

## PRESS CLIPPING SHEET

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### *View*

#### Will Zika become a national problem?

**WITH** the approach of summer and the likely fanning out of mosquitoes across the country, has the Ministry of Health and Population prepared a plan to face this problem nationwide ?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently announced that Zika virus infections may increase dramatically in the forthcoming months in areas where it had not previously been found, especially in Europe.

And, according to the Assistant Director General of the organisation, Marie-Paule Kieny, Egypt could also experience an increase in infections.

What precautions did the Ministry take to combat the original onset of the problem?

Dr Ahmed Emad, the Minister of Health, said last February that the Zika virus had been found in only two governorates: Assiut and el-Minya.

And the Health Directorate of the Ministry of Health in el-Minya has recently drawn up a plan to counter the spread of mosquitoes and the diseases they carry, especially Zika, during the summer months.

The plan is based on three components. The first is concerned with prevention through holding meetings with hospital doctors on identification of the disease. The meetings will cover how to diagnose the disease as well as discover its route of transmission. In addition, there will be constant communication with hospitals to monitor admissions of patients showing symptoms of the disease. The second component of the plan is based on paying more attention to the environment by removing garbage and spraying ponds and swamps with pesticides. And the third component is the eradication of mosquitoes by spraying their breeding sites daily.

• Zika infections have not been found in the major governorates of, for example, Cairo, Giza and Alexandria, but these cities are by no means immune to the spread of the disease. The big risk to their residents is represented in the ubiquitous piles of garbage they contain.

Surely, it would be good to apply the preventive measures used against mosquitoes in el-Minya to Cairo, Giza, Alexandria and the rest of the country in the interest of combating not only Zika, but other diseases as well.

**Amina**