



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 keep your practice up to date. She also revisits areas of on-going concern, for spot checks and further clarification

USEFUL INFORMATION IN 'NEWS'

Within the time constraints of a travel consultation, it's common to go into the databases NaTHNaC (www.nathnac.org) and TRAVAX (www.travax.nhs.uk) and just obtain essential information for performing a safe travel risk assessment. However, both websites have excellent information to provide a general update in their 'News' sections, which unless you deliberately look for it, you may be missing out on! For example, in September, both sites announced the new guidelines from The British Thoracic Society (BTS) Air Travel Working Group, who published updated recommendations for managing passengers with respiratory disease who are planning air travel. Topics included contraindications to air travel, pre-flight assessment, travelling with oxygen, disease specific recommendations for diseases such as COPD, cystic fibrosis, cancer, and patient information. The full report can be accessed through the database links above or at <http://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/guidelines.aspx>. Another useful resource to be found on NaTHNaC is www.flying-with-disability.org. In October, TRAVAX also highlighted the work of the UK National Kidney Federation (NKF) run by kidney patients for kidney patients, but which is a site that is also useful for healthcare professionals. It contains a wealth of information and

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practical advice on topics such as temporary haemodialysis away from home, insurance, peritoneal dialysis, transplant patients, immunisations, malaria prophylaxis and sun exposure. For more information go to www.kidney.org.uk/holidays/index.html

CHOLERA VACCINE ON THE NHS

Did you know that since the summer of 2010, cholera vaccine has been reimbursable by the NHS to patients in England under section 17.4 of the statement of financial entitlement for purchase and personal administration by healthcare professionals? This means that surgeries can now buy in stock and make a claim for financial reimbursement on an FP10. You can read more at www.pharmacy.biz/Newsdetails.aspx?HeadlineID=211. However, the NaTHNaC health information sheet on cholera advises that the overall risk of cholera for travellers is extremely low. Activities that may predispose to infection include drinking untreated water or eating poorly cooked seafood in endemic areas. Travellers living in unsanitary conditions, for example relief workers in disaster or refugee areas, are at greatest risk. The vaccine is not indicated for most travellers. However, it can be offered to humanitarian aid and relief workers, and to travellers whose itineraries will take them to more remote areas where cholera is prevalent, and with limited access to safe water and medical care. For further information go to www.nathnac.org/pro/factsheets/cholera.htm

EDUCATION ON RABIES

I was reviewing materials on the World Rabies Day website recently at <http://www.worldrabiesday.org/> and found some excellent educational materials. On the left hand menu of the home page there are links to a series of seven videos to help the viewer understand subjects such as the disease, symptoms, diagnosis and prevention of rabies. Below the video link on this same page is detail about a free online course about 'Rabies Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Basics'. This is designed to educate healthcare providers about rabies, and whilst the education is from a United States government perspective, the material is valuable and will be very useful to anyone wanting to attain a good understanding about this often-fatal disease.

EMPORIATRICS

The Autumn/Winter 2011 edition of the travel magazine 'Emporiatics' which I co-edit with Sandra Grieve, Chair of the RCN Public Health Forum has just been published. This issue focuses on education in travel medicine, highlights details for training within the UK and a useful article explains Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Other features include updates and information resources, a piece about malaria diagnosis and recollections of my trip to the Christian Medical College in India earlier this year. If you would like an electronic copy, please email me at jane@janechiodini.co.uk ●

