



Safety and security issues of travellers in the 21st Century

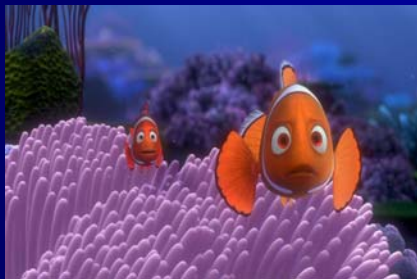
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Acknowledgments

- World Safety Organization



Greetings from Australia!



Greetings from Australia!



Overview of presentation

- Should travellers be concerned about their safety abroad?
- Are travellers concerned about their safety abroad?
- Are travel health advisors concerned about discussing safety?
- What can we do?
- Importance of safety nets



"I'm afraid we're going to have to head back, folks. ... We've got a warning light on up here, and darn if it isn't the big one."

Should travellers be concerned about their safety abroad?

The Importance of Travel Health Measures

100,000 travellers to the developing world for 1 month...

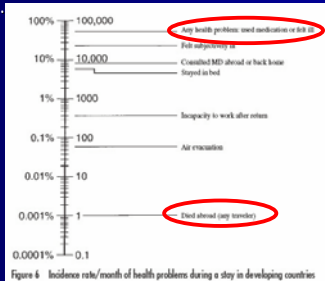
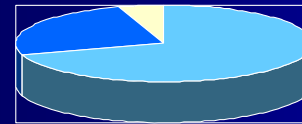


Figure 4 Incidence rate/month of health problems during a stay in developing countries
Steffen et al, Manual of Travel Medicine and Health 2003

The Importance of Travel Health Measures

Deaths of travellers abroad...



- Pre-existing diseases
- Accidents, violence & trauma
- Infectious diseases

Reid and Cossar, BMJ 1993;257:268; Procvic, MJA, 1995;163:27-30; Baker et al., PHR 1992;107:155-159; MacPherson et al., JTM, 2000; 2000:227-233; Steffen, Trans RSTM&H 1991;85: 156-162; Leggat et al., in press.

Motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of death of travellers abroad, travellers should be advised to use common sense using transport abroad



Tourist Mortality: 2 year Thai study

- Major single incidents
 - Domestic jet plane crash
 - Hotel fire
 - Cable car accident
- Frequent incidents
 - Bus/minivan accidents
 - Motor cycle accidents
 - Ferry/tour boat accidents
 - Incidental drownings / water sport accidents
 - Serial lethal mugging incidents (Int'l airport)



Leggat et al., 2003

Accidents involving tourists are newsworthy, particularly those involving multiple casualties!

- 5 road accidents (buses-3, cars-2)
 - 16 deaths and 86 injured (mostly tourists)
- 3 ferry and tour boat accidents
 - 12 deaths & at least 33 injured (mostly tourists)
- 1 cable car accident (North Thailand)
 - 3 deaths and 35 injured (mostly Thai tourists)
- 1 domestic aircraft crash (South Thailand)
 - 101 deaths and 45 injured were reported (unknown number of tourists)
- 1 hotel fire (southeast Thailand)
 - 90 people perished (mostly Thai tourists)
- 11 muggings and other violent incidents
 - 8 deaths and 6 injured (all tourists)



Leggat PA et al, 2003

Mortality: 2 yr Thai study

- 11 muggings and other violent incidents
 - 8 deaths and 6 injured
 - All were foreigners.
 - 6 deaths were reportedly connected to the scam at the airport in Bangkok involving unlicensed airport taxis.

Leggat et al. Travel Med Inf Dis 2003;1:107-113

Muggings: Case study

- "Bangkok, 6 June 1999- warning issued against taking unlicensed taxis from Bangkok's international airport.



Muggings: Case study

- This was after allegations that Thai authorities concealed an investigation into the murder of at least six foreigners during the previous 10 months.
- All were apparently lured into unlicensed taxis on arrival in Bangkok, usually at Terminal 2, taken to isolated areas on the outskirts of the city, robbed and murdered."

