



Article Title

Tourism and the Health Effects of Infectious Diseases: Are There Potential Risks for Tourists? [Summary]

Citation

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Abstract

According to statistics of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), international tourist arrivals for 2014 exceeded 1138 million. In the same year the majority of international tourist arrivals were for the purposes of leisure, recreation and holiday, about 55%. However travel is a potent force in the emergence of disease since the migration of humans has been the pathway for disseminating infectious diseases throughout recorded history and will continue to shape the emergence, frequency, and spread of infections in geographic areas and populations. The current volume, speed, and reach of travel are unprecedented. The consequences of travel extend beyond the traveler to the population visited and the ecosystem. International travel and tourism can pose various risks to health, depending on the characteristics of both the traveler and the travel.

Travelers may encounter serious health risks that may arise in areas where accommodation is of poor quality, hygiene and sanitation are inadequate. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the details and impact of significant infectious diseases that can pose a risk to tourists and threaten public health. The paper also seeks to raise awareness of the issues outlined and thereby increase efforts to enhance travel safety.

Summary:

Travelers should be considered an integral part of the global surveillance network for emerging infections. Research and the knowledge gained can be used to alert the global community to the presence or susceptibility patterns of pathogens in different regions; inform strategies that can be used to control infections in developing countries; and prepare travelers to those areas and guide the care of those returning.

One major lesson from the Ebola outbreak was for the world to respond much more quickly than before to epidemics. The containment and preparedness efforts dramatically limited the potential impact of Ebola on the African economy, compared to earlier worst-case scenarios. This demonstrates why all countries, developing and developed, should make investing in pandemic preparedness a top priority. It points to the need for a global pandemic emergency financing facility that will enable the world to respond much more quickly and effectively to any future deadly outbreaks, and avoid the tragic and unnecessary human and economic costs that have resulted from the Ebola epidemic.

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Conclusion

Travelers should be considered an integral part of the global surveillance network for emerging infections. Research and the knowledge gained can be used to alert the global community to the presence or susceptibility patterns of pathogens in different regions; inform strategies that can be used to control infections in developing countries; and prepare travelers to those areas and guide the care of those returning. One major lesson from the Ebola outbreak was for the world to respond much more quickly than before to epidemics. The containment and preparedness efforts dramatically limited the potential impact of Ebola on the African economy, compared to earlier worst-case scenarios. This demonstrates why all countries, developing and developed, should make investing in pandemic preparedness a top priority. It points to the need for a global pandemic emergency financing facility that will enable the world to respond much more quickly and effectively to any future deadly outbreaks, and avoid the tragic and unnecessary human and economic costs that have resulted from the Ebola epidemic.