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Zika identified in South Korea in a 40yo traveller returning from a short trip to Indonesia

<https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/2025-06-02/national/socialAffairs/Korea-confirms-first-Zika-virus-infection-case-of-the-year/2321269>

Through this column we have mentioned Zika on a number of occasions as it is certainly a continuing problem in many regions of the world. We regularly hear from our patients that they '*did an Internet search*' and that the number of Zika cases in country 'X' is now reported to be '*ridiculously small*' and so they '*presume that there really is no problem*' and surely that their pregnancy-related plans are '*not of any significance*'. Well, that really is not at all correct and we, as healthcare professionals dealing with these patients, need to explain very clearly that only one out of every five Zika infections presents with clinical symptoms and also that, even for that one individual, the symptoms are typically not that severe and they may not attend a medical practitioner. So the country statistics may be incorrectly showing the true level of Zika circulation within the local population. Secondly if the patient reports that the number of children born with microcephaly in country 'X' is now almost back to expected figures (remembering that this is a genetic condition which has always been present in every country – including the UK) then we need to explain something about immunology! After an initial Zika infection the individual should develop protective antibodies against the disease and so they may have subsequent babies unaffected by the Zika virus. However the only ones who are now at a particular risk are those within the population who initially avoided the infection but also us, travellers from non-risk regions of the world who have never previously been infected. Of course, Zika is not the only problem facing the international traveller but it certainly is one of the most emotive.

Five individuals contract Legionnaires' disease at a bathing facility in Yonago city (Japan)

<https://www.nnn.co.jp/articles/-/539734>

So, the option for a beautiful spa on a warm summers day what else could be more inviting? Perhaps avoiding Legionnaires' might be a consideration! There have been reports of this 'spray related' infection from many unexpected regions of the world so perhaps from our perspective it is just another option to have within the differential diagnosis when a patient presents with an unexplained pyrexia and a rapidly deteriorating clinical state. This is where taking a geographical and '*what were you doing before the symptoms started*' history from every patient may reap great rewards and actually also save the individual from the consequences of this frequently fatal disease.

89 sick with Cryptosporidiosis after visiting feeding sessions at a farm in South Wales (UK)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz9y44q59w4o>

Pet farms are a very popular destination for families with children both within our own country and also when we travel. Typically it is a great way to amuse the children for a few hours and the parents can sit back and relax! However there are a number of sensible precautions which should always be followed to lessen a terrific afternoon becoming a torrid trip to a local emergency department! In some regions of the world (frequently the USA) we hear reports of an alert being raised when one of the animals within a petting zoo has been diagnosed with rabies and there is a panic to try to contact all the families who attended the facility within the previous days. Of course bites from the animals happen too frequently but also there may be the risk of flea or tick exposure which needs to be considered. This report relates to the fact that cryptosporidia is an animal and a human disease and it takes only minimal exposure to animal faeces (or the lick of a tongue which recently was exposed to another animal's rear quarters!) to infect us unsuspecting souls with significant consequences! Sensibly washing of all hands before any food or drink is consumed will lower the unfortunate risks.

Raw shrimp or snails linked to cases of Angiostrongylus cantonensis in Mallorca (Balearic Islands, Spain)

<https://www.libertaddigital.com/ciencia-tecnologia/salud/2025-06-03/nueva-alerta-en-los-centros-preescolares-de-mallorca-por-el-el-riesgo-de-infeccion-por-el-gusano-pulmonar-de-la-rata-7261331/>

This report relates to a destination rather close to home and refers to this somewhat unusual but rather nasty parasitic condition which is definitely best avoided! Even the more recognised name of 'rat lungworm' may be enough to focus the mind on our dietary choices. We are back into being sensible with food and water and remembering that sufficient heat is a great refiner and kills most if not all bugs! The crucial word in that last sentence is 'sufficient'! When a meal is of something 'raw' it surely should be regarded as a warning sign and perhaps best avoided!

Chikungunya outbreak reported in Mombasa (Kenya) with at least 25 cases identified so far

<https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/112791-chikungunya-all-you-need-know-about-virus-spreading-mombasa>

So, mosquitoes continue to be a problem and definitely something best protected against when visiting their regions of our world – which is almost every warmer country and now known to be spreading into Western Europe and even the UK (see below!). We covered Chikungunya during the last BGTHA conference so hopefully most of you remember that this mosquito borne disease (typically through the Aedes warrior) causes symptoms similar to Dengue but with arthritic pains and aches and muscular spasms which can easily last for many months or even into years. We don't have any treatment as yet but two vaccines are undergoing evaluation so perhaps there will be some relief in the not-too-distant future. Avoiding any aspirin or non-steroidal based medications is important in any suspected case as that could increase capillary permeability.

BBC report on mosquito borne West Nile Virus confirmed in UK

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c77115e0645o>

West Nile is another of these arboviral infections transmitted by mosquitoes. To date there have been no human cases reported but the fact that the mosquitoes have the virus may just mean that its progression into the human population is close at hand. Fortunately infection with this virus typically causes mild symptoms but there are of course exceptions.

