



Travel health update

As anyone who had their own travel plans disrupted in the last 12 months knows only too well, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on travel medicine practice. But one day, travel will return to normal and it is vital that standards in travel health continue to be upheld

TRAVEL HEALTH PRACTICE AT THE START OF 2021

The latest wave of COVID-19 has resulted in more international travel restrictions so whereas travel clinics were starting to see some travellers last summer and were very busy with PCR testing, this has now declined. Throughout, general practice has significantly reduced provision of service due to overwhelming demands in other areas of their work. Despite this, I found myself busier than ever last year in my position of Dean of the Faculty of Travel Medicine (FTM) both in terms of being involved in COVID-19 as part of my work in the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, and with a key publication entitled 'Good Practice Guidance for a Travel Health Service'. The timing may seem inappropriate, but this piece of work had been in development since 2018 and in fact, when the pandemic is overcome, people will want to travel again. The importance of maintaining standards in travel health practice will be even more imperative.

The publication addresses the standards to be expected for anyone providing travel health, but with a particular emphasis on the individual new to the subject. Whether you are in this position or have been undertaking travel health practice for some time, it's important to be aware that all practitioners undertaking such care need to exceed the minimum standards, to meet the health needs of the traveller. The document sets out the FTM's expected standards of practice in four key areas: Service Delivery; Operating/Facility Requirements for a Travel Service; Assurance and Governance of Travel Health Services; and Recommendations for the Practice of Travel Medicine. Two further

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sections available as appendices provide both the training requirements for practitioners in travel medicine, and a practitioner tool for competency – similar to a tool in the National Minimum Standards for Immunisation Training document, and more recently for the COVID training programme.

This tool (appendix B) is particularly useful for the practitioner new to this field of practice, but will also serve as a means of identifying the practitioner's current level of practice and further educational requirements to support their Continuing

Professional Development. A 12 page document of resources is included along with a patient information leaflet explaining the minimum standard of care they should expect to receive when they attend a travel consultation. All the resources are available at <https://rcpsg.ac.uk/travel-medicine/good-practice-guidance-for-providing-a-travel-health-service>

WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

So what about my work for this year? I've certainly missed writing this column so regularly and it will be some time until there is sufficient travel news to provide a monthly update. However, I'll be back as soon as possible and intermittently until then. I've applied through the official channels to help with the COVID-19 vaccination programme, and am frustrated beyond belief to have had no response to date, when vaccinating is my key clinical skill. I'm aware this is true of many friends and colleagues in travel medicine. But I remain busy until such time that this opportunity comes my way. I'm currently building my introductory course in travel health into an e-learning course – piloting it at present and hope it will be available from the summer onwards. In my position as Dean, I'm leading on the development of two new courses in travel medicine from the College to include a post graduate diploma in travel medicine, so life is busy! And depending on how the pandemic progresses, I look forward to undertaking some face-to-face training hopefully this year. In the meantime, if you want to catch up on recent educational opportunities I've been involved with and future events as well, take a look at <https://www.janechiodini.co.uk/education/>