

Drought may increase West Nile cases

By Sophie Mattson, San Jose Mercury News

Laura Jaramillo woke up one morning in the summer of 2005 and sensed something was horribly wrong. After going to the hospital, she fell into a coma and spent six weeks fighting for her life – waking up to find her right side paralyzed.

Doctors were baffled until they discovered the culprit – the West Nile virus.

“I had to learn how to eat, walk and talk all over again,” said Jaramillo, 69, of Oakley. “But I was just glad to be alive.”

Thirty-one Californians last year weren't as fortunate. They succumbed to West Nile infection in one of the worst outbreaks the Golden State has seen in years. More than 800 state residents were infected.

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