Travel Medicine, 2nd Edition

Travel medicine has become a unique discipline devoted to the well-being of international travelers through health promotion and disease prevention. The evolution of this specialty owes its origin to the marked increase in global travel with virtually any destination reachable within 36 h of travel, well within the incubation time of most infectious diseases, as the preface of this text emphasizes. The authors, all known experts in the field, have crafted a practical “how-to” book targeted primarily at all levels of travel medicine practitioners; it does not attempt to comprehensively cover post-travel illness. It reads easily, has bulleted key points highlighted at the beginning of each chapter, and covers 11 broad aspects of travel medicine in 57 chapters. It ends with a useful glossary of the treatment of common tropical diseases and an outline of “The Body of Knowledge for the Practice of Travel Medicine” used for guiding professionals to identify the scope of competencies needed to ensure good patient care as well as to achieve a Certificate of Knowledge in Travel Medicine.

The first 3 sections encompass a comprehensively arranged approach to pre-travel health and preventative care. The first section, “The Practice of Travel Medicine,” is written by authors involved with the International Society of Travel Medicine, thus offering a worldwide perspective of travel clinic practice. This section reviews how to run a travel clinic, with helpful sample forms and an exhaustive list of online travel medicine resources. In the next edition, guidance such as useful friendliness ratings of these Web sites would benefit the new practitioner. For example, most travel clinics use software programs for disease risk, epidemiology, and vaccine recommendations to permit up-to-date access to a large body of changing information. However, the odd listing of these packages under “non-governmental destination specific database services” is awkward and enconcenched within a table of over 130 Web sites. However, the section on the organization of a clinic, particularly the startup, marketing, and revenue discussion, is excellent, as is a clear table on troubleshooting the top 10 problems.

The pre-travel consultation section reviews risk management and communication with excellent chapters on water disinfection, insect repellents, and travel kits. Field water disinfection techniques are described, and preferred technique of disinfection depending on the number of people, quality of source water, and taste preferences is noted. A helpful chart of products with costs is included.

The chapters involving pre-travel vaccination are up-to-date and contain excellent tables and maps illustrating the geographic distribution of many of the diseases in question. Although a relatively comprehensive section, it could be argued that the new human papillomavirus recombinant vaccine and herpes zoster vaccine could now be considered pre-travel “catch-up” vaccines if the age-appropriate traveler presents to clinic. Malaria epidemiology, chemoprophylaxis, diagnosis, and treatment are covered with excellent graphics and algorithms. Although generally up to date, a brief discussion of the emerging role of Plasmodium knowlesi infection in humans in these chapters would have been useful, as would have been some photographs of actual malaria smears, treatment dosing of antimalarial agents (including the intravenous and oral artemisinin preparations newly accessible in the United States), and indications for exchange transfusion in severe malaria. Travelers’ diarrhea is comprehensively covered, from perspectives on epidemiology and prophylaxis to the clinical presentation and management of travelers’ diarrhea, with succinct reviews of recent comparative studies on the agents used for prevention and treatment in different regions of the world. Although this text does not attempt to focus on post-travel illness, it has excellent brief chapters on post-travel syndromic approaches to fever, eosinophilia, respiratory diseases, travelers’ diarrhea, and dermatologic conditions, with excellent supporting photographs. Other topics include several chapters on travelers with special needs and many on the environmental aspects of travel.

In summary, this 2nd edition of the premier text in travel medicine is an invaluable resource for any level of travel health provider with its superbly clear writing, high quality educational algorithms, bullet highlights, and quality graphics. It is the most comprehensive text of its kind and comes with an access code that permits one to search the entire text online, enabling the reader to consult it rapidly with any internet connection during an office interaction. Kudos to the editors and authors.

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