

## **The schistosomiasis consultation: travel health professionals' knowledge and confidence**

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**Background:** Schistosomiasis, a neglected tropical disease (NTD), is a parasitic infection endemic to 78 countries. This survey evaluates travel health professional's confidence and knowledge of schistosomiasis.

**Methods:** Following a literature review of comparable studies, schistosomiasis-related questions were incorporated into an annual Survey Monkey questionnaire distributed among UK Yellow Fever Vaccine Centres (YFVCs). A Likert scale assessed respondents' confidence in advising on NTDs and schistosomiasis. Multiple-response questions evaluated their knowledge of high-risk scenarios and health guidelines. Data were analysed using Excel and GraphPad Prism and presented as summary statistics.

**Results:** Of the 1703 YFVCs, there were 1348 eligible responses (79.2 % response rate); primarily from nurses (52.2%), and pharmacists (40.5%). Most do not advise on NTDs (57.7%) during travel consultations and expressed either little or some confidence when on NTDs (64.3%), including schistosomiasis (63.2%). Those advising on NTDs reported higher confidence when providing schistosomiasis advice (38.7% vs 5.2%). Few respondents (4.2%) answered all schistosomiasis knowledge questions correctly; although 80% correctly identified Lake Malawi as high-risk and acknowledged the absence of a schistosomiasis vaccine. Common pitfalls included the misclassification of countries as high-risk (Peru; 22.3%) and low-risk (Madagascar; 27%).

**Conclusion:** Most surveyed health professionals do not discuss NTDs during travel health consultations. Despite accurate responses to key knowledge questions, respondents reported a lack of confidence and demonstrated limited nuanced schistosomiasis knowledge. Although further evaluation is needed to understand these findings, the identified knowledge gap can inform future guidelines and education.