

Prevalence of Injuries among International Travelers Visiting Southeast Asia: An Airport Survey

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Background:

Underreporting of non-fatal injuries among international travelers obscures their true impact on morbidity, highlighting the need to identify their prevalence for effective prevention.

Material and methods:

International travelers completing trips in Southeast Asia were invited to answer a self-administered online questionnaire at Bangkok International Airport, covering demographic profiles, travel characteristics, preparations, injuries, and outcomes.

Result:

From August 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, 2,547 international travelers participated to the study, with a median age of 33 (range: 18–83), representing from 98 countries (49.7% from Asia), and an average stay of 10 days. Around 90% neglected pre-travel consultation, and merely one-third of those seeking advice were informed about the risks of injury. Approximately 40.3% reported holding travel insurance.

Among the respondents, 98 injuries from 73 participants resulted in a 2.9% prevalence rate. Falling, constituting 50% of injuries, included 10% involving substance use. Recreational/adventure activities contributed 17.8%; 70% related to water recreational activities. Road and traffic injuries constituted 16.4%, with 70% arising from motorcycles. Animal-related injuries occurred in 15% of cases, and notably, five potential rabies-exposed individuals did not receive the rabies vaccine. Violence and other causes comprised 4% and 8% of those with injuries, respectively.

Approximately 50% of injuries required medical attention, with one-fifth requiring hospital visits. Around 20% covered medical expenses themselves.

Conclusion:

Injuries, though infrequent, pose a significant health concern, especially with hospital visits among international travelers, necessitating targeted interventions to minimize their impact.