Member Care Update

Ethnê-MC Facilitation Team
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Ethnê-MC Update **Issue 2: April 2007**

Welcome again to the *Update*! This monthly report informs you about important member care resources, news, and topics. We especially want to further equip people with member care responsibilities who are focussing on mission/aid personnel in least-reached people groups (LPGs). Each report is archived on our web site: **www.ethne.net/membercare**. Please share the *Update* with others and feel free to submit materials for us to include. May the Lord bless you and your work!

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In this Issue—Travel Medicine and Psychological First Aid

SPECIAL RESOURCES: Tools to further equip you for member care

- *Resources for Health Care and Travel Medicine* **www.internelth.org.uk**

InterHealth offers many resources from this growing, specialised field

- *Some Medical/Travel Health Resources On-line*

Get up-to-date information on health, safety, and travel advice

- *The Travelers Good Health Guide(new edition) by Ted Lankester*

Check out this essential guide for mission/aid/development workers and any international traveler

- *Updates for Coaching/Counselling* **www.garyrcollins.com** and **www.athealth.com**

Stay current with news/analyses from Dr. Gary Collins (coaching) and At Health (counselling)

- *Psychological First Aid(PFA)* **www.athealth.com/Practitioner/Newsletter**

Be sure to see the helpful guidelines for doing PFA (from NCTS, October 25, 2006)

SPECIAL EVENTS: Events to help you connect/contribute to the member care field

- *Canada: International Society of Travel Medicine, Conference, May 2007* **www.istm.org**

This conference is for health professionals including those working in mission/aid.

SPECIAL TOPICS: Current issues and approaches related to member care

Travel Health—Preventing and Treating Common Problems by Ted Lankester

Want to stay healthy in your travels? Ted shares some excerpts from his new pocket book.

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The *Update* is compiled on behalf of the *Ethnê-Member Care Network*. We are a core, growing *network of colleagues* who are involved in member care. We come from different nations and organisations. Our passion is to see the least-reached people groups (LPGs) experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ. We are committed to help provide and develop member care resources in order to support the diversity of people/senders who are working among LPGs. Our *Network* is part of the Ethnê to Ethnê Movement (**www.ethne.net**).

Email: mc@ethne.net
Ethnê-MC Website: **www.ethne.net/membercare**
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SPECIAL RESOURCES

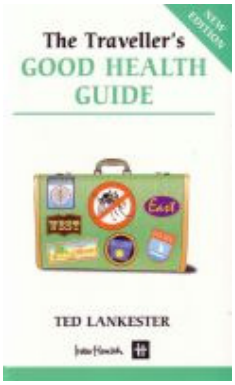
- *Resources for Health Care and Travel Medicine*

InterHealth is an example of a growing number of organizations/health professionals focusing on travel medicine. It is a Christian medical charity providing specialist healthcare to mission and aid workers and volunteers working in all corners of the planet. Its 15 health care practitioners include physicians, nurses, and psychologists, all with an interest and speciality in travel medicine and member care. InterHealth also provides phone and email access to all our member clients and their agencies, in addition to face to face clinical care, a travel health supplies shop, and a travel clinic.
Contact: **www.interhealth.org.uk**

- *Some Medical/Travel Health Resources On-line*

www.who.int/ith World Health Organisation, international site
www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk UK National Health Service; travel health with daily updates
www.nathnac.org/ National Travel Health Network/Centre UK; clinical standards in travel medicine
www.fco.gov.uk "Travel section" has advice on 200+ countries and links to advice from many others
www.cdc.gov/travel/yb This is the main site in the USA
www.bajmission.com See the excellent guidelines in the article: *Staying Healthy on Outreach*

- *The Travelers Good Health Guide(new edition) by Ted Lankester*



Written in an easy-to-read style with many illustrations, this lively book has been expanded to 400+ pages of practical/helpful advice. It has four sections:
****Before You Go*: know how to prepare for your trip—from immunisations and malaria prevention to essential health supplies
****Health Travelling*: minimise your travel-health risks with vital precautions, including food and water safety tips
****Returning Home*: know when you should get a travel-health worry checked out and how to deal with stress and reverse culture shock
****PLUS: a detailed glossary* of infections and conditions that affect travellers – how to prevent them and how to deal with them.
This essential guide is for international aid and development workers, long-term travellers, volunteers, backpackers, and anyone planning international travel! The author, Dr. Ted Lankester, is the Director of Health Care at InterHealth, London.
Contacts: **supplies@interhealth.org.uk** Also available on **www.amazon.co.uk**

