The imperfect travel health consult
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CISTM, Washington DC, June 2019

The good...

...the not so good

Case studies

- No right or wrong answers
- Considerations
  - Approach
  - Informed choice/Shared decision making
  - Risk perception
  - Forward planning and preparedness

A 70 year old couple are travelling to Kenya (4 days) and Tanzania (10 days).
- This is Nirvana...you have plenty of vaccines available, and they have no significant medical history.
- Yellow fever?

Kenya

- Required if traveling from a country with risk of YF virus transmission and ≥1 year of age, including transit >12 hours in an airport located in a country with risk of YF virus transmission.
- Generally not recommended for travelers to Tanzania.

Tanzania

CDC Health Information for International Travel 2019
Communicating risk

• Provide unbiased information
• Natural frequencies rather than percentages (e.g. 13/100)
• Use verbal descriptors with caution (e.g. rare, common)
• Be honest if there is no reliable evidence


• A 22 year old attends for a travel consult.
  • He has consulted Dr Google and tells you all he needs is a hepatitis A vaccine.

Why patients discuss internet information with their doctor

• A 30 year old woman attends for a flu vaccine.
  • During your conversation, she tells you she is planning a trip to India with her children to visit family in Mumbai.

Issues

• Allowing enough time
  • Arrange a follow-up appointment
• Educating future travellers
  • Posters in surgery
• Every encounter counts
  • Ask about future travel plans
• A couple in their 50s are traveling with friends
• You assess their malaria risk as being low and advise that chemoprophylaxis is not indicated
• But their friends have been prescribed doxycycline for the whole trip...

Issues
• Acknowledging and correcting beliefs
• Using up to date resources
• Liaising with colleagues

The travel medicine consult
• Is rarely, if ever perfect
• Is unique
• Is fabulously flawed
• But it can be enhanced
• Introducing Heather...