



CORRESPONDENCE

Travel medicine in the state of São Paulo, Brazil



Dear Editor,

The practice of travel medicine in Brazil began in 1997 in the city of Rio de Janeiro.¹ In 2000 and 2001, the travel medicine service in the Emílio Ribas Institute of Infectious Diseases and in the University of São Paulo School of Medicine in the city of São Paulo was developed.¹ In 2010, two new travel medicine clinics were established within the state of São Paulo: the University of São Paulo at Ribeirão Preto and the University Federal de São Paulo (UNIFESP).

The travel medicine clinics in the state of São Paulo have been involved in health care, education, and research. Regarding health care, the clinics provide pre-travel consultations and diagnostic investigation (in returning travelers). Pre-travel consultations can be for individuals or for groups of individuals, as was the case for the group of health professionals.²

The diagnostic investigation of returning travelers requires laboratory resources and a partnership between travel medicine clinics and epidemiological surveillance programs.^{3,4} The following constitute examples of the partnership between travel medicine clinics and public health services:

- the investigation of the outbreak of Chagas disease (contracted through the consumption of sugarcane juice) among travelers returning from the coast of the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil, in 2005
- the investigation of the Yellow fever outbreaks in Brazil in 2008 and in the state of São Paulo in 2009
- the investigation and treatment of cases of influenza A (H1N1) virus infection among travelers

Other examples include the diagnosis of malaria in individuals coming from Amazon region and Africa. Most such cases occurred during professional activities. More recently, we reported the two first cases of Chikungunya fever among travelers returning to Brazil.³

The travel medicine clinics in the city of São Paulo offer training to undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students and continuing education in travel medicine. Regarding research, descriptive studies of the clinical

experience of the clinics have disseminated information on travel medicine in scientific conferences in Brazil and abroad, as well as in journals within the field of travel medicine.^{2–5}

Our services have become referral centers for travel medicine in Brazil. These clinics have played an active role in discussions regarding the implementation of public policies in the field of travel medicine, not only in the state of São Paulo but also in Brazil as a whole. The First Conference on Travel Medicine, held on September 4–5, 2008, and resulting in the Carta de São Paulo (São Paulo Charter),⁶ as well as the First Symposium of the Brazilian Society of Travel Medicine, held in December of 2008, have demonstrated the importance of this issue in Brazil. In December of 2010, the São Paulo State Health Department Center for Epidemiological Surveillance established the São Paulo State Travel Medicine Committee in order to discuss the development of public policies in the field.⁷

In addition to its important role in disease surveillance among travelers, travel medicine constitutes an additional field of work for infectious disease specialists.

Conflict of interest

The authors have no financial or personal relationships with people or organizations that could inappropriately influence their work.

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