- *Psychological First Aid and Updates for Coaching/Counselling*

This following information comes from Dr. Gary Collins' excellent newsletter on coaching and counselling (#219). His one-page newsletter is available for free from **www.garyrcollins.com**

There is a web-based service that sends free, regular mental health and counselling articles. The 25 October 2006 issue, for example, includes eight articles on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, including guidelines on Psychological First Aid after disasters. **www.athealth.com/Practitioner/Newsletter**

Psychological first aid (PFA) as described in these guidelines, reduces distress caused by traumatic events and fosters short-term and long-term coping. The goal of PFA "is to reduce the distress, assist with current needs, and promote adaptive functioning, not to elicit details of traumatic experiences and losses." PFA is given as soon as possible after a trauma, delivered in diverse settings, and includes: Initiating contact only after observing the situation and determining that contact is not intrusive or disruptive; Speaking calmly, slowly, and in compassionate terms, knowing that the aid giver may be avoided or flooded with the other person's emotions; Acknowledging the positive things dome by the survivor following the trauma; and Giving information that addresses immediate need.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- *International Society of Travel Medicine, Conference, Vancouver Canada, May 2007*

This conference is for health professionals including those working in mission/aid.
Contact: **www.istm.org**

SPECIAL TOPICS

Travel Health—Preventing and Treating Common Problems

Ted Lankester, InterHealth, London

We all know that travelling can be a bit risky. For most of us the usual risk involves crossing the road, or having a car crash, often near home. And when you leave home and go abroad, road traffic accidents will still be your biggest danger.

But let's look further. Did you know that there are nearly 700 million arrivals at international airports each year? And despite all our worries about security and epidemics we go on travelling more and more each year. Just from the UK there are nearly 60 million overseas trips per year. This figure does not include trains, car journeys, cycle rides and hot air balloons from one country to another, just air flights. So of course we will be at slightly greater risk than if we sit in our office, on the sofa, or drink coffee at a cafe with our friends.

All this increase in travel is good news for disease-causing organisms—they can hitch lifts on planes and cruise ships and find a new range of people to bite and intimidate. And the more we travel, the greater is the risk of infectious diseases, old and new, spreading from one part of the world to another. Flu is the one we may fear the most, but a few years ago it was SARS that got people seriously scared.

Common minor problems

Before embarking on any longer trip or major bit of travel, many of us worry that we might become ill. And we wonder what sort of health care will be available. Let's look at the health problems that are most likely. It's helpful to think of those that are just a nuisance and those that are really serious.

The nuisances are the "bugs" that might spoil our trip. It isn't hard to guess the main one—travellers diarrhoea, which has hundreds of names just because it's so common. It affects about half of all those travelling for two-three week holiday from a developed to a developing country. You can do quite a bit to prevent it and a lot to treat it quickly. The other main nuisances are the same sort of things we might get back home: coughs, colds, sore throats, a flare up of our back problem or migraine or whatever tends to affect us most. Of course certain destinations, especially in the tropics, have their own hassles: heat rash, bites which sometimes get infected if we are tired or run down, and just sheer tiredness especially from the heat, mosquitoes, local dogs, and snores from our travelling companions.

One thing its worth mentioning at this stage is how safe flying is. Of course there are some dodgy air companies so it's always worth going on the main carriers or checking out the company doing any flight into a remote area. Fatal air crashes on the main international airlines are extremely rare.

More serious illness

Sometimes we get concerned about the possibility of snakebites or poisonous insects. Life-threatening dangers from these are extremely rare in travellers. What we do need to be careful about is malaria and some other diseases, which a few years back we thought would be eradicated, but in recent years have made a real come-back. The biggest worry is malaria. About 3000 children per day die from this in sub-Saharan Africa alone. Although comparatively few travellers die from malaria, some do, and many more get seriously ill, nearly always because they don't take the right precautions. Another serious illness is dengue fever, also spread by a mosquito, but one which bites during the daytime. Dengue is a nasty flu-like illness. In southeast Asia and parts of South America and the Caribbean, it is more common than malaria, and cannot be prevented apart from avoiding mosquito bites.

There are a number of "emerging diseases" and the one we worry most about is avian flu. As I write this book the dangers to travellers are virtually zero but the "worry factor" is high. At times the media gets hold of a super scare story which gets our hearts beating fast. Typical examples are outbreaks of plague, Ebola, or Marburg Fever—but these are extremely rare with almost zero risk to travelers.

[Note: This page has modified extracts from a new/brief book on travel health by the author. The emphasis is practical material for the short-termers. The basic message is simple: There are important precautions which will help to prevent diarrhoea and dengue, altitude sickness and malaria, etc. **supplies@interhealth.org.uk**]