

Resources for travel medicine

Trish Batchelor

Key words

Travel medicine, World Wide Web, medical society, textbook, medical journal

Abstract

Travel medicine is becoming recognised as a sub-specialty of both General Practice and Infectious Diseases. There are a number of related resources for those who are interested in developing their interest in the area. Societies such as the International Society of Travel Medicine, the Wilderness Medicine Society and the International Society of Mountain Medicine all maintain peer-reviewed Medline-indexed journals for their members and run international conferences. Information is presented on useful textbooks and web sites.

Introduction

Travel medicine is becoming recognised as a sub-specialty of both General Practice and Infectious Diseases. There are a number of useful textbooks, courses and societies available for those with an interest in travel medicine. Additionally, the World Wide Web provides many useful sites of reference. There are also a number of computer software programs that provide accurate and up-to-date country-by-country travel health information.

Societies and journals

The International Society of Travel Medicine (www.istm.org) is the largest society dedicated to travel medicine and has 1,200 members from 53 countries. Every two years it holds a world congress – the next will take place in New York in May 2003. *Journal of Travel Medicine* is part of ISTM membership.

The Wilderness Medical Society (www.wms.org) is an American-dominated society that focuses on all aspects of wilderness medicine, in particular high altitude medicine, diving medicine and wilderness toxicology. It runs a number of well organised courses and conferences throughout the year in the United States. *Wilderness and Environmental Medicine* is part of WEM membership.

The International Society of Mountain Medicine

(www.ismmed.org) is dedicated to high altitude medicine. The membership is a mixed group of American, European and South American physicians. An international symposium is held every two years, the next being held in Tibet in 2004. *High Altitude Medicine and Biology* is part of ISMM membership. *The Australasian College of Tropical Medicine* (www.tropmed.org) has a Faculty of Travel Medicine. Information can be found on their website. *Clinical Infectious Diseases* often features relevant articles.

Textbooks

There are a number of useful textbooks dedicated to travel medicine. Useful information can also be gathered from various infectious diseases and parasitology texts.

The most useful texts are as follows:

Manual of Travel Medicine. Tilman Ruff and Alan Yung. Published by the Victorian Infectious Diseases Service at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, 1999. This text is written by two well known infectious diseases physicians from Melbourne who have a special interest in travel medicine. It is logical and practical and represents the best text in the Australian context.

The Textbook of Travel Medicine and Health. Edited by Robert Steffen and Du Pont. Published by BC Decker,

2nd edition 2000. This is the original text on travel medicine, recently revised. For those with more than a passing interest it is definitely recommended.

International Travel and Health. Published by the World Health Organisation, 2002. This book is essential if you are administering yellow fever vaccination. It gives country-by-country information on yellow fever and malaria, and provides some basic general travel medicine advice.

Health Information for International Travel. Published by the American Centers for Disease Control, 2002. This book has good sections on each vaccine and a number of travel-related issues such as the pregnant traveller. It is, however, American so some recommendations differ to those in Australasia.

National Health and Medical Research Council Australian Immunisation Procedures Handbook. 7th edition. 2000. Published by NHMRC. This book gives good general information about all vaccines licensed in Australia, but is not specifically a travel health book and so gives no country-specific information.

Wilderness Medicine. Edited by Paul Auerbach. Published by Mosby, 2001. St Louis, Missouri. This huge text is the definitive work on wilderness medicine and is great reading.

Web sites and web based journals

www.who.int/ith/ – the World Health Organization book, *International Travel and Health* can be downloaded from this site.

www.who.int/wer/ – the *WHO Weekly Epidemiological Report*. This gives useful information on disease outbreaks, influenza activity and so forth.

www.whosea.org – the WHO South East Asia Regional Office. This site has excellent information on malaria in SE Asia.

www.cdc.gov – front page for the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The travellers' health section is very useful.

www.cdc.gov/travel/blusheet.htm – this section of the CDC site is essential if you are a yellow fever vaccinator. It provides information on the regions currently infected with yellow fever.

www.cdc.gov/travel/ybint.htm – from here you can download the CDC book *Health Information for International Travel*.

www.cdc.gov/mmwr – *Morbidity and Mortality Report* from the CDC. It has numerous relevant articles.

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid – *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. This journal is dedicated to emerging infectious diseases and often has interesting articles.

www.dpd.cdc.gov/dpdx/Default.htm – an excellent parasitology site.

www.health.gov.au/puhlth/cdi/cdicur.htm – Australian Public Health Department surveillance data. It has a section on travel health.

www.eurosurveillance.org/eurosurv/index.htm – European disease surveillance information.

www.jcu.edu.au/school/phtm/PHTM/putravle.htm#comprehensive – and excellent site for links on travel health.

www.dfat.gov.au – for security advice from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs.

www.istm.org – International Society of Travel Medicine.

www.ismmed.org – International Society of Mountain Medicine.

www.wms.org – Wilderness Medicine Society.

www.ciwec-clinic.com – an excellent site for information on Nepal, altitude and diarrhoea (and my contact).

www.traveldoctor.com.au – Australia and New Zealand's largest group of travel medicine clinics – this site has updates, vaccine information, etc.

www.tourismconcern.org.uk – various issues related to the impact of tourism on host countries.

www.ippg.net – the International Porter Protection Group. A non profit organisation working to raise the awareness of trekkers and mountain climbers to the issue of porter welfare in the high altitude tourism industry.

Commercially available computer programs

Walkabout MD – specifically designed for Australia. More information available at www.traveldoctor.com.au

Travax Encompass – an American program. This has a very good update system, with comments on recent articles of interest from experts in the field. Contact www.shoreland.com

Exodus – an Irish program. There are two options, information only, or a practice management option. More information available at www.exodus.ie

Gideon – a program that provides country-by-country epidemiological data on infectious diseases as well as a diagnostic algorithm for infectious diseases. More information can be found at www.cyinfo.com

Programs such as Medical Director contain some very basic travel medicine information. However, they are inadequate for anyone who has more than a passing interest, and contain some significant inaccuracies.

Dr Trish Batchelor, MB,BS, FRACGP, MPH (Trop Med), is the Medical Adviser to The Travel Doctor TMVC, New Zealand. Trish was the principal guest speaker at the SPUMS ASM, Port Vila, Vanuatu, May, 2002.

*Currently she is working as a medical officer at the CIWEC Travel Medicine Centre, PO Box 12895, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal
E-mail: <trishb@mos.com.np>*