

Dengue, chikungunya and Zika in travellers: a single-centre cross-sectional study

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Background

Arboviral infections, particularly dengue, chikungunya, and Zika, represent a growing risk for international travellers returning from tropical and subtropical regions. We aimed to describe the epidemiological and travel-related characteristics of laboratory-confirmed cases managed at a single tertiary centre.

Methods

This retrospective cross-sectional study included travellers diagnosed with dengue, chikungunya, or Zika virus infection between 1 September 2022 and 31 December 2025. Demographic and travel-related data were analysed descriptively.

Results

A total of 72 patients were identified: dengue in 59, chikungunya in 8, and Zika in 5 cases. Median age was 43 years (IQR 32–53); 29 patients were male and 43 female. Most infections were travel-related during tourism (63; 87.5%), followed by work-related travel (6; 8.3%) and visits to friends and relatives (2; 2.8%).

Geographically, exposures occurred mainly in South Asia (31; 43.1%) and Southeast Asia (27; 37.5%), followed by Latin America (11; 15.3%) and sub-Saharan Africa (3; 4.2%). All chikungunya cases were diagnosed in 2025. Zika infections were recorded in 2023 (3 cases) and 2025 (2 cases). Dengue was detected throughout the study period and represented the predominant diagnosis.

Conclusions

Dengue remains the most frequent arboviral infection among returning travellers, particularly from South and Southeast Asia. The temporal clustering of chikungunya cases in 2025 and intermittent Zika detections highlight the dynamic nature of arboviral transmission. Continuous surveillance and targeted pre-travel counselling are essential to improve prevention and early diagnosis in returning travellers.