



Who's getting Zika tests nationwide?

By Joanna Weiss | August 3, 2016

As fear of Zika spreads through the United States, so will the ordering of Zika tests.

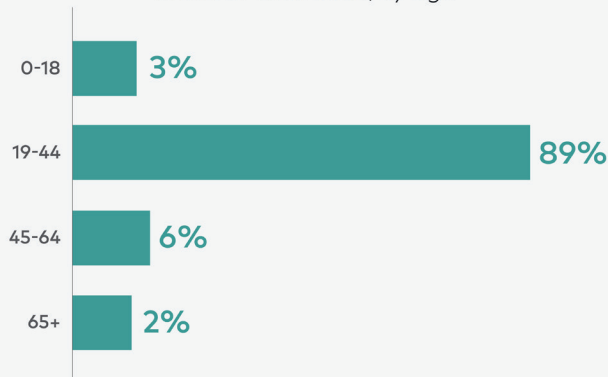
That fear is growing, as public health officials surmise that homegrown mosquitoes in Florida are transmitting the virus. On Monday, the Centers for Disease Control announced that pregnant women should avoid Florida's Miami-Dade County – particularly Miami's Wynwood neighborhood – where 14 cases have been detected so far.

Still, data from athenahealth's national network shows that the volume of tests performed – a good barometer of worry over the mosquito-transmitted illness – are still at a relative trickle nationwide.

The vast majority of tests – 89 percent – have gone to women, with most administered to women ages 19 to 44. The second-largest group to take the tests? Men in the same age bracket, most likely due to the fear that they'd spread the disease via sexual transmission to women of childbearing age.

Vast majority of tests going to young adults

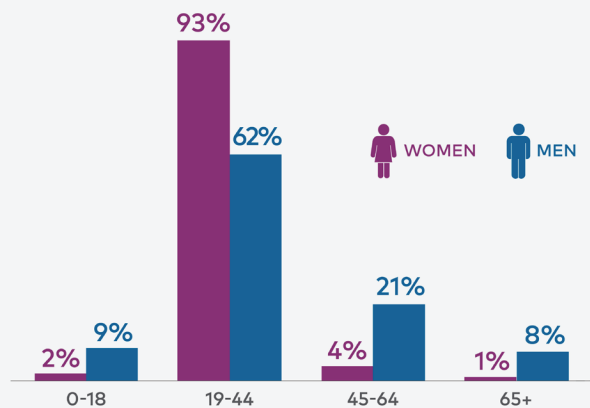
Share of Zika tests, by age



SOURCE: athenaResearch
SAMPLE: Patients with a Zika test order present in athenaNet

Age distribution varies by gender

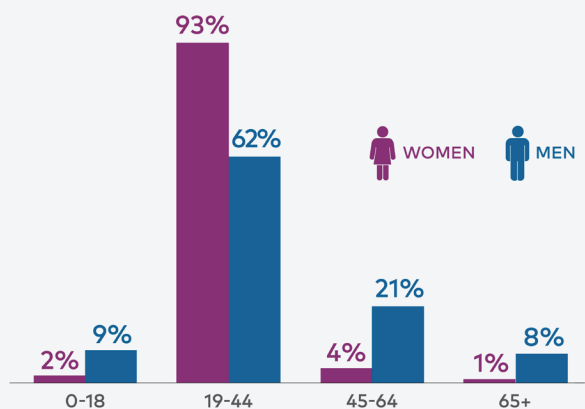
Share of Zika tests, by age and gender



SOURCE: athenaResearch
SAMPLE: Patients with a Zika test order present in athenaNet

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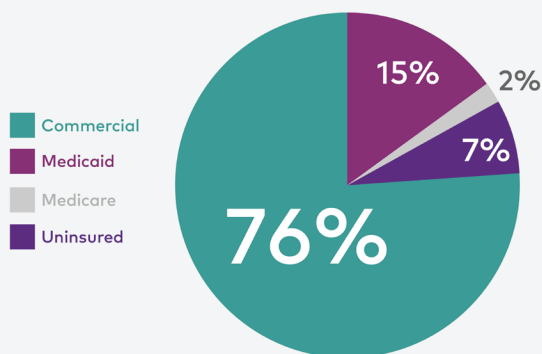
Overall, the volume of Zika testing reflects a state of worry that's consistent with the relatively low level of threat. But if outbreaks rise or panic sets in, the data will bear it out.

For ongoing tracking of Zika tests, check in on athenaInsight.com, or follow us on Twitter @athena_insight.

Patients with commercial insurance have gotten 76 percent of the tests – far more than patients on Medicaid or without insurance coverage. But the data indicates no bias toward delivering the tests to people who can pay.

Commercial patients are getting the majority of tests

Share of Zika tests, by payer class



SOURCE: athenaResearch
SAMPLE: Patients with a Zika test order present in athenaNet

“So far, the tests seem to be going to people most likely to need them, as opposed to people acting out of panic,” says Stewart Richardson, an athenahealth data engineer.



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