



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

MALARIA LEAFLET FROM HPA

In August 2010, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) published *Malaria: information for people travelling overseas*. The A5 leaflet is only available in PDF format but may be photocopied and distributed free of charge as long as the HPA is properly credited and no profit is gained from its use. Go to www.malaria-reference.co.uk and click on 'Advisory service'.



given previously. The August edition includes a superb algorithm to help you vaccinate people appropriately during the flu season (it makes decision-making far clearer). It also has information on the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) publication *Health information for overseas travel* – the Yellow Book, and details about its Yellow Fever Vaccination Centre newsletter.

GREEN BOOK UPDATES

See www.dh.gov.uk/greenbook for updates to the Green Book (these are also usually itemised in the *Vaccine Update*). Note the changes made in July this year for chapter 20 on Japanese encephalitis (JE). A booster dose (third dose) of the JE vaccine Ixiaro should be given within the second year (ie 12–24 months). Individuals at continuous risk and long-term travellers who expect to reside in a JE endemic area for long periods should receive a booster at 12 months after primary immunisation.

PGDS AGAIN

Support for the appropriate use of patient group directions (PGDs) and patient specific directions (PSDs) has been stated by the Nursing & Midwifery Council and the Royal College of Nursing.

From 2002 there was a difference of opinion with the BMA's General Practitioner Committee, but in August 2010 the BMA published a statement clarifying the current position and a change in its policy for advice, including 'General practices should use PGDs to authorise registered nurses to administer or supply prescription-only medicines, unless they are independent prescribers.' This comprehensive and interesting document gives information about PGDs and PSDs and includes a number of frequently asked questions and answers. It is highly recommended that you and your GPs read it.

Points I found of particular interest include: confirmation that an electronic instruction in the patient's notes is acceptable for use of a PSD; practices must have protocols in place for their staff to follow to administer a prescription-only medicine (POM) using a PSD; hepatitis B vaccines for travel could be given under a PGD if administered free on the NHS, but if the practice chooses to charge the traveller for this vaccine then it must be given under a PSD; primary care organisations (PCOs) do not have to develop PGDs but they do have to authorise them. The document can be found at www.bma.org.uk/health_promotion_ethics/drugs_prescribing/pgdandpsdingp.jsp ●

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