



Title:
MALARIA WARNING TO BUSINESS TRAVELLERS -
Malaria myths are putting travellers of ethnic origin at risk

Summary:

Black & Asian business travellers from the UK could be exposing themselves to the deadly disease, malaria, after a new survey revealed that 50% of travellers who originate from a malarious area believe they have natural immunity when travelling to a country with a malaria risk.¹

Main Body:

Black & Asian business travellers from the UK could be exposing themselves to the deadly disease, malaria, after a new survey revealed that 50% of travellers who originate from a malarious area believe they have natural immunity when travelling to a country with a malaria risk.¹

Business travellers are failing to seek travel health advice and take precautions in areas affected by malaria, the Malaria Awareness Campaign has revealed. Out of those who had recently travelled to a malarious destination, another recent survey of attitudes towards travel, found that business travellers were least likely to seek travel health advice for their trip, making them a high-risk group for contracting malaria.²

Every year, between 1,500 and 2,000 UK travellers return from overseas trips with malaria, making Britain one of the largest importers of the disease amongst all industrialised countries. On average there are 9 deaths annually.³

A simple visit to the [malaria map](#) on the malaria hotspots website could advise travellers whether the region they are visiting poses a risk of malaria, and whether they ought to seek medical advice before travelling.

Broadcast journalist, Rageh Omaar, says: 'The common misconception is that if malaria is present in your country of origin, you will have immunity to the disease for life. This is a dangerous myth. The truth is that any natural immunity begins to fade within six months of leaving your home country.'

Businesses have a duty of care to keep their employees safe while travelling on business abroad, and that includes advising employees to seek qualified medical advice about the risks of diseases such as malaria. If you have a friend, family member, business colleague or employee travelling to a malaria hotspot, you can inform them about some of the risks of contracting malaria while travelling abroad, and why they should seek qualified medical advice, by using the online form at www.malariahotspots.co.uk here; [tell a friend about the risks of malaria](#).

Jane Chiodini, Travel Health Nurse and member of the Malaria Awareness Panel says: 'Frequent travellers and those familiar with destinations – whether they are visiting friends and family or business travellers - can take the threat of malaria less seriously. Mosquitoes do not differentiate between types of travellers and won't discriminate if you are staying in a five star hotel or a hostel. Malaria is a serious disease, but very simple to prevent.' Visit www.malariahotspots.co.uk/travelTips.asp for Jane's travel health tips.

'Malaria-risk destinations change over time so it is essential to speak to a qualified healthcare professional who can tell you exactly what precautions are needed, ahead of every business trip,' she adds.

To find out if the country you're visiting has a malaria risk, text 07800 000 571 or visit www.malariahotspots.co.uk.

The Malaria Awareness Campaign is calling on anyone who has ever suffered from this potentially fatal disease to share their story and help make malaria history in the UK. For more information about the campaign or to share your experience, please contact Zita Stockbridge on behalf of the Malaria Awareness Campaign: 020 7053 6018 / zita.stockbridge@beattiegroupp.com

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Issued by Beattie Communications on behalf of GlaxoSmithKline Travel Health. For more information, please contact:

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Notes to editors:

The Malaria Awareness Campaign is sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline Travel Health and supported by a leading panel of healthcare professionals, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA). The campaign aims to educate UK travellers about the risk of malaria and encourages them to seek expert medical advice before their journey.

Other facts:

In this 2008 omnibus study, commissioned by GlaxoSmithKline Travel Health (n = 750), British Indians, Africans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Caribbean and Chinese were questioned on their attitudes to malaria:

- Nearly half (43%) of those surveyed do not believe there is a malaria risk in their home country
- 40% have never talked to their healthcare professional (GP, practice nurse, pharmacist) about malaria protection before travelling to their home country
- Nearly 1 in 5 respondents (17%) do not take any precautions against malaria when visiting their home country (i.e. insect repellent, mosquito nets or antimalaria tablets)
- Nearly half (44%) of those surveyed do not regularly speak to a healthcare professional to check if travel vaccinations are up to date
- 1/3 (32%) of respondents have never received any vaccinations

References:

¹ Malaria Study. Ethnibus. March 2008. (GSK data on file)

² Hall & Partners Market Research, January 2008

³ Muetener P et al. Bulletin of the World Health Organisation 1999; 77(7):560-566
[http://whqlibdoc.who.int/bulletin/1999/Vol77-No7/bulletin_1999_77\(7\)_560-566.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/bulletin/1999/Vol77-No7/bulletin_1999_77(7)_560-566.pdf)

⁴ National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC)
http://www.nathnac.org/travel/news/malaria_080507.htm

