

GM mosquitoes may be only option for controlling Zika, other viruses

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Genetically modified mosquitoes are in the news for good reason: They may be our best hope for controlling the mosquito-borne Zika virus. The Food and Drug Administration has issued a preliminary finding of no significant environmental impact and is seeking public comment on a plan to test them in a field trial in the Florida Keys.

So you might think this will resolve the Zika crisis, which has caught the world's attention because of an unexpected spike in [microcephaly](#) in babies born to women infected during [pregnancy](#) and in the incidence of the paralytic Guillain-Barré syndrome in Zika-infected adults.

You'd be wrong. People are apprehensive about the release of these mosquitoes simply because they are genetically modified. And the company that produces them must traverse a time-consuming federal regulatory process before they can be released in the United States.

This is unfortunate, because biological insect control can eradicate pests over large areas. This is what these genetically modified mosquitoes are intended to do to Zika-virus-carrying mosquitoes.

Mosquito-control efforts rely on insecticides and eliminating mosquito breeding places. But despite a relatively successful [hemisphere-wide effort](#) beginning in the 1940s, mosquitoes have [roared back](#), becoming difficult to control because of growing resistance to insecticides.

Diseases carried by mosquitoes that were once relatively well controlled are [re-emerging](#) along with newer ones, including the West Nile and Zika viruses.

**Read full, original post:** [Mosquito vs. Mosquito in the Battle Over the Zika Virus](#)