
Another Brazilian Dies from Yellow Fever and Foreigners Are Told to Get Vaccine

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Foreign travelers to Brazil who intend to visit rural and forested areas are being advised by the WHO (World Health Organization) to get yellow fever vaccination. Three quarters of Brazil are located in these areas. Yellow fever is a viral disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes

A Brazilian patient who was in a list of 17 people being investigated for yellow fever by Brazil's Health Ministry died Monday night, January 14, in Brazilian capital Brasília.

From 26 suspected cases of yellow fever in the whole country, six were ruled out and three cases have now been confirmed. From these, two have died and one is in recovery.

Three health agents' teams have started today to reinforce vaccination against the disease in the rural areas of the Federal District.

A 44-year-old man admitted to a hospital in Taguatinga, 20 kilometers from downtown Brasília is another suspect case. The man is in serious condition being kept alive with hemodialysis and a respirator. He wasn't vaccinated against the disease and had spent the New Year's celebration in a ranch in Abadiânia, Goiás state.

All cases of yellow fever that were confirmed or just suspicious were of the wild kind, meaning that the infection occurred in rural areas and not in the city where yellow fever is supposed to have disappeared since 1942.

In Cascavel, in the southern state of Paraná, 140 health agents have been looking for mosquito focuses in the city's Zoo since 10 monkeys died there. The place has been closed to the public.

Reassurance

Brazil faces no risk of a yellow fever epidemic, despite an outbreak of the disease, Health Minister, José Gomes Temporão said this last weekend. However the health ministry asked a Rio-based foundation to double production of a yellow fever vaccine from 15 million to 30 million doses in 2008.

"The situation is absolutely under control," Temporão told the Brazilian population. "There is no need for mass

vaccination, no epidemic. What we're doing is adequate."

Neighboring Uruguay and Paraguay have declared a state of emergency in border areas while Argentina faces a growing demand for vaccines given the significant influx of tourists planning to spend their holidays along the Brazilian coast.

The death of a visiting Spaniard who purchased land in Goiás, is believed to have been caused by the disease according to the symptoms.

The minister underlined that Brazil has no registered cases of urban contagion since 1942 and all later outbreaks have occurred in rural risk areas and among people not vaccinated. Temporão recommended that Brazilians traveling to rural areas be vaccinated ten days in advance and pointed out that no cases have been reported for years along the country's long coastline.

The vaccine immunity lasts ten years therefore those who were vaccinated before 1999 should have a repeat.

According to the Brazilian Health ministry in January 3.23 million doses were distributed, three times the 961.000 average of 2007. However Temporão indicated that the number of cases has been "gradually" falling since 2003.

While yellow fever has been largely eradicated, Brazil was last year wracked by a wave of dengue fever that spread across Latin America and the Caribbean. Some 438,949 cases and 98 deaths were reported in the first seven months of 2007 in Brazil alone.

Bzz/MP