

Development of a web site for information of the general public regarding travel diseases endemic in the Mediterranean basin: the Greek Case

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Introduction

Travelers to different countries should be aware of the potential for acquiring diseases and injury which are not common in their own country. Immunizations, preventative medications, and general precautions should be considered prior to trips to different parts of the world. [1]

Immunizations against diseases such as rabies, tetanus, diphtheria etc may be recommended or required for travelers to certain countries, as well as preventative medications against traveler's diarrhea, malaria, and tuberculosis may be necessary. Information on Travel Diseases, Vaccination requirements and general Travel Health advice are readily available through the WHO and the Department of Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response (CSR). Additionally, CDC also provides information on current travel medical recommendations and requirements for various countries all over the world.

Scope and Methods

The Departments of Epidemiology, Infectious Diseases and Health Informatics of the Faculty of Nursing, University of Athens in collaboration with KEELPNO (Travel Medicine Office) attempted the development of a website in order to inform the general public on travel diseases in the Mediterranean basin. [2] The knowledge base included in the web site consists of three parts. In the first part conceptual entities regarding information on Risk factors, Education, Symptoms and Treatment are included. In the second part the importance of the use of internet is highlighted. In the third and last part the website is presented with specific implementation tools.

For the development of the website Joomla CMS was used [3]. The development of website follows certain guidelines in order to preserve the quality of the information provided [9]. Thirty one travel diseases endemic to the Mediterranean basin have been chosen for the aim of this study, [4,5,6,7]. Risk Factors, Symptoms, Prevention and Treatment are provided for each one of the 31 travel diseases. In the second part of this study the importance of the use of the Internet within Health Care is presented [8].

Discussion

Since this is the first attempt in developing a web site concerning travel diseases in Greece, it is hoped that it will be a useful tool both for travelers, health professionals and the general public. The website does not aim to present knowledge that is not available by WHO, CDC and other related sites. The aim is to function as an information source but also as a Greek platform interlinked with the international knowledge base. This is the reason, why one of the three sections of the portal is dedicated almost entirely to the web sources available through a clean and organized presentation.

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