Are You Sicka Zika? Sorry, 50 US Cities Could See It

By Josh Bloom — March 17, 2016

Regular followers of our site might think that a more appropriate name for us might be the American Council on Zika and Zika, since we have covered this potential epidemic since the very beginning, and often since then.

We would rather not have to but important news continues to surface, often several times each week. Worse still, it has all been bad.

But, perhaps not this bad.

A new modeling study predicted that this summer, atmospheric conditions may be favorable for the Aedes aegypti mosquito to inhabit 50 cities in the United States, starting in June. The cities studied comprise a wider geographical area than previous models. The map below is self-explanatory:
The study’s lead author Andrew J. Monaghan acknowledges that, as in all modeling studies, there are limitations in predictive power. Some of these include:

- The forecast is for any warm summer, not specifically 2016
- Competition with other species could affect the Aedes population
- So could eradication efforts
- Some cities not predicted to become inhabited could anyhow, given a variation in the local climate in a given summer

Source: *PLOS Outbreaks* [2]

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The opposite could be true; even though the mosquitoes may survive, their eggs may not hatch in borderline climates.

So far, the Aedes aegypti species exists only in warm climates, however, its relative, Aedes albopictus, which can also be able to carry the virus, can tolerate cooler temperatures. And, of course, all of this goes out the window if the ubiquitous Culex family is able to transmit the infection as well. So far, infection of Culex has only occurred in a lab. We encourage it to stay there.

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