

Royal College of Nursing Competency update; a brave new world of travel

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Background: Standards in travel medicine practice are unquestionably essential. The most important aspect of the delivery of care is not which professional group delivers that care, but that each person doing so exceeds the minimum standard of practice and meets the health needs of the individual traveller. At CISTM10 in 2007, members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Travel Health Forum presented a new guidance document, *RCN Travel Health Nursing: Career and Competence Development*. This and subsequent editions of the publication (2012 and 2018), have inspired nurses in Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the USA to develop their own guidance.

Objectives: To review, revise and publish a fourth edition of this publication.

Methods: In January 2023, three of the original authors, and one new author completed writing and await publication of a fourth edition of this guidance document.

Results: The document has been updated and expanded in content and support, particularly for practitioners delivering travel health care in the UK. Expansion of topics such as gender identity, establishing the purpose of a trip, for example, for forced marriage or female genital mutilation are addressed. The training and validation of competency requirements for practitioners are discussed. As we are all aware, the impact of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic affected travel medicine practice in many dramatic ways. The guidance for timing of appointments and process of the consultation have been expanded upon, taking into consideration the advancement in technology that now enables different ways of conducting the pre-travel risk assessment.

Conclusions: This poster presentation highlights some of the key statements and guidance within this updated publication, helpful for all those conducting travel medicine consultations on a regular basis. Whilst written by nurses and published from a UK professional nursing body, its content remains equally applicable for all registered health professionals including doctors and pharmacists practising travel medicine no matter which country or profession they are from.

What's new in this publication:

Here are some highlights

Timing of appointments

Background - In the UK it's not uncommon for practitioners to be given 10-15 minutes only for a travel appointment.

Statements within this document include

- travellers with more complex health needs such as individuals who are immunocompromised, longer-term travellers such as backpackers, or individuals requiring malaria prevention advice relevant to their destination – will certainly need an extended consultation time of **30 minutes or longer**.
- A yellow fever assessment is also complex and requires sufficient time to establish a required pre travel risk assessment and for comprehensive advice to be given. This one aspect could take **30 minutes or longer** by itself, particularly for YFVCs who see travellers who are not registered, and whose medical records are not known or available.

Integration with other official bodies and guidance

- The Care Quality Commission regulatory body for healthcare standards in England, Mythbuster guidelines for the provision of travel health services were included
- News of the integration of the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) and Public Health Scotland (PHS) co branded new yellow fever pre-vaccination checklist was discussed
- Detail of the Faculty of Travel Medicine publication, *Good Practice Guidance for Providing a Travel Health Service*, launched in 2020 were included, aligning many relevant concepts and statements to this new RCN document, particularly for the use of a competency assessment tool. See page 15 to access this aligned resource, or please scan the QR code right.



RCN Travel Health Nursing:
career and competence development



SCAN TO ACCESS THE DOCUMENT



Greater attention to topics and types of travellers

Increased awareness more recent practice of significant importance including gender specific issues

- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Gender – LGBTQ+ status, gender reassignment
- Medical tourism
- Older travellers, cognitive impairment, communication barriers.

New definition

The title of Nurse Consultant was included in this edition and a description provided on page 9.

New ways of working

It was recognised that new ways of performing a pre-travel risk assessment post pandemic included

- online consultations
- screen sharing to explain many useful resources to the traveller via a secure clinical system etc.

Important to note, that it was said regardless of the format of delivery, the quality and standard of the pre-travel risk assessment and confidentiality need to be maintained. If an online consultation was the method used, optimal time would still be required and if vaccinations are recommended, the traveller should be asked to attend an appropriate clinical setting to receive them.

New models of travel service delivery were also described, with special attention to a completely new format in Scotland where care is delivered by Health Boards and not, in most cases from a primary care setting any longer. The Public Health Scotland travel websites and processes have been adapted accordingly, and new digital training created to support staff.

General information

- A fresh cover image and the layout was created in a new modern style template
- Details of authors are provided on page 2
- The content list (pages 3-5) is longer and more comprehensive. Navigation around the publication is fully hyperlinked, making the publication easier to read.
- In Foreword and Introduction on page 6, it refers to this document being the fourth edition and that the previous editions have inspired nurses around the world (Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the USA) to develop their own guidance. This is something the authors of this RCN document are particularly proud of
- A new section (page 18) added about indemnity cover, important for all to read
- References are fully hyperlinked.

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