

## Zika, pesticides, microcephaly shrouded in misinformed hysteria

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

I recently published an [article](#) on reports by the Argentine doctors' group, Physicians in the Crop-Sprayed Towns, and the Brazilian public health researchers' group [Abrasco](#), which raised the issue of the potential role of the larvicide pyriproxyfen in the apparent surge in babies born with birth defects involving abnormally small heads (microcephaly).

Pyriproxyfen is added to drinking water stored in open containers to interfere with the development of disease-carrying mosquitoes, thus killing or disabling them.

*The Ecologist* published a version of my [article](#) which, together with the original publication on GMWatch, quickly went viral, triggering a lot more media coverage.

This in turn met with a furious backlash involving what has seemed at times like a 'shouting brigade' condemning anyone who thinks the Argentine report worth taking seriously.

Yet at times this chorus of condemnation has been extraordinarily hypocritical, condemning the Argentine doctors as enemies of fact and accuracy while getting the most basic of facts wrong about what the doctors are actually suggesting.

Take, for instance, the Washington Post food columnist, Tamar Haspel. Haspel [tweeted](#): "No, GMOs and pesticides aren't the Zika culprits. Could we evaluate groups by how often they spread fact-free theories? A cred rating."

Andrew Noymer, a social epidemiologist at the University of California, Irvine, [replied](#): "Pesticide is not Zika culprit but it hasn't been definitively ruled out as birth defect culprit. Got it? Good."

In response to Noymer's challenge, Haspel claimed that she was just using Zika as Twitter "shorthand" for microcephaly! Noymer [retorted](#), "Well then you're just misinformed."

**Read full, original post:** [Zika, microcephaly, and pesticides: half-truths, hysteria, and vested interests](#)