BGTHA
The British Global and Travel Health Association

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Report on continuing expansion of Pertussis in Texas and Nevada (USA)

https://www.star-telegram.com/news/state/texas/article314775096.html

The somewhat old song by Pete Seeger in 1955 (and brought to my attention through the beautiful rendition by The Seekers) of "Where have all the flowers gone" has the rather poignant and repeated line "when will they ever learn" which remains so very relevant to the sad and desperate anti-vax situation in many parts of the world. Vaccines have been the cornerstone of public health for many decades and of course its success has been directly responsible for falling case numbers which has dampened the populations memory of the dreadfully serious consequences associated with these awful diseases.

Passengers warned as a traveller from Ethiopia to Israel identified with Measles

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/measles-patient-flew-from-ethiopia-to-tel-aviv-last-week-says-health-ministry/

To emphasis the point above the passengers on that flight have been contacted to ensure they are vaccinated against Measles but even by the time that occurs it is very likely that many others will have been exposed to a disease which has one of the highest rates of person to person transmission known. Just to emphasise the seriousness of this disease, in Israel there have been 16 measles related deaths over the past 9 months.

Measles cases in Auckland (New Zealand) linked to flight from Singapore

https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/587785/two-measles-cases-detected-linked-to-overseas-travel

And another worrisome report of an international flight associated case of Measles transmission. Perhaps WHO should be considering advising cover against Measles as a pre-travel requisite for all international travellers!

Cattle with Foot & Mouth Disease confirmed in Lesotho

https://news.az/news/lesotho-confirms-fmd-outbreak-near-border-with-south-africa

The main reason for including this report of foot & mouth among cattle for this edition of snippets is the potential for quarantine travel restrictions to be introduced at short notice which can lead to seriously affected travel plans for our patients.

Concern in Zambia as Polio virus identified in wastewater treatment plant in Lusaka

https://eastleighvoice.co.ke/africa/300537/zambia-declares-polio-outbreak-after-virus-detected-in-wastewater

Fundamentally as long as the use of the older live oral Polio Sabin vaccine is used within a country it is perfectly understandable that there will be evidence of polio virus within wastewater and to be fair that is part of the way a population can benefit from increased herd immunity. Nevertheless it is a reason why we should continue to recommend cover against polio (with the inactive Salk version) for our travellers to many of these regions.

Authorities in Cambodia announce a significant reduction in reports of Malaria during 2025

https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501850840/malaria-cases-plummet-by-84-as-health-officials-eye-total-elimination/

A little bit of encouraging news interspersed between the many problem reports! Not enough movement as yet to suggest total eradication of malaria but at least moving nicely in the right direction for a change.

Cases of flea-borne Typhus in California (USA) causing concern

https://dailytitan.com/news/increase-in-flea-borne-typhus-reported-in-fullerton/article_757724e0-ea12-4e11-b084-95685220093a.html

As if there were not enough health related problems within the USA, the numbers of cases of this flea-borne Rickettsial disease (Typhus) has significantly increased. Animal fleas may be one of the reasons for this increase so households are being advised to be carefully ensure their pets are cared for correctly and that any symptoms (animals or humans!) are treated urgently. Fortunately Doxycycline is still a useful medication for this family of diseases and usually works quickly.

Tourists return home from a short trip to Zanzibar with severe Malaria

https://unn.ua/en/news/two-women-in-lviv-region-diagnosed-with-tropical-malaria-after-vacationing-in-zanzibar

There have been a number of reports of tourists to Zanzibar returning home with Malaria and it is definitely worth us spending the time when our patients are seen in a pre-travel clinic to remind them of how serious this disease can be and the necessity to take their prophylaxis correctly.

Teenager dies of suspected Leptospirosis after exposure in a Forest Park swimming pool near Suva in Fiji

https://www.fijivillage.com/news/public-urged-to-avoid-colo-i-suva-after-teen-s-suspected-leptospirosis-death-485a8e/

A simple trip to a water park facility and three teenagers were sickened (with one dying) from suspected Leptospirosis. If the diagnosis is confirmed it would typically be linked with contamination of the pool after heavy flooding or from animal faecal contamination. The affected individuals frequently have open sores but of course trans-conjunctival infection is also a possibility.

Report on cases of Meningococcal Meningitis in Mali

https://outbreaknewstoday.substack.com/p/africa-mali-reports-increase-in-bacterial

This is of course the meningitis season across the infamous 'Meningitis Belt' of Sub-Saharan Africa and definitely wise for us to consider advising our travellers to these regions to ensure they have suitable cover.

Update on Meningitis outbreak in Ghana after 11 recent deaths
https://www.newsghana.com.gh/eleven-dead-and-counting-ghanas-meningitis-season-is-here-again/
A further report from one of the countries clearly within that 'Meningitis Belt' region. Fortunately for our travellers most of the risk is within the northern regions of these West African countries and areas seldom visited by the majority of our patients.