(ref: www.dfat.gov.au)

Types of problems are claimed on travel insurance

Loss/theft/muggings 25%

Medical

- Respiratory 20%
- Musculoskeletal 17%
- Gastrointestinal 14%
- Ear, nose & throat 12%
- Dental problems 7%
- Cardiovascular 6%
- Dermatological 5%

(Leggat et al., 2002)

Challenge #1

In terms of personal safety, it is important for travellers not to be a target!



Morbidity: Acts of assault, muggings & theft

- "Westerners" travelling in developing countries are considered "rich"
- Even tattered "Nike's can be a prize!"
- Travellers should carry just what they need and given advice on personal safety and security



Travellers have also been confronted by terrorism/civil unrest

- Significant acts of terrorism- some have been directed towards travellers
 - 9/11
 - Bali bombings
- Travellers can be caught up in civil unrest

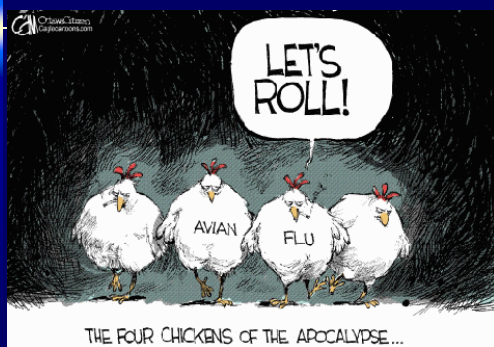


Travellers can be caught up in natural disasters: Tsunami



- Indian Ocean Tsunami hit southwest part of Thailand on 26 December 2004
- About 5000 deaths, half of these were foreigners/tourists

Travellers can be affected by EIDs: Will Avian Flu be the next pandemic?



Are travellers concerned about their safety?

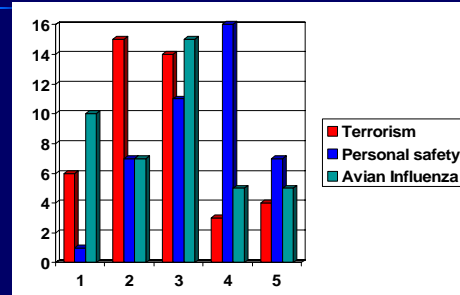
Yes, they are!

Major Amex study in 1999

- More than 75% of travellers concerned about safety when travelling overseas

Australian travellers concerns

Leggat et al. J Travel Med. 2007; 14: 212-6; Leggat et al. Travel Med Inf Dis. 2007; 5: 53-6



Not concerned

Extremely concerned

Interestingly, there was also some awareness of bird flu



Are travel health advisers concerned about travellers safety?

Australian & New Zealand GPs

- About 50% of GPs in Australia would normally advise travellers about personal safety abroad (Seelan & Leggat 2002)
- About 50% of GPs in New Zealand would normally advise travellers about personal safety abroad (Leggat et al., 1998)

Travel clinics worldwide

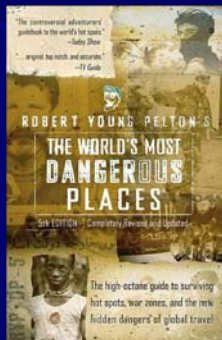
- About 70% of travel clinics worldwide would regularly advise travellers about personal safety abroad (Hill et al., 1996)

What more can we do about travellers safety abroad?

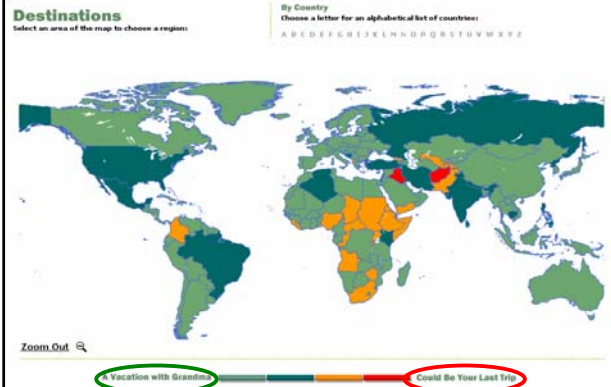
Hopefully most of your travellers are going to typical tourist destinations in this type of guide...



That don't feature in this one!



http://comebackalive.com



Travel advisories have assumed great importance

Travel advisories should be included in the pre-travel health consultation

Travellers need an edge...