Festival attendance in Germany linked to significant spread of Measles

<https://www.freyung-grafenau.de/verwaltung-und-politik/pressemeldungen/details/masern-im-landkreis-freyung-grafenau-gesundheitsamt-meldet-sechs-infektionsfaelle>

Crowding people together and breathing the same air clearly is a risk factor for any of the respiratory diseases (and crowding also increases skin-to-skin related problems) so it is hardly surprising that this festival has been linked to a measles outbreak among those who attended. For our usual travellers perhaps they won't be attending mass gatherings but very frequently they will be travelling on crowded trains, or on buses definitely not designed for the number crushed on board (along with a multitude of miscellaneous animals!), so that may be their personal exposure to various health-related problems.

Concern as more cases of Malaria are identified in Torres Strait Islands region of Australia

<https://www.msn.com/en-au/news/australia/queensland-health-investigating-second-locally-acquired-malaria-case-in-the-torres-strait-islands/ar-AA1G6bHM>

Poor Australia's population don't just have to deal with crocodiles, snakes and spiders. They now have a number of mosquito borne diseases spreading through their massive country. OK, so the Torres Strait Islands (off Queensland) are not the most popular tourist destination, and yes they do have a mosquito problem, but it is reports like this one which may prove to be a sentinel warning of how easily these diseases can become established and lead to a significant public health concern.

Significant increase in cases of Hepatitis A and Hepatitis E in Kerala

<https://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=1282405>

When I was young we just had 'Yellow Jaundice' as the description for this family of viruses and the diagnosis of the disease being related to 'food and water' was frequently down to the fact that other (now known) causes could not possibly have been in play as we were all so very well behaved and body fluid / sexual contact was surely not possible! So the world has changed and of course we are far more aware of human activities and this family of viruses continues to grow and cause issues for our travellers. Kerala must be one of the most popular destinations for many of our patients so ensuring they have cover against Hepatitis A (and possibly Hepatitis B too) is clearly worthwhile although, as we don't have any vaccine for Hepatitis E, they still need to be careful of their dietary choices.

Delayed onset of Rabies in Spain following a dog bite in Ethiopia 11 months previously

<https://www.abc.es/espana/comunidad-valenciana/hospitalizado-grave-valencia-hombre-rabia-contraida-etiofia-20250604193650-nt.html>

Another sad but essential reminder that the incubation period for rabies can range from very short (literally days) to many years (occasionally even decades) so all potential exposures have to be treated with the utmost of care and correct post-exposure protocols must be followed even if the exposure was a significantly long time ago.

32yo traveller from Ireland returns from India with Brucellosis after drinking unpasteurised goat's milk

<https://www.agriland.ie/farming-news/man-contracted-brucellosis-after-handling-buffalo-on-trip-to-india/>

I think it is safe to say that 'unpasteurised' equals 'raw' so it really is not that surprising that there would be risks involved! Brucellosis can be quite a hard condition to deal with but primarily perhaps because the clinicians frequently don't initially consider it within their differential diagnosis. Again, that is where taking a geographical history is essential as perhaps the patient may reveal '*well I did drink unpasteurised milk from a goat*' which could perhaps speed up the diagnosis – although salmonella and other bacterial or parasitic diseases would then also be within that expanding list!

52yo Chinese traveller returns home from a 2 week trip to Wisconsin (USA) with tick-borne Babesiosis

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40249-025-01311-x>

In what is historically regarded as a 'first-world' country, the range of vector borne diseases across the USA staggers the mind and frequently leads to a delayed diagnosis because of '*the patient only visited the USA*' mentality. Just remember that the 'Black Death' (flea borne Bubonic Plague) which wiped out populations in the Middle Ages is now eradicated from all but 6 or 7 countries throughout the world – although reports still come through from the USA! Now you can add Babesiosis to the list of US related diseases which may need to be considered in a returning traveller.

Patient with Plague in Pueblo County (Colorado)

<https://county.pueblo.org/public-health-department/public-health-officials-investigating-human-plague-case-pueblo-county>

Plague in South Dakota (USA)

<https://www.powelltribune.com/stories/plague-confirmed-in-south-dakota,130120>

Death from Plague in New Mexico (USA)

<https://www.nmhealth.org/news/information/2024/3/?view=2071>

Over 100 ill from food poisoning after meal at temple in Tamil Nadu (India)

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/tamil-nadu/story/107-devotees-hospitalised-food-poisoning-tamil-nadu-temple-feast-virudhunagar-2739283-2025-06-11>

Another mass gathering associated with illness. "**Boil it, Peel it, Cook it or forget it**"

Russian report states that 100 individuals contracted tick-borne Anaplasmosis in Moscow region

<https://m.avtoradio.ru/news/uid/484142/city/276>

OK, so not that many of our patients are travelling to Russia at this time but clearly ticks and mosquitoes continue to cause havoc in many regions of the world and that includes many regions within Western Europe where we have heaps of our patients travelling over the next months. Take care of yourselves but also ensure you are aware of risks to which your patients may have been exposed so you don't "***exclude the diagnosis you have never even considered***"