33 cases of suspected paralytic shellfish poisoning along the coast of the South China Sea (Guangdong, China)
https://cdcp.gd.gov.cn/ywdt/jkyw/content/post_4857120.html
Regular readers of these Snippets will be well aware of my disbelief as to why anyone would want to consume shellfish remembering that their diet comes from filtering the waters where they live and frequently that will be polluted by faecal contamination from nearby cities and other habitations. However many other marine life can also cause serious illness through dinoflagellate or cyanobacteria toxins where the incubation period from consumption to initial symptoms can be as short as 20 minutes! In case anyone is interested here is a link relating to shellfish and dinoflagellate toxicity
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470225/

Diners sickened after a seafood meal of snails, oysters and grilled horseshoe crab in Cá Mau (Vietnam)
https://vietnamnews.vn/society/1765931/seafood-poisoning-probe-launched-after-diners-hospitalised.html
These diners reported nausea, fatigue and numbness of the tongue within minutes of finishing their meal.

Canadian oysters recalled over a Noroviral risk identified in US States
https://foodpoisoningbulletin.com/2026/british-columbia-oysters-recalled-for-norovirus-outbreak/
Frequently symptoms commence up to 48 hours after consumption and so that may delay the diagnosis of the cause when the disease eventually becomes evident.

18,000 oysters placed in Dublin Bay in bid to establish reef (and improve the environment !)
https://www.rte.ie/news/dublin/2025/1107/1542623-oysters-dublin-bay/
Great. Oysters are being placed in Dublin Bay to help clean up the polluted waters. We can just hope and pray that these do not enter the food chain at least before they have completed their task and that generation of oysters has fully passed! Although unless the public health facilities are sorted this is and will continue to be an on-going problem.

Worker on a demolition site dies of Hantaviral infection in Minas Gerais (Brazil)
https://www.hojeemdia.com.br/minas/familia-de-servidor-que-morreu-apos-contrair-doenca-transmitida-por-ratos-vai-receber-r-50-mil-1.1104901
Reports of Hantaviral infection are coming through very frequently, mainly from South American countries. The disease is typically spread through rodent faecal / urine contamination and of course a particular risk for those working on demolition sites but also for any helping in regions of natural disaster after an earthquake or flooding.

Plans to limit bats in Tamaulipas (Mexico) to reduce the risk of Rabies transmission among cattle
https://expreso.press/2026/02/12/combate-tamaulipas-rabia-bovina-erradicando-murcielago-transmisor/
The very thought of coming across a rabid cow is downright frightening. However it is so well understood that dogs are the main transmitter of rabies to humans that perhaps at times we are lulled into a sense of false security if we are in the company of cats or monkeys or other animals – and that includes bats. One recognised risk is from the urine of rabies-infected bats which can be inhaled through dust particles if venturing into their habitats deep within caves.

63 recent cases of mosquito-borne Chikungunya identified in Kedah region of Malaysia (close to Penang)
https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2026/02/11/63-chikungunya-cases-reported-in-jitra-housing-area
Chikungunya virus is transmitted by the same family of mosquitoes as dengue, zika, Ross River fever, yellow fever and many other rather nasty diseases. The aedes mosquito is typically a day time biting creature and enjoys urban rather than rural habitats. Fever, sweating, shivering and shaking and coupled with arthritic and muscular aches and pains which can last for many (many) months and present like a 'sero-negative rheumatic arthritis' picture much to the confusion of everyone.

175 ill from food poisoning at fair held in Jharkhand (India)
https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/health/3807275-food-poisoning-outbreak-at-jharkhand-fair-175-fall-ill
We can have very similar mass food borne disease outbreaks in this part of the world and frequently they are associated with the poor hygiene facilities linked to 'pop-up' food vans parked within easy reach of the crowds lining up to enter sports stadiums. Mass preparation of foods, and its maintenance, is a special skill and not always practised correctly much to the detriment of many individual's health which is especially important if there is a short incubation period linked with an overuse of poorly maintained bathroom facilities. The name 'explosive diarrhoea' matches up to the experience of many!

Raw unpasteurised milk in Tennessee linked to increased cases of E coli infections
https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2026/feb/17/hamilton-county-health-department-says-raw-milk/
The consumption of any foods described as 'raw' takes fools courage.

The mosquito-borne Usutu Virus now recognised to be established in Luxembourg
https://www.lessentiel.lu/de/story/zoonose-das-usutu-virus-hat-sich-in-luxemburg-etabliert-103502641
Usutu is a mosquito-borne virus which is moving northwards and now recognised in a number of Western Europe countries. Many infections are asymptomatic but, like West Nile, unfortunately a small number of more severe cases are reported. This is particularly within the older and immune compromised populations. We now really do need to advise our travellers to mid and southern Europe to ensure they pack their mosquito repellent and to use it wisely.