

Inquiring Minds topic – 7 July 2016

Zika, Russian Doping, & Infrastructure in Rio

A collaborative effort: Colleen Curry's topics with Floyd Jamison Moderator. On the first pass of the Microphone please keep your comments to under two minutes and comment on any of the three topics.

Zika:

Zika is a virus that is spread by a mosquito common to much of the world including the United States. It appears that the virus may be carried by a second variety of mosquito which is even wider spread in the US. The [following video](#) at the news site Vox explains both the virus and some of its consequences, the most dire of which seems to be the impact on the fetuses of pregnant women which can suffer a condition that reduces both head and brain size. A Zika outbreak in Brazil has been of particular concern since the upcoming Olympics are being held in Rio De Janeiro, although as [this link](#) explains the timing of the Olympics is during a period when mosquito borne illness is less severe in Brazil.

Russian Doping:

Various accusations accompanied by a growing body of evidence indicates that Russian athletes in several sports have engaged in illegal doping. [This USA Today article](#) gives an overview of the allegations as well as their impact on the Olympics.

Infrastructure in Rio:

The cost of holding large events like the Olympic Games has long been an issue as [this article](#) from Business Insider discusses. Even countries with robust and modern infrastructures have faced difficulties in staging Olympic like events. Countries like Brazil which start with poor infrastructure have even larger problems.

In 2014 Brazil hosted the World Cup, an event nearly as large as the Olympics. There were several problems associated with that production and its aftermath as [this piece](#) shows. [Here is another piece](#) from Business Insider on the general infrastructure problems Brazil faces.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the impact of Zika specifically in relation to the upcoming Olympics?
 - Should the Olympics be canceled?
 - Given the expense and logistics is it possible to move the Olympics?
 - Are there any real dangers to Olympic athletes because of Zika?
- Given broad media coverage of viruses and diseases like Ebola, Zika, and SARS are we entering an age of “killer epidemics” driven by a smaller world (plane travel and Globalization) or are we reacting to a ubiquitous and ever-present media? (maybe a comparison with some past health events like the plague (great GIF [here](#)) and the 1918 Spanish Flu – about 100 million worldwide)
- Should the Russians face broad penalties like expulsion of the entire contingent from the doping revelations or should sanctions?

- Or should individual sanctioning bodies decide on a team by team basis which Russians individuals, teams or programs should be banned or permitted to participate?
- Are PEDs (performance enhancing drugs) really an impediment or are they simply part of accepted training regimens in today's world? Do we use other training technologies that should be banned?
- Have the Olympics and similar events like the World Cup in soccer (which had [significant scandals](#) related to the FIFA sanctioning body) become too commercialized?
 - Have these sorts of events furthered the cause of sport and human communication or have they become spectacles of nationalism?
 - Should countries where infrastructure is poor or limited to only the wealthiest citizens go to the expense of hosting worldwide events – pros/coms?

<http://www.vox.com/2016/2/2/10890210/zika-virus-explained>

<http://www.vox.com/2016/5/25/11760228/zika-virus-risk-rio-olympics-2016>

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/olympics/2016/03/02/russia-doping-scandal-rio-olympics/81199350/>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/summer-winter-olympics-sports-cost-2015-7>

<https://mic.com/articles/93814/7-big-problems-the-world-cup-left-behind-in-brazil#.XodKzOYpR>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/laundry-list-of-problems-facing-rio-just-seven-months-before-olympics-2016-1>

<http://www.vox.com/2016/4/17/11435620/black-death-europe-gif>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_FIFA_corruption_case