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Contact: Michael Rozansky | mrozansky@asc.upenn.edu | 215.746.0202

Nearly 6 in 10 Americans say Brazil Olympics should be cancelled, postponed or moved because of Zika

PHILADELPHIA – As some athletes announce that they are [pulling out](#) or [considering](#) pulling out of the summer Olympic Games in Brazil because of concerns about Zika virus, most Americans favor the idea that the Games should be cancelled, postponed or moved to another country. In addition, with much of the United States experiencing mosquito season, few Americans are aware of the [guidelines](#) issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on properly choosing and applying insect repellent as a way to prevent mosquito bites.

The findings are part of a survey of 1,023 U.S. adults conducted June 2-6 by the [Annenberg Public Policy Center](#) (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania.

In the survey, 59 percent of respondents said their view was more closely represented by the statement that because of Zika virus in Brazil, the Summer Olympics scheduled to take place there in August should be cancelled, postponed or moved to another country. Just over one-third of respondents (36 percent) said that the statement “the games should go on as scheduled” was closer to their view.

More than 200 health experts have called upon the World Health Organization (WHO) to press the International Olympic Committee to delay or move the Games. A WHO panel will [meet next week](#) to review the evidence on Zika and concerns over the Olympics, according to Reuters.

Many ill-informed about insect repellent use

Summer officially doesn't arrive until June 20, but much of the United States is already experiencing mosquito season. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which has an estimated range across the southern United States from coast to coast, is the primary transmitter of Zika. Applying insect repellent is a [key recommendation](#) from the CDC as a way to prevent mosquito bites. But most Americans are unaware of the ways to choose a proper repellent or how to properly apply it. The CDC recommends choosing an insect repellent that is EPA registered and has at least [20 percent DEET](#).

Asked what comes closest to the CDC's recommendations on insect repellents:

- Four in 10 (40 percent) people correctly say that the CDC recommends using an [EPA-registered](#) insect repellent.
- Nearly as many (35 percent) incorrectly say that the CDC recommends using an insect repellent with more than 50 percent DEET. (The effectiveness of DEET plateaus at 50 percent, the CDC says).

- 17 percent incorrectly say that looking for a repellent that says it is “natural” comes closest to the CDC’s recommendation. (The CDC says the effectiveness of repellents that are not registered with the EPA, including some natural repellents, is not known.)

Using insect repellent and sunscreen – which goes on first?

In the survey, respondents were also asked several questions about what comes closest to the CDC’s recommendations on using insect repellent together with sunscreen. (For exact wording and results, see the Appendix.)

- 36 percent correctly said the CDC recommends that people should [put on sunscreen first](#), let it dry, and then apply insect repellent. But 26 percent incorrectly responded that they thought the CDC said it doesn’t matter which you put on first, and 10 percent incorrectly said repellent first.
- 13 percent correctly said that the CDC recommends not applying insect repellent under their clothing. But 37 percent incorrectly said the CDC recommends putting repellent on their bodies first and then put clothes on over the areas covered by repellent, and 45 percent incorrectly said the CDC’s advice is that it doesn’t matter whether you put on repellent under your clothing or not, but you should use repellent if you are in an area with mosquitoes.

Finally, most people (84 percent) are aware that the CDC recommends that insect repellent should not be [used on infants](#) younger than two months old, but rather the infants should be dressed in clothing that covers their arms and legs, and mosquito netting should be draped over cribs, strollers and carriers.

The phone survey of 1,023 U.S. adults was conducted June 2-June 6 for APPC by the research firm [SSRS](#). It has a margin of error of +/-3.7 percentage points. It is one in a weekly series of Annenberg Science Knowledge (ASK) surveys conducted since February by APPC on public knowledge about the Zika virus, changes in public behavior because of Zika, and support for public policies on Zika.

For more on the questions and data, see the [Appendix](#). More on the policy center’s ASK surveys can be found [here](#). Recent news releases on Zika include:

[Majority Agree With Idea of a Presidential Public Health Emergency Fund](#) (June 2, 2016)

[Few Report Taking Steps to Protect Themselves Against Zika](#) (May 26, 2016)

[A Majority of People Say They Would Get a Zika Vaccine If It Were Available](#) (May 12, 2016)

The [Annenberg Public Policy Center](#) was established in 1994 to educate the public and policy makers about the media’s role in advancing public understanding of political and health issues. APPC’s [FactCheck.org](#) is a nonpartisan consumer advocate for voters, and its [SciCheck](#) feature investigates false or misleading scientific claims made to influence public policy. Its latest post on Zika is [What Zika Means for Americans](#).