Fatal Dengue in Travellers from Non-Endemic Countries: A Targeted Review of Reported Deaths (1995–2025)

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Background:

Dengue frequently affects travellers to the 136 endemic countries and territories. Reporting of dengue-related deaths in travellers is inconsistent and fragmented, limited by underreporting, misdiagnosis, and lack of laboratory confirmation.

Methods:

A targeted review of peer-reviewed and grey literature was conducted to identify fatal dengue cases among travellers from non-endemic countries (January 1995–November 2025). PubMed, global public health agency databases, national surveillance registries, media reports, and conference proceedings were searched using dengue-, traveller-, and death-related terms.

Results:

Sixty traveller deaths were identified, with 51 confirmed as dengue-related based on reported diagnostic method and/or inclusion in national surveillance/registries. Countries of residence and infection were available for 21/51 confirmed cases, with infections originating in 13 endemic countries. The 51 cases spanned all ages (<1–79 years) and included 13 females and 11 males. DENV-1 (n=3), DENV-2 (n=4), and DENV-3 (n=5) were most frequently identified. Both primary (n=9) and secondary (n=3) infections resulted in death. The remaining 9 cases are reported as dengue-related fatalities in news (n=3), conference abstracts (n=2), journals (n=3), or anecdotally (n=1) but without sufficient detail to confirm diagnoses.

Discussion and Conclusions:

Fatal dengue is rare in travellers, but deaths occur across all age groups. Primary dengue infections can be fatal, consistent with previous observations and warranting further attention given potential implications for prevention strategies. Many cases remain hidden in national public health databases with limited detail, and some, such as deaths occurring abroad, are not recorded, contributing to under-recognition of fatal dengue in travellers.