

Have jobs, will travel!

Travel health specialist nurse **Jane Chiodini** goes globetrotting online to look at advice sources for those round-the-world vaccinations

Travel health is provided predominantly in primary care although the service is expanding in private travel clinics and pharmacy outlets. However, the provision of vaccinations and immunisations has been an additional service in a primary care setting since 2004 which includes travel vaccines provided on the NHS. (1) A total of 2% of the global sum is allocated for the additional service of vaccinations and immunisations and, if this income is accepted, then travel health must be provided. (2) The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) guidance document, *Travel health nursing: career and competence development* outlines the work of the registered nurse in travel health. It recognises that pre-travel risk assessment and risk management underpin the travel health consultation. Included within this information is the statement that 'national online databases should always be consulted for the latest information on the country specific risk – to help inform recommended vaccines and additional information, for example disease outbreaks'. (3)

30th anniversary

TRAVAX is one such online database available in the UK for healthcare professionals, which is particularly liked by practice nurses for its ease of use. Produced by the Travel and International Health Team of Health Protection Scotland (HPS), TRAVAX celebrates its 30th anniversary next year. It began initially in a ceefax/viewdata format then moved to a web-based presentation in response to a demand for advice from health care professionals telephoning the helpline for advice. Today, the service provides a very comprehensive website for healthcare professionals used extensively in the UK, and some countries abroad. It also has a public version of the website, named *fitfortravel*. While the content is intentionally written in a different format between the two sites, care is taken to align consistency of messages.

Risk assessment

An upgrade to TRAVAX in 2012 which introduced a number of time saving features, and a fresh dynamically intuitive version of *fitfortravel* was launched in 2014, with both databases providing specific health information for every country in the world. Within these pages are details on general health risks, outbreak news, immunisation recommendations, malaria prevention, other infection risks, and medical services at the destination. Countries with a risk of yellow fever include additional detail and individual maps. In line with the essential process of a travel risk assessment, TRAVAX recommends certain vaccines, graded by considering the epidemiology of the disease at the destination. This is a feature that nurses undertaking a travel health consultation find useful and supportive, especially when quite new to this complex field of practice. The sections within the terminology: *Vaccines Usually Advised*; *Vaccines Sometimes Advised* and *Vaccines Selectively Advised* guide the user to discuss required options with the traveller. Information within each of these sections should be considered depending on the individual travel risk assessment. The layout helps the nurse to stay 'on track' for the evidenced based advice in a structured and logical way to avoid deviation from the topic, which could otherwise waste valuable consultation time.

Malaria maps

A popular visual feature that's helpful within a discussion are the multi-layered malaria maps indicating risk areas, points of interest, rivers, airports and altitude together with malaria prevention advice. The 'suitcase' feature allows the user to create a selection of suitable advice leaflets either for printing, or e mailed to the traveller, helping to



Jane Chiodini MSc (Travel Med), RGN, RM, FFTM RCPS(Glasg) is a travel health specialist nurse at The Village Medical Centre, Bedford. She has 20 years' experience of seeing travellers in a primary care setting. She has been training practice nurses in travel health for many years and is passionate about designing tools and materials for nurses to use in practice, which can be found at www.janechiodini.co.uk

provide evidence of information provided within the appointment, thus creating essential documentation of the patient encounter. Videos of these features can be viewed at <http://www.janechiodini.co.uk/home/whats-new/> by looking at the May 2014 entry, entitled 'TRAVAX tools' The wealth of additional information within TRAVAX such as the latest news in travel health, information on vaccines and vaccination practice, resources including information on setting up a travel medicine service and a forum for those in practice, add to the wealth of resources provided. TRAVAX plan in the future is to address the complexities of returning travellers often seen in general practice settings – aiming to become more rounded as a tool, meeting the needs of both pre- and post-travel consultations.

References

1. Department of Health. (2012) The Statement of Financial Entitlements (Amendment No2) Directions. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-statement-of-financial-entitlements-amendment-no2-directions-2012>
2. General Practitioner Committee (2012) Focus on travel immunisations: guidance for GPs, (November 2012), London: BMA. Available at: <http://bma.org.uk/practical-support-at-work/gp-practices/focus-travel-immunisation>
3. Chiodini J, Boyne L, Stillwell A, Grieve S. Travel health nursing: career and competence development, RCN guidance. RCN: London, 2012. Available at: http://www.rcn.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/78747/003146.pdf

What you say...

'As far as I'm concerned, TRAVAX is a surgery must-have for anyone offering a travel health service. It provides invaluable country-specific information, not just about disease risk but also about the country itself – terrain, population, etc. It is a wonderful educational resource covering the entire A-Z of travel-associated problems. The fact that the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) uses TRAVAX advice as the standard of care expected when judging nurses appearing before them speaks volumes about the quality of this service provided by HPS' – Cate Riley, practice nurse/travel health advisor, Surrey Lodge Group Practice and Travel Clinic, Manchester

*'I have been a constant user of TRAVAX and Fitfortravel since the web sites were first introduced. They are invaluable sources of reliable travel health information, with the benefit of coordinated sites that provide reference sources for both health professionals and travellers to access. In my role as a trainer in the world of travel health, I would categorically state that TRAVAX is one of the essential tools for a safe travel health consultation' – Sheila Hall RGN SCM MSc (T Med), Director of TREC Ltd, Travel Health Related Education and Care
www.TRECtravelhealth.co.uk*

Confidence boost!

TRAVAX is funded as part of the work of the Travel and International Health Team by Health Protection Services, a division of Public Health and Intelligence, National Services Scotland. It is provided free to the NHS in Scotland. Practices in Wales can access the service via Health of Wales Information Service (HOWIS) but practices in England and N. Ireland need to register for its use. Practice managers and GPs may be reluctant to have to pay the annual registration fee but do not always appreciate that the ease of use of this system actually provides a professional service, instills confidence within the user and saves time for the Practice nurses, thereby overall reducing long term costs. A single registration (for one individual, with an NHS email address which is not shared) will cost £25 per year (plus VAT); and GP practice registration through commissioning intermediary (will cover all within a practice), £60 per year (plus VAT). For further details, contact Mary O'Neill: email NSS.HPSTravax@nhs.net or by telephone 0141 300 1164.

For your patients

Fitfortravel is intended for general public use and is free of charge (note this should not be used by nurses instead of TRAVAX). The content is written in a very user-friendly style, navigation around the site is easy and attractive and the selection of information about country specific information, general travel health advice and disease information is easy to find. Surgery websites could provide a link to *fitfortravel* to encourage patient awareness and allow them to take increased personal responsibility for their health when travelling abroad.

For more, visit
www.travax.nhs.uk
www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk
www.janechiodini.co.uk