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This volume of *Travel Medicine*, a reference textbook, could not have been more timely. Just a century ago, Orville and Wilbur Wright achieved the first powered flight, which lasted 12 seconds and covered 120 feet—less than the length of a Boeing 747. This was the shape of things to come: between 1950 and 2002 the number of international arrivals grew from 25 million to 703 million with continued growth predicted. The “shrinking” world demonstrated the need to protect the health of travellers and, concomitantly, to develop and rapidly expand travel medicine as a distinct specialty. The WHO recognised the importance of this specialty with the establishment of three WHO collaborating centers for travel medicine, in Italy, Switzerland, and the UK.

*Travel Medicine* is edited by internationally renowned experts in the field of travel medicine and is written as an instructional “how-to” book to support the practice of travel medicine. It will, therefore, be of interest to all those involved in the clinical practice of travel medicine including health-care practitioners in primary care, occupational health, infectious diseases, tropical medicine, and, of course, travel medicine practitioners per se.

The book is divided up into 11 separate sections encompassing 57 chapters. The clinical practice of travel medicine is often considered, inaccurately, as applying only to the prevention of infectious diseases. The contents of this book demonstrate the comprehensive approach to travel medicine.

The book starts with a chapter on understanding the basic principles and practice of travel medicine. Subsequent sections are devoted to vaccine-preventable diseases, the prevention of malaria, and the prevention of travellers’ diarrhoea, these being the more commonly encountered clinical issues. The chapter on immunisations includes references to every travel-related vaccine-preventable disease accompanied by clear algorithms, tables, and disease-specific maps. The authors should be commended for providing a four-page summary of commonly administered travel vaccines. The chapter does, however, reflect North American schedules of administration of vaccines—for example, recommendations for the use of immunoglobulin for the prevention of hepatitis A, no longer available in Europe, and monovalent tetanus vaccine, no longer available in the UK. An important omission is that of the availability of a combination hepatitis A/typhoid vaccine, which has been licensed in the UK and Europe for the past 3 years.

Co-authored by writers of international standing in this important subject area, the chapter on malaria chemoprophylaxis is excellent. The different malaria chemoprophylactic regimes are presented clearly with the use of many tables to complement the descriptive text. The chapters on the topic of travellers’ diarrhoea cover the subject well, although the very short chapter on self-diagnosis and treatment is a repetitive inclusion in this section.

The following sections review the clinical topics concerning travellers with special needs, which are covered comprehensively. The chapter on issues surrounding international adoption is a novel and relevant inclusion for consideration. The chapter on visiting friends and relatives is, however, limited by the important omission of the risk of infection with childhood diseases. These include measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella as well as poliomyelitis, which continue to present a risk in particular to those visiting the Indian subcontinent and several other countries where wild-type poliovirus still circulates.

The section describing the psychological aspects of travel medicine includes references published mostly in German. The inclusion of a chapter on cultural adaptation is unnecessary, as is the specific chapter on environmental issues in the following section. The last section, unusually entitled “Post-travel care” describes the management of a traveller returning unwell. The inclusion of a chapter on eosinophilia is too detailed, although the chapter on respiratory disease includes reference to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which is important since respiratory disease is a significant cause of illness in travellers with the potential of importation, as well exemplified by influenza A and SARS.

The lack of contributions from more authors outside North America is disappointing and such additional representation may have helped provide a more balanced review of some of the topics. Some of the chapters are so brief that the editors may consider their omission in future editions, and the lack of detailed description of the relevant infectious diseases will make access to a reference book necessary.

Overall, this is a well-presented reference textbook, which is a welcome addition to the other two currently available reference textbooks in travel medicine. A CD-ROM is also included, which contains all the colour illustrations and guidelines accompanying the text. This book is a valuable resource for those interested in or practising travel medicine and will also support the educational activities available within this specialty.

**Jane N Zuckerman**
This book is published by Elsevier, of which *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* is part.