

Zika Blamed for Texas Newborn's Death

The death of an infant born with the birth defect microcephaly in the Houston area has been linked to the Zika virus, with the baby becoming infected in the womb while the mother traveled to Latin America, Texas health officials said on Tuesday.

The Texas Department of State Health Services said the infant died in Harris County shortly after birth and had microcephaly, a birth defect marked by small head size that can lead to severe developmental problems in babies. U.S. health officials have concluded that Zika infections in pregnant women can cause microcephaly.

It was the first Zika-related death reported in Texas, the department said.

"The mother and baby are classified as travel-related cases, and there is no additional associated risk in Texas," the department said in a statement.

The department said the infant died recently, but did not say precisely when. It also did not identify the country to which the mother had traveled, the name of the mother or the baby's gender.

The mosquito-borne virus has been linked to a spike in microcephaly in Brazil. The Zika outbreak first came to light last fall in Brazil and has spread rapidly in the Americas.

Texas has reported 97 cases of Zika infection, including the two infants with microcephaly, the department said, adding there have been no reported cases of Zika transmitted by mosquitoes in Texas. {eoa}

