

What do travellers know about arboviral infections? Insights from a survey of NHS travel clinic attendees.

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Background:

Understanding travellers' baseline knowledge of arboviral infections is important for tailoring effective pre-travel health advice.

Materials and Methods:

An anonymous questionnaire was administered to travellers attending NHS Lothian travel clinics prior to consultation with a travel health professional. The survey explored awareness of arboviral infections, knowledge of transmission and prevention, perceptions regarding vaccines and treatment, and intended mosquito bite prevention behaviours. Questions included multiple-choice and free-text responses. Responses were analysed descriptively to identify patterns in traveller knowledge, attitudes and intended protective behaviours.

Results:

Awareness of arboviral infections among travellers was variable. Many respondents recognised commonly discussed infections such as yellow fever and dengue; however, knowledge of other arboviruses was less consistent. Uncertainty was frequently observed regarding mosquito transmission patterns and the availability of vaccines for arboviral diseases. Healthcare professionals, traditional media and personal research were commonly reported sources of information. Most respondents reported intending to use mosquito bite prevention measures while travelling, particularly insect repellent and protective clothing. Free-text responses indicated that travellers would generally seek medical advice if symptoms developed while abroad, although uncertainty remained regarding appropriate management and symptom recognition. Despite these knowledge gaps, a majority of respondents reported confidence in their ability to protect themselves from mosquito-borne infections.

Conclusion:

Travellers attending pre-travel clinics demonstrate variable understanding of arboviral infections, with notable gaps in knowledge relating to transmission, vaccines and prevention strategies. Identifying these gaps can help guide more targeted education during travel consultations and strengthen pre-travel risk communication.