

The travel industry should inform travelers about malaria, say doctors

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Tour operators and airlines are wasting an ideal opportunity to warn travellers about the risk of contracting malaria in specific countries, say infectious disease experts on BMJ.com today.

The authors reviewed 27 travel brochures from British tour companies and found that only 12 contained any information about malaria, yet they all featured holidays to African countries where the disease is endemic.

Tour operators are really missing a trick here, say the authors, as this would be an ideal place to target travellers about malaria and the need to take preventative medication.

The authors call on the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to provide guidance on malaria.

Currently IATA advises member airlines on how to disinfect aircraft to remove insects, but offers no health advice to travellers. This means that people travelling independently to visit relatives in countries that have malaria may not receive any information about this potentially life-threatening disease.

"We believe that the travel industry has an obligation to improve the quantity and quality of the malaria advice it provides [and] for independent travellers, malaria advice should be provided by the airline, for example on the ticket itself."

Source: British Medical Journal

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