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## Who does the public think is most at risk from Zika?

PHILADELPHIA – A majority of Americans say that pregnant women or infants born to women who had Zika during pregnancy are the ones scientists think are most likely to suffer severe health effects from Zika virus, according to a new survey from the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania.

The Annenberg Science Knowledge (ASK) survey of 1,017 U.S. adults was conducted March 31-April 4. The survey asked the respondents who, according to scientists, will be most likely to have severe health effects if infected with Zika.

After hearing a list of groups that might suffer such effects from Zika, more respondents identified infants born to women who had Zika virus while pregnant (32 percent) and pregnant women (26 percent). Those groups were followed by everyone (18 percent); adults with existing health conditions that affect the immune system like HIV (12 percent); and men who have Zika but do not show symptoms (2 percent).

“Based on current knowledge, the greatest risk for complications from Zika is to a pregnant woman’s fetus,” [according to](#) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). “If a pregnant woman is infected with Zika, she can pass the virus to her fetus. Zika has been linked to cases of microcephaly, a serious birth defect, and is a sign that the baby is born with a smaller brain, which can result in medical problems and impaired development.” The nature of that link is still under investigation.

In the ASK survey, 79 percent of respondents correctly said that scientists think it’s likely that Zika can be transmitted by being bitten by mosquito that has already bitten someone who has Zika. Zika is primarily transmitted by mosquitoes. Sixty percent correctly said scientists think that Zika can be transmitted through sexual intercourse with a man who has Zika. In addition, 74 percent said it was accurate to say that a pregnant woman infected with Zika is more likely to have a baby with an unusually small head and brain.

The Zika outbreak was reported last year in Brazil and has spread through Latin America. As of April 6, there were 346 travel-reported cases of Zika in the United States, though no locally transmitted cases, the [CDC reported](#). Of those 346, 32 were pregnant women and seven were sexually transmitted. The CDC has said that women who are pregnant should [not travel](#) to areas with Zika.

The ASK survey is the eighth in a series on Zika virus and its health, policy and behavioral implications. The phone survey was conducted for APPC by the research firm [SSRS](#) among 1,017 U.S. adults and has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.7$  percent. To see questions and data click [here](#).

Other recent APPC surveys on Zika include:

[Only One of These Mosquitoes Bites. Which Is It?](#) (March 31, 2016)

[Just Over Half of the U.S. Public Favors Using GM Mosquitoes to Fight Zika](#) (March 24, 2016)

[Nearly 2/3 of Americans Claim ‘Poor’ or ‘Fair’ Understanding of GMOs](#) (March 18, 2016)

[More than 4 in 10 Mistakenly Think Zika Is Fatal, Symptoms Are Noticeable](#) (March 10, 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. It has written about Zika here ([The Facts About Zika](#)) and here ([GMOs Didn’t Cause Zika Outbreak](#)).