

1. Introduction

1.1 Zika virus disease

Zika virus disease is an emerging viral disease caused by Zika virus. This virus was first identified in Uganda in 1947. Since 2015, Zika virus disease continues to spread globally. World Health Organization declared Zika virus disease to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on 1st February, 2016, based on the temporal association of Zika virus infection with Microcephaly [(a condition where newborn babies head is much smaller than expected) and other neurological syndromes (Guillain Barre Syndrome). Fact Sheet on Zika virus disease is placed at **Annexure-I**.

From 2015 onwards, the geographical range of Zika virus has expanded rapidly with mosquito-borne transmission of the virus reported in 67 countries (as on 12th August, 2016) in the Americas region but more recently spreading to countries in Africa and Asia. Countries in the Western Pacific (e.g. Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam) and South –East Asia Regions (e.g. Thailand) are reporting new Zika cases.

In addition, since February 2016, 11 countries have reported evidence of person-to-person transmission of Zika virus, probably via a sexual route. 15 countries or territories have reported microcephaly and other central nervous system (CNS) malformations potentially associated with Zika virus infection. Also, till now 16 countries and territories worldwide have reported an increased incidence of Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) and/or laboratory confirmation of a Zika virus infection among GBS cases.

1.2 Risk Assessment

Zika virus disease has the potential for further international spread given the wide geographical distribution of the mosquito vector, a lack of immunity among population in newly affected areas and the high volume of international travel.

As of now, the disease has not been reported in India. However, the mosquito which transmits Zika virus, namely *Aedes aegypti*, also transmits Dengue and Chikungunya virus. It is widely prevalent in India.

A majority of those infected with Zika virus disease either remain asymptomatic (up to 80%) or show mild symptoms of fever, rash, conjunctivitis, body ache, joint pains etc. Based on the available information of previous outbreaks, severe forms of disease requiring hospitalization are uncommon and fatalities are rare.

However, if the disease becomes endemic in India, there could be possibility of a cohort of persons with microcephaly and/ or other neurological disorders that would require long term rehabilitation/ psychosocial care.

1.3 Purpose of document

A series of actions need to be put in place to mitigate the epidemic of Zika virus disease. The strategy would depend upon the efficiency with which the virus is transmitted among our community. The purpose of this document is to provide action plan for early detection of human cluster of Zika virus disease, appropriate case management and to institute public health measures that would ensure containment / control of the outbreak.

The action plan also delineates actions that need to be taken if the disease becomes endemic in India