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The importation of the Phylogenetic-transition state of Zika virus to China in 2014

Binghui Wang, Yuebo Liang, Yunnan Lu, Li Zhang, Yaping Li, Yuzhu Song, Chengfeng Qin, Zhongxin Luo, Zhiqing Xia, Weihong Qin, Xueshan Xia



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1 The importation of the Phylogenetic-transition state of Zika virus to China in 2014

2 Dear editor:

3 We read with interest about the article published by Sun J. et al. in your journal.

4 ¹ They found 19 Zika virus (abbreviated to 'ZIKV') infected cases in Guangdong, China
5 were imported from America (From February 12 to September 16, 2016), and
6 inferred it may increase the risk of ZIKV local transmission. That is an exactly alarming
7 issue. However, we suspected ZIKV has been introduced into China before this time
8 because the Asian-lineage virus had been reported to cause sporadic outbreaks and
9 low-scaled epidemics in Asia before 2010.^{2,3} Here, we report a ZIKV imported case
10 from Bangladesh, a South Asian country. This may be the first recorded ZIKV
11 imported case in China. Our finding may complement the considered transmission
12 profile of ZIKV in China.

13 Since the first discovery of ZIKV in Uganda,⁴ only limited ZIKV circulation had
14 been observed in Africa and South/Southeast Asia (abbreviated to 'SSEA'). It came as
15 a surprise that large-scaled outbreaks of the Asian-lineage viruses had been reported
16 in the French Polynesian islands,⁵ and more surprisingly, they had taken place as well
17 in the Americas where it was first detected in Brazil in 2015.⁶ Since then, ZIKV had
18 rapidly spread to more than 32 countries and territories⁷⁻⁹ and has become an
19 emerging global public health problem. Imported infection was one of the main
20 channels for the rapid spread of ZIKV from epidemic areas to other countries,
21 especially to China.^{1,7,8} The Asian-lineage virus had been reported to cause sporadic
22 outbreaks and low-scaled epidemics in Asia before 2010,^{2,3} while it had been found
23 out that all the recent ZIKV cases reported in Asia were imported from South
24 America or Oceania.⁹

25 We analyzed 133 ice-stored serum samples with retrospect, as they were
26 collected from travelers coming to Yunnan Province from January 2014 to June 2016,
27 and we discovered that one of them was determined as ZIKV-positive. The carrier of

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