

## Panama to use GM mosquitoes to battle deadly dengue

[Two weeks ago](#), Panama declared a dengue outbreak, that up to that point, had affected more than 3,100 people and killed several individuals.

In response to the outbreak, the Panama Health Ministry announced they are turning to “transgenic”, or genetically modified (GM) mosquitoes in an attempt to get the epidemic under control, according to an AFP report Jan. 14.

According to the Abingdon, UK company, Oxitec, who produces GM *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes:

Oxitec uses advanced genetics to insert a lethal gene into its mosquitoes. The gene is passed on to the modified insect’s offspring, so when Oxitec mosquitoes are released into the wild and mate with wild females their offspring inherit the lethality trait. The resulting offspring will die before reaching adulthood and the local mosquito population will decline.

This method of “mosquito control” has shown some promising results in the past. In field tests conducted in Juazeiro, Brazil, the engineered insects shrank the *A. aegypti* population in an 11-hectare area by 85% over one year.

Panama Health Ministry director Carlos Galvez told the AFP that the GM mosquitoes are not a danger to humans because they do not feed on blood, but rather on fruit.

**Read the full, original article:** [Panama Will Use Genetically Modified Mosquitoes In Their Battle With Dengue](#)