

GM mosquitoes can control mosquito menace, if politics doesn't block development

Mosquito-borne diseases kill millions of people annually, and cause suffering for many more. It takes only one bite from a disease-carrying mosquito to transmit a debilitating or deadly infection – and mosquitoes breed and multiply with astonishing speed.

The good news is that a promising new technology is ready for field-testing. It is now up to government agencies to facilitate its development. When it comes to genetic engineering, however, science seems to matter less than politics.

Male mosquitoes are bred in the laboratory with a specific genetic mutation. As a result, their offspring produce high levels of a protein that prevents their cells from functioning normally, causing them to die before reaching maturity. Male mosquitoes do not bite, so their release presents no health risk, and, because their progeny die, no genetically engineered mosquitoes persist in the environment.

Given the degree of suffering caused by mosquito-borne diseases, government leaders must not subject genetic-engineering solutions for controlling them to the same kinds of political and populist headwinds that have impeded the approval of genetically engineered agricultural products. Only with pragmatic, fact-based regulation can the world realize genetic engineering's full disease-fighting potential.

Read the full, original article: [The Mosquito Menace](#)