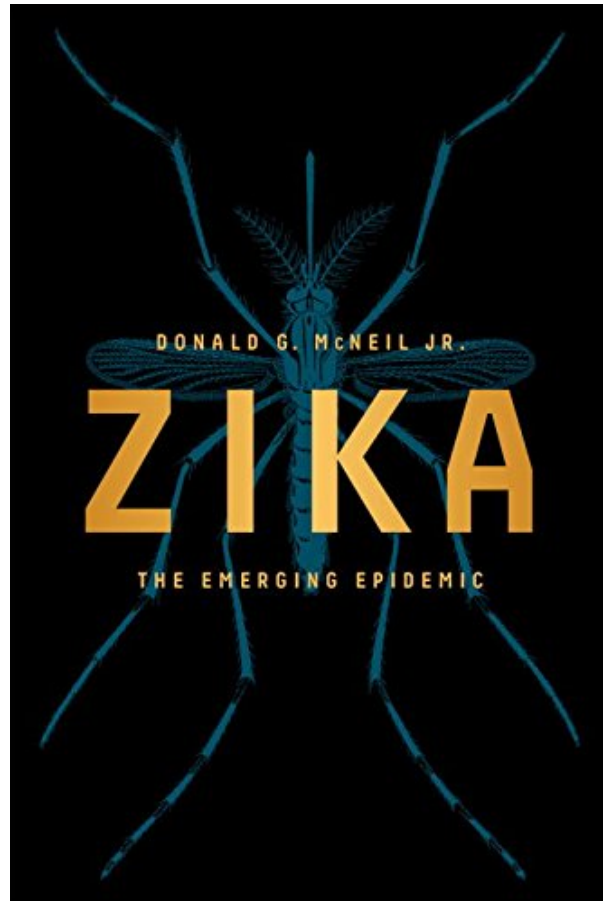
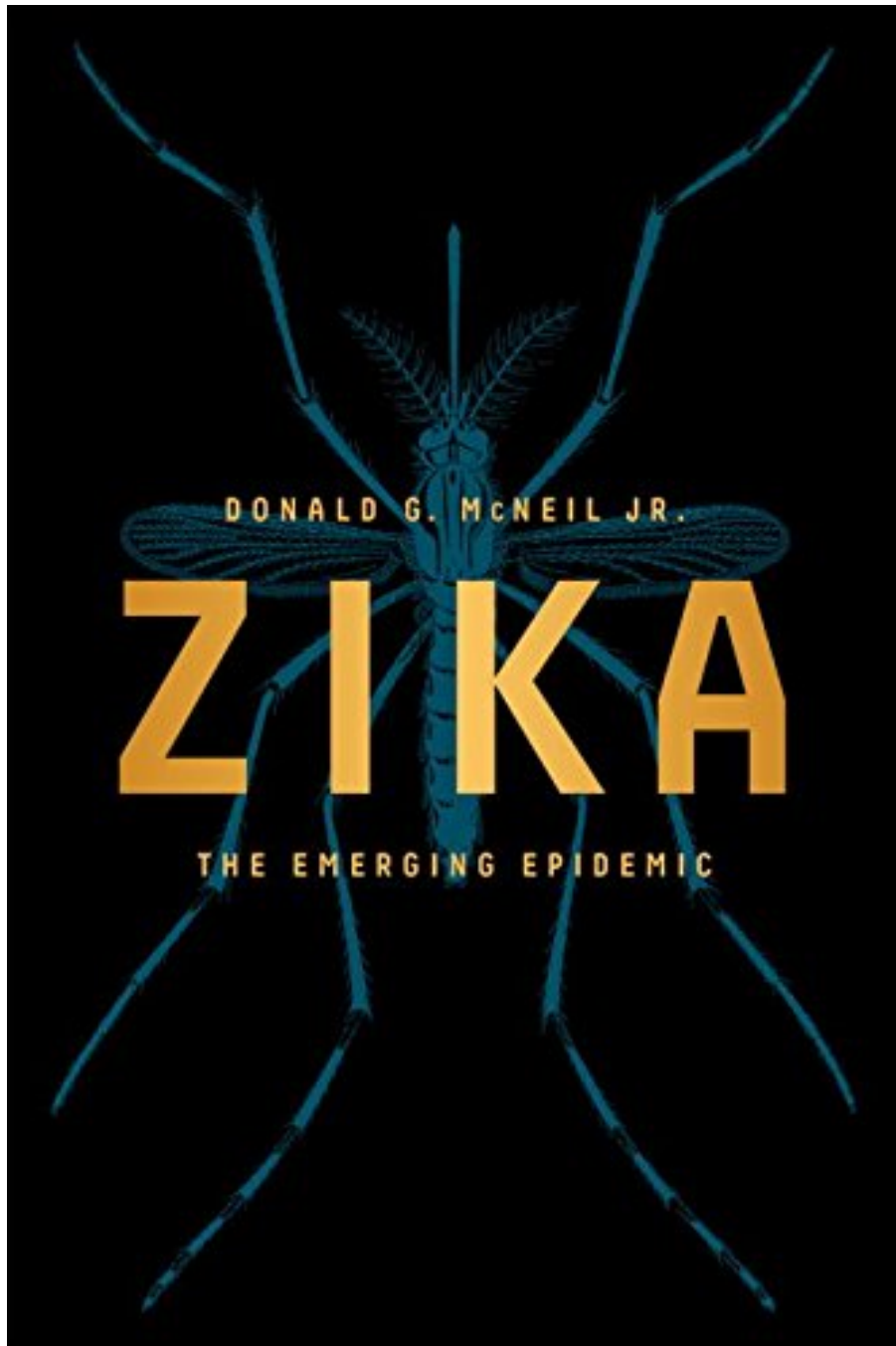


