Travel health update

Travel health can be complicated, and advice for health professionals and travellers is ever-changing. In this regular feature, Jane Chicodini 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 ongoing concern, for spot-checks and further clarification.

TRAVEL VACCINATION

The October issue of Vaccine Update reminded us that supplies needed to vaccinate travellers with the tetanus, diphtheria and polio vaccine (Revaxis) should be ordered from the manufacturer, Sanofi Pasteur MSD, on 0800 085 5511 or via email orders@spmsd.com. The stock of vaccine as part of the national immunisation programme must not be used for travellers. Receiving Vaccine Update is a great way of ensuring you keep up to date on all immunisation issues. To put your name on the distribution list, email vaccine.supply@dh.gsi.gov.uk

CPR GUIDELINES UPDATED

The Resuscitation Council UK (www.resus.org.uk) published new CPR guidelines in October this year. The latest guidelines include some treatment recommendations and changes in practice based on new scientific evidence that has accrued since 2005.

Several of the treatment recommendations in the new guidelines represent significant changes in the delivery of resuscitation. Time will be needed for courses and training materials to be updated and for this change in practice to be disseminated to healthcare professionals and laypeople by resuscitation trainers. The Resuscitation Council states that over this transition period, there will inevitably be some variation in practice between individuals and healthcare organisations. The guidance states that healthcare organisations should implement these elements of Resuscitation Guidelines 2010 that are relevant to them by the end of 2011. It is essential that you undergo CPR training over the next year to ensure your knowledge of the new guidance can be applied in practice. To view the document go to: www.resus.org.uk/pages/guide.htm

STIs IN THE OVER-50s

In August this year, the Health Protection Agency revealed that almost 13,000 men and women over the age of 45 were diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection (STI) in 2009, double the number in 2000. Following on from this, the fpa launched the first ever national campaign entitled The Middle-age Spread (STIs in the over-50s).

People of this age often have poor knowledge of sexual health issues and as contraception may no longer be a necessity, they are less likely to be consistent or confident condom users. Sexual health advice should always be considered for travellers in this age group as well. The fpa has launched some posters designed to catch the attention of the over-50s, which could also be used on a travel health display board. For details of the campaign and to download the posters, go to www.fpa.org.uk/campaignsandadvocacy/sexualhealthweek/stisandsafersexover50/professionals

TRAVELLERS WITH DIABETES

Diabetes UK has a superb selection of resources for travellers with diabetes. Go to www.diabetes.org.uk then on the top menu select ‘Guide to diabetes’ and on the drop down menu select ‘Living with diabetes’. Within this section you will find many useful topics including ‘Travel’. Information here covers topics such as: your diet while away from home; blood glucose conversions, air travel and insulin; dealing with illness abroad.

In the shop area at www.diabetes.org.uk/OnlineShop/Travel-Country-Guides—NEW/ there are a selection of new country guides that can be downloaded. These guides typically include: the time zone difference and how it would affect insulin users; the local emergency telephone number; detail regarding staple starch food and whether any sugar-free drinks are available; and translation of useful phrases that may be helpful in an emergency health situation.

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