

Travel and Health in the Elderly, Chapter 3

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TRAVEL RELATED ILLNESS, TRAUMA, INFECTION RISK AND AVOIDANCE

All travellers are exposed to a range of health risks during a trip overseas. Health professionals need to be aware of these and how to prevent them if best advice is to be provided to clients. Older travellers may be more vulnerable to these risks and if they are affected may be more adversely disturbed. Lowered immunity makes it more likely they may become infected and secondary effects of infection such as fever, dehydration and electrolyte imbalance, can prove a greater health threat than in younger people. They are at greater risk of having a road traffic accident while abroad. The effects of trauma with fracture, disability and slower healing may have greater impact on senior citizens. Risk can be divided into perceived and actual categories. The actual risk to the individual is dependent upon prevalence of the condition at destination or en route. Travel destination is associated with the probability of diagnosis of certain diseases. Significant trends are based on regional differences.

This chapter looks at infectious and non-infectious sources of health risk for the older traveller