

Chikungunya risk in travelers returning to France, 2025.

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Introduction: In 2025, several sudden, large, and explosive chikungunya (CHIK) outbreaks occurred worldwide. France recorded a marked increase in imported CHIK cases from these affected areas, underscoring the risk for travelers. This study aims to describe the incidence of CHIK infection in French travelers returning from different outbreak areas.

Materials and Methods: We compiled estimated monthly numbers of French imported CHIK cases from La Réunion, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Mayotte, and Mauritius based on official weekly Epidemiological Bulletins.

When available, we combined these data with flight ticket booking data (IATA) as a denominator to estimate monthly incidences of imported CHIK cases to France.

Results: Incidence trends among travelers returning from La Réunion closely mirrored the sharp and compact epidemic curve observed locally. Although lower than locally observed, imported incidences exceeded 1.700 cases/100.000 travelers at peak and remained above 100 cases/100.000 travelers for four months.

Looking at other outbreak areas, estimated peak incidences ranged from ~100 to 2.089 cases/100.000 travelers for Sri Lanka and Cuba, respectively, whether an outbreak was officially reported or not at the time of infection.

Conclusions: Estimated incidences among French travelers highlight a substantial risk of CHIK infection when visiting areas with ongoing outbreaks. In several instances, outbreaks were not officially reported while infected travelers were already returning (i.e. Madagascar, Cuba). These findings should be considered while counselling travelers, particularly for expatriates, frequent travelers, and individuals visiting friends and relatives in regions at risk for CHIK outbreaks.