

Ahamed Faleel A.F., Noorul Haq F.N.

SIGNIFICANT INFECTIONS FOR TOURISTS IN INDIA AND SRI LANKA

Tutor: PhD, professor Dotsenko M.L.

Department of Infectious Diseases

Belarusian State Medical University, Minsk

In recent times, people travel a lot and with travelling comes the risk of acquiring infections. Therefore, it's important for tourists to be aware of the types of infections they might contract while traveling, and take needed precautions. Our research focuses on the significant infections that travellers may acquire while traveling to two of the most famous destinations in South Asia - India and Sri Lanka - and the measures to prevent them.

To begin with, tourists to India and Sri Lanka, are advised to be up-to-date with all routine vaccines before the trip, which includes Chickenpox, DTP, MMR, BCG, Polio and Shingles. Apart from these, WHO also recommends vaccination against - Covid-19, Hepatitis A&B, Japanese Encephalitis, Rabies, Typhoid, and Yellow Fever.

Malaria is a non-vaccine preventable disease and a major international public health problem. India accounts for 4% of the global malaria burden (Susanta K Ghosh., Manju Rahi (2019)), therefore all travellers to India must strictly follow a combination of mosquito avoidance measures and chemoprophylaxis. Whereas, Sri Lanka reported the last case of domestic malaria in October 2012, and received malaria free certification from WHO in September 2016, according to Dharmawardena.P et al (2021).

Amongst the enteric infections, traveller's diarrhea is at the top, with up to 40% chance of developing within 2 weeks of stay (Kuenzil,E et al (2017)) . More than 2/3rd of travellers surveyed in India experienced inadequate sanitation and hygiene services. (Chandra, R. et al (2022)). Hepatitis E and Giardiasis are also enteric infections that can be prevented by not drinking contaminated water; also, boiling and chlorination of water and proper hand hygiene.

Bird flu, Hanta virus and endemic fungi are few of the respiratory infections prevalent in the territory. Bird Flu prevention includes minimising contact with wild birds and dead poultry and wearing gloves and N95 masks. Travellers should avoid places infested by rodents in addition to other non-specific prophylactic measures to prevent Hanta viral infection.

Leptospirosis is a mainly water borne infection, and has fatal outcomes if left untreated. The chances of acquiring leptospirosis greatly reduces if travellers refrain from swimming in water bodies that may have been contaminated with animal urine. Protective clothing should be worn when travellers are exposed to potentially contaminated water.

Main vector-borne infections in India and Sri Lanka are Dengue, Chikungunya and Zika virus. In Sri Lanka incidence of dengue increased 20-fold from the year 2000 to 2012 and a further 3-fold from 2012 to 2019 (Malavige, G.N., et al (2021)). Protection against mosquito bites during the day and early evening is a key measure to prevent these infections.

In conclusion, when travelling to India and Sri Lanka, travellers can come in contact with a wide range of infections. Travellers must be well informed about the types of infections they may acquire, and their modes of transmission. Therefore, it is extremely important for travellers to strictly follow the vaccination regimes that's recommended by the WHO, use chemoprophylaxis for Malaria, and other non-specific protective measures.