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Travel risk behaviors as a determinant of receiving pre-travel health consultation and prevention

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Background: An estimated 30-60% of travelers experience an illness while traveling. The incidence of travel-related illness can be reduced by preventive measures such as those provided by the Traveler Health Clinic (THC) in Kuwait.

Objectives: To identify the determinants of receiving pre-travel health consultation and the contents of this care.

Methods: The present study is an analytical comparative study between groups of travelers visiting the THC during the study period (May 2009 to December 2010) and an age and gender-matched control group of non-visitors (800 people). Both groups completed a modified pre-departure questionnaire.

Results: Bivariate analysis revealed that Kuwaitis (68.2%), those traveling for work (25.3%) or leisure (59.5%), those living in camps (20.4%) or hotels (64.0%) and those with knowledge of the THC from the media (28.1%) or other sources (57.3%), were more likely to be associated with a high frequency of visits to the THC ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, travelers heading to Africa (47%) and South America (10%) visited the THC more than did others ($P < 0.05$). Multivariate analysis revealed that nationality, followed by purpose of travel, duration of stay and choice of travel destination are independent predictors of receiving pre-travel consultation from the THC.

Conclusion: Nationality, purpose of travel, length of stay and travel destination are predictors for receiving a pre-travel consultation from the THC.

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Awareness and enhanced accessibility to immunization: Public health initiative in Pakistan

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Background: Pakistan is one the two countries where polio is still endemic. Immunization program in Pakistan is experiencing great challenges. However, Aga Khan University Hospital is providing services to the community and playing a pivotal role in creating mass awareness of immunization.

Objective: To enhance public awareness about immunization in order to decrease disease burden from the society through Pharmacist assistance.

Methodology: Pharmacist plays an important role in health care team as trainer, educator and motivator in immunization. In April 2013, as being part of strategic planning, Pharmacists were inducted at immunization center where they were involved in taking immunization histories, past and current medication records and ensuring the rational use of vaccines. WHO advisory body, on May 5, 2014 has imposed polio vaccine sanctions on Pakistani travelers. Every traveler of Pakistan has to be vaccinated with polio vaccine. Against this backdrop the role of Pharmacist was further enhanced. In October 2015, the phlebotomists training program was started under the supervision of immunization certified pharmacist in order to expand immunization services to phlebotomy centers operating in far flung areas of Pakistan in order to bring out the country from the disease burden.

Result & Conclusion: The idea opened new venues of decreasing the disease burden particularly polio from Pakistan. The patient volumes at vaccination center jumped to almost 100% in 2015 as compared to previous years. Till date around 50 phlebotomists had successfully completed the immunization training program and most of them had been inducted in various phlebotomy centers functioning in different areas of Sindh province.

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