

Havana Syndrome

In 2016, the Havana Syndrome had affected a few US diplomats and their other employees stationed at Havana in Cuba. This strange and mysterious neurological illness was reported by the officials after hearing strange sounds and odd sensations physically.

Why is the Havana Syndrome in news? (as in 2020)

No source of transmission of the syndrome had been attained during in 2016, however, in 2020, after much research and study, the National Academies of Sciences (NAS) has reported that microwave radiations are a plausible cause of the syndrome.

Origin of Havana Syndrome

- In late 2016, a few diplomats from the United States of America and their employees had reported of certain usual symptoms during their stay in Havana, Cuba
- They experienced some odd physical sensations and heard peculiar sounds, after which they started feeling sick
- Although there were no casualties, the aftereffect of the syndrome could still be felt by a few diplomats
- The US had even accused Cuba of carrying out sonic attacks. But Cuba denied the accusations of the sonic attacks and refused awareness of any such illness or syndrome
- Ever since many bodies and institutions have been researching the cause of the Havana syndrome and many plausible factors have been discovered till date

Symptoms of Havana Syndrome

The symptoms of the syndrome include:

- Nausea
- Severe headaches
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Sleep problems
- Hearing loss

A few of those who had been affected more faced chronic issues like vestibular processing and cognitive problems.

UPSC aspirants can visit the [Diseases and causing agent](#) page and know about the various sources through which a disease can be caused.

Given below are links to a few other harmful viruses, syndromes and diseases which have had a deadly impact on human lives:

COVID-19 (Wuhan Coronavirus)	Guillain Barre Syndrome
Acute Encephalitis Syndrome	Zika Virus
Ebola Pandemic	Japanese Encephalitis
Chapare Virus	Zoonotic Diseases

Havana Syndrome - Key Findings of National Academies of Sciences (NAS)

- The National Academies of Sciences, USA has been researching on four probable causes of the syndrome since 2016, These include infection, chemical, psychological factors and microwave energy
- NAS first considered the cause to be some kind of a psychological factor due to the stress of handling an overseas project. But this theory could not be proved
- In 2020, NAS came up a conclusive report that a plausible cause could have been microwave radiations
- Directed pulsed microwave radiation energy justifies all the symptoms which were reported by the affected people
- The peculiar sound which could be heard may have emanated from a particular direction or a particular spot
- The source of energy transmission has however not yet been mentioned by NAS

It must also be observed that other factors shall also be examined before coming to a final conclusion. In the case of the use of Microwave weapons, significant research will be required to attain the final conclusion.

What is the National Academy of Sciences (NAS)?

- It is a non-profit, Government Organisation in the United States of America
- NAS was founded in 1863 as a result of an Act of Congress, which was approved by Abraham Lincoln
- 85% of the funding of NAS is through the US Government and the remaining through State, Private and Institutional foundations
- The organisation offers its reports to the Government with regard to the Science and Technology projects

Also, read the [National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme](#)

What are Microwave Weapons?

- These are supposed to be a type of direct energy weapons, which aim highly focused energy in the form of sonic, laser, or microwaves, at a target
- Similar to the functioning of kitchen appliances, Microwave weapons release electromagnetic radiations which cause sensations in the human body
- Major countries across the world are believed to possess these microwave weapons. Including China and the US themselves
- These weapons are a cause of concern as they can affect both machines and human beings
- These weapons can cause long-term damages without leaving a single mark on the human body

Microwave weapons are a type of [Directed Energy Weapons](#). To know in details about these weapons, aspirants can visit the linked article.

Other Related Links		
Government Exams	UPSC 2021	List of Government Schemes in India
World Health Organisation (WHO)	Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV)	Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897: RSTV
UPSC Mains GS-II Strategy, Structure & Syllabus	UPSC Mains GS-I Strategy, Structure & Syllabus	UPSC Mains GS-III Structure & Syllabus