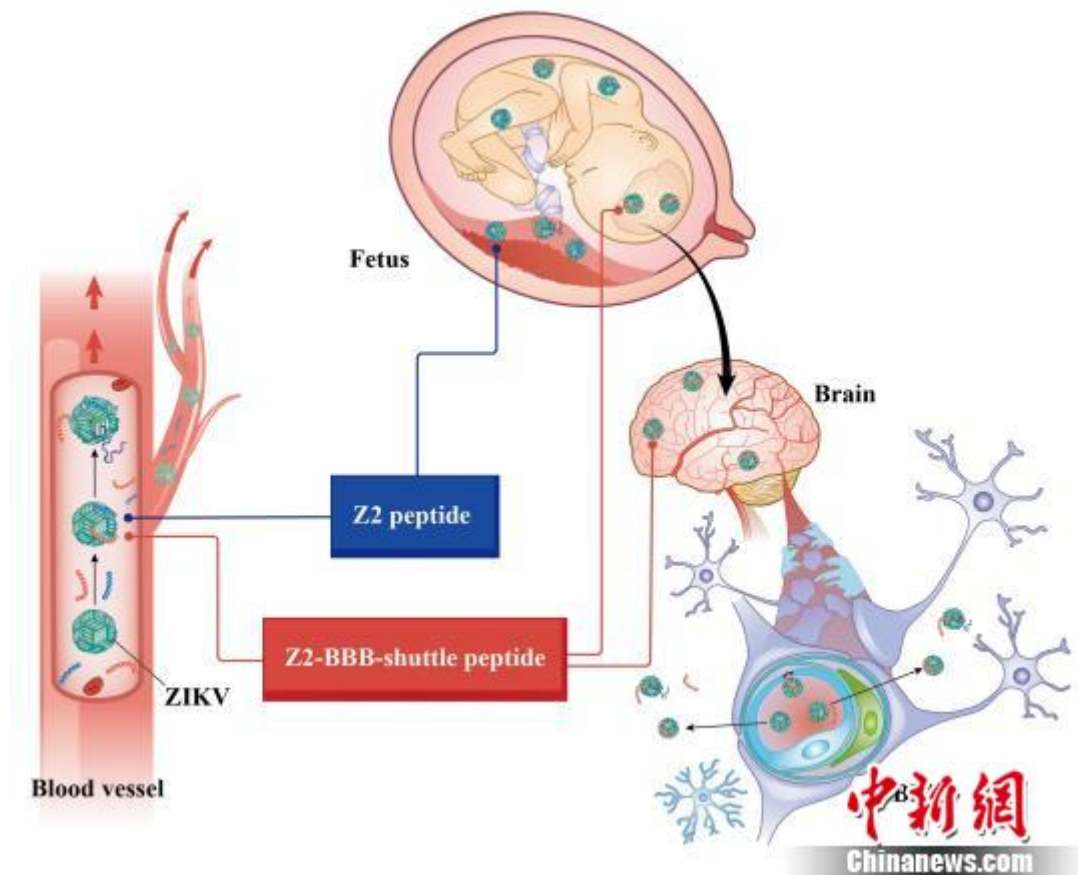


Chinese medical experts develop drug to kill Zika virus



Chinese medical experts have developed Z2, an antiviral peptide that can kill the Zika virus. [Photo/Chinanews.com]

Chinese medical experts have developed Z2, an antiviral peptide that can kill the Zika virus.

The achievement was published in the international journal Nature Communications on July 26 and has aroused wide attention in the global medical field, China News reported.

The World Health Organization warned about the Zika virus after 2007 outbreak, calling it a public health emergency of international concern. More than 80 countries have reported infection cases by March 2017.

The new drug has been show to kill the Zika virus in rats and can prevent pregnant rats from passing on the virus. It was developed by Lu Lu and Jiang Shibo's research team at the School of Basic Medical Sciences at Fudan University and by research teams at the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center as well as the Institute of Microbiology and Epidemiology under the Academy of Military Medical Sciences.

Jiang said there is currently no vaccine or drug that can effectively prevent infection. But the Z2 peptide can combine with surface proteins of the virus to make it inactive.

Jiang added that the peptide is able to penetrate the placental barrier. This not only lowered the infection rate of the pregnant rat but also that of the fetus, stopping vertical transmission.

Experts said that the polypeptide inactivating agent could become a new drug for preventing the virus, as it is also safe for high risk groups, including the pregnant.