



West Nile Virus 2019

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Message from the Guest Editor

West Nile virus (WNV) is the most widespread flavivirus present in all continents, except Antarctica. It is also a truly emerging virus, which 20 years ago was absent in the Americas and had little impact in Europe. This changed significantly when lineage 1 WNV was introduced to the United States in 1999, followed by the emergence of two different lineage 2 WNVs in Europe around 2004. After an adaptation period of a few years, the newly introduced viruses spread quickly across the Americas and Europe. Humans, horses, and birds have been confirmed to be susceptible hosts for WNV, with clinical symptoms ranging from mild to life-threatening neuro-invasive West Nile disease. In 2018, Europe experienced an upsurge in the number of WNV infections. Similarly, in the U.S., more human cases were seen in 2018 when compared to the previous year(s). The natural transmission cycle of WNV involves certain mosquito species, mainly *Culex*, and a number of avian species. Since transmission-competent mosquito species are abundantly found in cooler climatic regions, further dispersal of the virus is likely.





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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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