**ZIKA: THE EMERGING EPIDEMIC BY
DONALD G. MCNEIL JR.**



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Review

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About the Author

Donald G. McNeil Jr. is a science reporter covering plagues and pestilences for *The New York Times*, where he began work as a copy boy in 1976. He is a former Africa correspondent and has reported from fifty-five countries.

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A gripping narrative about the origins and spread of the Zika virus by New York Times science reporter Donald G. McNeil Jr.

Until recently, Zika—once considered a mild disease—was hardly a cause for global panic. But as early as August 2015, doctors in northeast Brazil began to notice a trend: many mothers who had recently experienced symptoms of the Zika virus were giving birth to babies with microcephaly, a serious disorder characterized by unusually small heads and brain damage.

By early 2016, Zika was making headlines as evidence mounted—and eventually confirmed—that microcephaly is caused by the virus, which can be contracted through mosquito bites or sexually transmitted.

The first death on American soil, in February 2016, was confirmed in Puerto Rico in April. The first case of microcephaly in Puerto Rico was confirmed on May 13, 2016. The virus has been known to be transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* or Yellow Fever mosquito, but now *Aedes albopictus*, the Asian Tiger mosquito, has been found to carry it as well, which means it might affect regions as far north as New England and the Great Lakes. Right now, at least 298 million people in the Americas live in areas “conducive to Zika transmission,” according to a recent study. Over the next year, more than 5 million babies will be born.

In *Zika: The Emerging Epidemic*, Donald G. McNeil Jr. sets the facts straight in a fascinating exploration of Zika’s origins, how it’s spreading, the race for a cure, and what we can do to protect ourselves now.

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Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

I enjoyed his account of tracking down a small group of ...

By katarinaism

This is a decent historical and popular-science account of the Zika virus intended for a general audience. McNeil is a deft and effective science journalist, and keeps the book interesting and informative. I enjoyed his account of tracking down a small group of scientists who had come down with Zika virus (prior to the outbreak), proving that human-to-human exposure existed. The accounts of microcephaly were jarring, but illustrated the author's points about prevention. One qualm I had was that at times, he seemed to deemphasize the severity of Guillain Barre syndrome, an autoimmune-mediated reaction against nerve cells causing severe weakness. Though it is true that patients can make a full recovery, a subset of patients are left with disability and in the acute phase, patients are at risk for respiratory compromise and cardiac arrhythmias. Additionally, the subtype of neuropathy (acute motor axonal neuropathy) most associated with Zika virus tends to cause a more severe motor weakness than the typical Guillain Barre triggered by other inciting infections and have a more prolonged recovery.

This is a good book for a general audience, and the Q/A section at the end is accessible for most readers. If you are looking for a more precise account of Zika's effects on the developing brain, JAMA Pediatrics (11/3/16 issue) published a very thorough literature review on the defects associated with congenital Zika. As a neurologist-in-training I found this book to be a bit simplistic, but a good starting point for starting a dialogue with patients asking questions about Zika. While he does make some controversial recommendations re- pregnancy and planning, most of his suggestions (using mosquito repellent, avoiding endemic areas in the summer if possible, covering skin as much as possible when in high-risk areas) are good common practice.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

If you are concerned about Zika...

By Ronnie-gail Emden

...you should read this book. It is the clearest description of the way the current issues with Zika have been managed by governmental health agencies. As a practicing OB/GYN, I learned a lot from this book. The Q&A at the end is one of the clearest presentations of the facts about Zika that I have seen.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

very good, I did research with Aedes aegypti in the ...

By M C. Rose-Walker

Gets you the information to March 2014, very good, I did research with Aedes aegypti in the 0's in grad school and have worked in medical research it answered my questions. Gave me a way to talk to clients about medical issues.

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