



Travel health update

Travel health can be complicated, and advice for health professionals and travellers is ever-changing. In this regular feature, Jane Chiodini seeks out and presents the latest travel advice and information to help you to keep your practice up to date. She also revisits areas of on-going concern, for spot-checks and further clarification

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS ON HEALTH FOR TRAVELLERS

Short videos are a useful medium for providing key health messages that, by nature of their content, command attention. Four such films have been recently published and are well worth watching and then recommending to your patients. NHS Choices has a huge bank of such videos on a number of health issues (visit www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/medialibrary.aspx?Tag=Travel then go to the travel section). Among the latest is one entitled Travel Health, which covers all aspects of travel health advice, and another entitled Malaria, which includes a case study with a commentary about the disease from Professor David Hill, director of the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC).

A video about insect repellents forms part of the malaria prevention advice presented by the British naturalist, writer and television personality, Steve Backshall. The film, entitled *The Malaria Awareness Campaign*, GlaxoSmithKline *Travel Health*, was an initiative for the Malaria Awareness campaign and provides a helpful and useful demonstration of how to apply repellents correctly – view it at www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QJMyboaspQ or search using



the title. Perhaps my favourite is another on YouTube entitled Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Friends and Family, which is about raising awareness of the need to take out travel insurance even if you are travelling abroad to stay with friends and family – the script is fast moving and fun.

PATIENT GROUP DIRECTIONS

Patient group directions (PGDs) are legal documents comprising written instructions for the supply or administration of medicines to groups of patients who may not be individually identified before presentation for treatment. As I train nurses on travel health in different areas of the UK, it is becoming increasingly apparent that many are still not aware of changes that occurred in 2008 regarding the use of PGDs for some travel vaccines. The

vaccines that are available free of charge under the NHS, such as hepatitis A, typhoid and polio (including any combination vaccine that incorporates these vaccines, for example Revaxis, Viatim, Hepatyrrix, Twinrix and Ambirix) may be administered under a PGD but others must be administered using a patient-specific direction (PSD) or be prescribed by an independent prescriber. More information is available within the frequently asked questions section of the home page of the NaTHNaC website for healthcare professionals at www.nathnac.org/pro/FAQ_PGDPDS.htm. A useful new publication *Patient Group Directions* –

a practical guide and framework of competencies for all professionals using patient group directions is also available from the National Prescribing Centre at www.npc.co.uk

COMPRESSION SOCKS FOR THE ENGLAND FOOTBALL TEAM

Although more research is needed into the cause of travel-related deep-vein thrombosis (DVT), such events have been known to occur following long-haul air travel. Travellers at increased risk of DVT are advised to consider the use of compression stockings, which reduce the risk of DVT and also reduce swelling associated with long-haul flights. See the NaTHNaC information sheet for further details at www.nathnac.org

Evexar Compression Advisory Ltd is a spin-out company from University College London. Medically developed, the graduated compression sock is designed using the latest textile technology and produced under stringent quality control, under the direct guidance of a world-leading university. The socks, which are suitable for travellers, come in a variety of colours, and such products have recently been supplied to the England football team for their forthcoming travel abroad, and you guessed it, they are in red and white displaying the England flag! To find out more go to www.evexcomp.com

