

Brazilian state bans pesticide following conspiracy theory linking Monsanto to microcephaly

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

You may have seen the theory that the increase in microcephaly in South America is caused not by the Zika virus, but by a pesticide called pyriproxyfen that officials have been putting into water to kill mosquitoes.

This [theory](#) has been circulating in a number of conspiracy-happy publications — often along with the claim that the pesticide is made by Monsanto — and getting lots of play on social media (also conspiracy-happy). But now the theory has a more significant backer: The Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul has suspended use of the pesticide in drinking water. “Although we have no indication that the larvicide has a link with microcephaly cases, it is also true that we do not have any strong evidence that it has no links,” the state’s health secretary, João Gabbardo Dos Reis, [told the *Wall Street Journal*](#).

A reasonable person might ask, why? Intuitively, from afar, it makes a lot of sense to stop using this pesticide until we figure out what’s going on. After all, we’re not totally sure that Zika is causing the microcephaly yet. So why not just err on the side of caution?

Because “caution” — in this case, not using the pesticide — is more likely to cause more harm than the alternative. Less pesticide means more mosquitoes and more mosquito-born diseases.

Read full, original post: [A bogus theory connecting Zika to Monsanto could give mosquitoes a boost](#)