SAND abstract number 196 from the BEACH program 2012–13

Subject: Travel advice and vaccination

Organisation collaborating for this study: CSL Biotherapies Pty Ltd

Issues: Proportion of patients who travelled overseas in previous two years; for most recent trip—main reason, countries visited (multiple), whether stayed overnight in rural area; whether travel advice sought and from whom; for which diseases was patient fully vaccinated and was the risk of infection discussed; proportion who had recommended vaccination/prophylaxis prior to most recent trip, and reasons if not.

Sample: 2,955 patients from 102 GPs; data collection period: 02/05/2012 — 04/06/2012.


Countries for which vaccination should be considered were sourced from the Center of Disease Control’s yellow book and the World Health Organisation’s geoserver.

Summary of results

The age and sex distributions of the patients in the sample was similar to those at all 2011–12 BEACH encounters, except there were fewer 0-14 year olds. Of 2,955 respondents, 690 (23.0%, 95% CI: 19.8–26.3) had travelled overseas in the previous two years. Main reason for most recent trip was given by 671 patients, of these: 65.7% cited ‘holiday’; 29.5% ‘visit friends/relatives’, and 6.4% ‘business’. Countries most frequently visited were the United Kingdom (10.0% of destinations), USA (8.9%), New Zealand (8.8%), Thailand (6.4%) and Bali (5.0%). Most frequent countries where patients stayed overnight in a rural area were the UK (11.3% of destinations), New Zealand (10.9%), Italy (5.7%) and Thailand (5.2%).

Of 670 respondents, 36.1% sought travel advice before their trip: 29.9% (n=200) from their GP, 3.7% (n=25) from a travel clinic and 1.5% (n=10) from the internet. The number of respondents to each vaccine question varied. The proportion vaccinated ranged from 40.5% for hepatitis A and 36.0% for hepatitis B to the lowest rates of 0.7% for Japanese encephalitis and 1.8% for rabies. Malaria prophylaxis had been arranged for 11.8% of travellers.

Two-thirds (66.1%, n=448) of patients travelled to destinations where vaccination should have been considered. The most common risk diseases were typhoid (60.1% of trips), Hepatitis A (55.9%) and B (64.2%), and rabies (50.1%). Of 423 patients travelling to a country with infection risk who answered the travel advice question, only 42.7% sought advice before their trip. Of those travelling to a country with a risk of infection risk, the proportion fully vaccinated against the risk varied from 50.9% for Hepatitis A and 44.6% for typhoid to 3.2% for rabies and 1.5% for Japanese encephalitis. Patients who sought advice from a GP before travelling were significantly more likely to have been fully vaccinated against common diseases in their destination before they travelled than those who sought no advice.

Of the 345 patients who were not fully vaccinated for infection risks associated with their destinations, only 110 patients gave reasons. The most common were: patient objection (31.8%); the GP did not think it was needed/required (22.7%); patient did not raise travel plans with their GP (13.6%); they raised the issue but left it too late (7.3%) the patient did not realise they were at risk of infection in their country of destination (2.7%).

We conclude that patients travelling overseas can reduce unnecessary risk by seeing their GP well in advance.

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PLEASE READ CAREFULLY
The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about TRAVEL VACCINATIONS AND PROPHYLAXIS MEDICATION.
You may tear out this page as a guide to completing the following section of forms.

INSTRUCTIONS
Ask EACH of the next 30 PATIENTS the following questions in the order in which the patients are seen.
Please DO NOT select patients to suit the topic being investigated.

Overseas travel
Please advise whether this patient has travelled overseas in the past 2 years.
If 'yes' please specify how many times this patient has travelled overseas.
If 'no' you can end questions here for this patient.

Destination country and rurality
Please specify the country where the patient spent the most time during the most recent overseas trip.
Please also record details of other countries visited in the same trip.
For each country please use the tick box to indicate whether the patient stayed overnight in a rural area.

Infectious diseases
For each of the specified infectious diseases, please indicate whether the patient was fully vaccinated prior to the most recent trip, regardless of whether the vaccination was specifically given for this trip.
If the patient was not fully vaccinated please indicate whether the risk of each disease was OR was not discussed with the patient in regard to the travel destination, prior to the most recent trip.
Please tick a maximum of one response per disease.

Vaccination/prophylaxis not given
When a vaccination(s) and/or prophylaxis medication(s) was indicated for the patient’s travel destination but not given to the patient please use the tick boxes to indicate why it/they were not given.

Malaria prophylaxis
Please advise whether malaria prophylaxis was given, prior to the most recent trip.

The remaining questions on this form relate to the patient’s most recent overseas trip. Patients who have made multiple overseas trips in the past 2 years should answer the questions pertaining to the most recent trip.

Reason for travel
Please use the tick boxes to indicate the main reason for the patient’s most recent overseas trip.

Travel advice
Prior to the most recent trip please indicate whether the patient sought travel advice about vaccinations or prophylaxis medications, and where this advice was sought.

Has the patient travelled overseas in the past 2 years?
- Yes-please specify how many trips: ______
- No → End questions

The remaining Qs relate to the most recent overseas trip
- Main reason for most recent trip?
  - Holiday
  - Visiting friends/relatives
  - Business
  - Conference
  - Other

Country where most time was spent: ______
- Stayed overnight in rural area?
- Other countries visited: (in the same trip)
- No

PRIOR TO TRAVEL:
- Was travel vaccine/prophylaxis advice sought by patient?
  - Yes - GP
  - Yes - travel clinic
  - Yes - internet
  - Yes - other
  - No

For each disease, was:
- Patient fully vaccinated?
- Risk discussed?
- Risk not discussed?

Was malaria prophylaxis given?
- Yes
- No

If vaccine/prophylaxis med’n advised for the destination wasn’t given, why not?
- Not enough time prior to travel
- Patient refusal
- Other: (please specify)