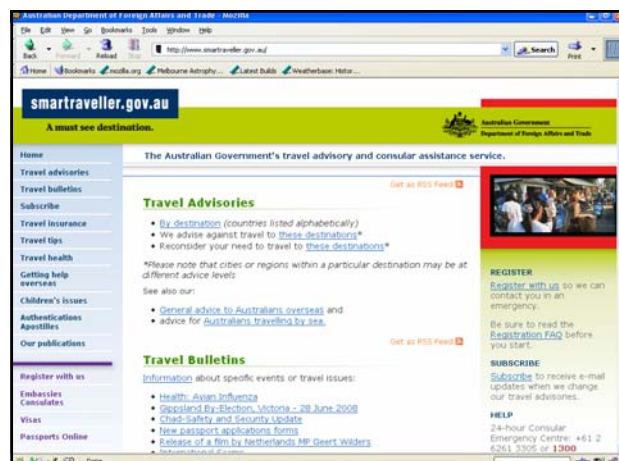


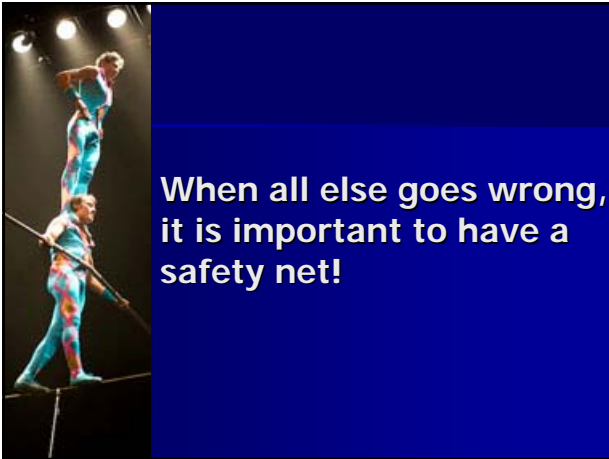
www.cia.gov

Destination specific information needed...

Need to know the types of safety and security concerns at each destination...

Ability to register with local embassy can also be useful...





When all else goes wrong,
it is important to have a
safety net!

Travel insurance is probably the most important safety net for travellers today

Other measures might include first aid training, travellers' medical kit, making copies of important documents/keeping them with someone etc...

See Smartraveller



What are the chances of something going wrong?

Major study with Australian travel insurer

Approx 20,000 policies issued each year (incl. Exec. Gold)

- About 1600 claims (8%)
- 400 claims for emergency assistance (2%)
- 80 ER or clinic referrals (0.4%)
- 46 Hospital admissions (0.2%)
- 10 Aeromedical evacuations (0.05%)

*Leggat et al (2005)



Evacuation could be by Venician waterambulance...



Or ultramodern air ambulance....
Regardless evacuation is expensive

Travel insurance

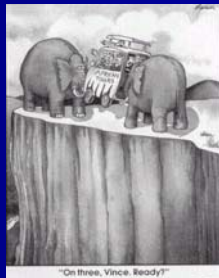
- Only 60% of travellers routinely take out travel insurance
- One third indicated that they never took out travel insurance
Leggat et al., J Travel Med 2002
- About 60% of GPs in NZ would routinely advise travellers about travel insurance
Leggat et al., J Travel Med 1998

So to summarise from
Smartraveller.gov.au

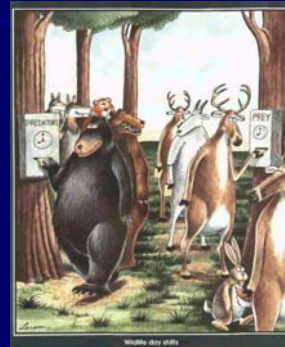
“If you don’t have travel insurance, you can’t afford to travel”

Take home points

- Accidents and muggings resulting in death and injury abroad are common
- Travellers are concerned about personal safety and they need to have some appreciation of common sense personal safety and security measures
- Personal safety, bird flu and terrorism are on the radar screen and travel advisories are important
- Travel insurance is an important safety net



“Play it safe! Thank you”



References

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Further Reading

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