevitably reach the country, so it is advocating international alliances.

This is evident from the sessions of an international course on dengue and other emerging arboviruses, as experts call them, held in Havana.

To clarify, arboviruses are viruses transmitted by arthropods, especially insects, to humans or other vertebrates.

The Cuban Minister of Public Health, José Ángel Portal Miranda, in a timely intervention, highlighted the political will of the State to prepare the system of care for the population against future epidemics unleashed by arboviruses.

At the forefront of this organization, groups of national experts in the management of dengue and arboviruses have emerged from the prestigious Pedro Kouri Institute, committed to exchanging with colleagues on mutual progress.

The training and exchange of experiences in the above-mentioned course are valuable at a time when arboviruses such as Zika and Chikungunya are circulating in the world, and the latest one, Oropouche, is spreading.

As of August 1, more than 8,000 cases and two deaths have been reported in five countries in the Americas: Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, and Cuba.

The largest of the Antilles recorded the presence of the Oropouche virus in all provinces, with more than 400 confirmed cases.

As for dengue, official figures showed that 2023 was catalogued as the most reported worldwide, with more than 4.5 million cases in the Americas alone.

Nothing could be more urgent than for scientists, physicians, and other experts to update and discuss the epidemiological situation and progress in the understanding, prevention, and control of dengue and other arboviruses.

Despite Cuba's economic difficulties, mainly due to the U.S. blockade and its inclusion on an arbitrary list of state sponsors of terrorism, this Caribbean archipelago is promoting the exchange of experts on health challenges.

Minister Portal Miranda emphasized the need for alliances, especially against dengue fever, which is on the rise, although the growing threat of oropouche, a little-known virus for which there are currently no vaccines or medicines, is not being minimized.

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