

Policy Regarding Travel to High Risk Countries

The Medical College of Georgia supports and encourages interested medical students' and residents' travel to foreign countries for electives. However, personal safety remains paramount when engaging in any activity abroad. Therefore, the following will be strictly enforced.

- Medical students and residents may not participate in international electives for credit in countries on the U.S. State Department's Travel List¹, CDC Travel Warnings List², or any other country where there is or high risk³. Certain substantial and high risk³ experiences (elevated risk level because of remoteness and poor medical delivery system, potentially requiring team self extrication) may be undertaken, but only on teams lead by experienced MCG faculty. Permission to participate on a team traveling one of these elevated risk areas will be granted on an individual basis and students will be required to sign a waiver before embarking.
- MCG cannot regulate where individuals travel during their vacation or personal time, but nonetheless strongly discourages travel to any country with State Department or CDC warning or travel to high risk areas. Therefore, MCG will not give credit after returning from a country with a Travel Warning.
- If a student or resident is on an approved international rotation in a country which has a travel advisory raised during the experience, the individual will be asked to return to the US immediately.

1. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

2. <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>

3. See attached excerpt "Stratifying the Risk of Travel"
The Risk of Travel, W Kuhn, *Global Medical Missions: Preparation, Procedure, and Practice*, W Kuhn, S Kuhn, H Gross, S Benesh editors, Enumclaw, WA, WeinPress Publishing, 2007.

Stratifying the Risk of Travel

Travel in the developing world can conveniently be categorized into four distinct risk levels—Low, Moderate, Substantial and High risk. Inquire ahead of time as to the level of risk your travel involves. Also realistically address your physical ability.

I – Low Risk

Travel to a western country or to a major city in the developing world with medical and social standards similar to western countries. No political or environmental uncertainties. Project requires only minimal exercise. Ground support team well established and experienced with previous teams.

II – Intermediate Risk

Travel to the developing world to cities with medical and social standards similar to western countries but with anticipated travel outside those cities. No political or environmental uncertainties. Project involves a moderate degree physical effort. Ground support team well established and experienced with previous teams.

III – Substantial Risk

(Any one applies.)

- Travel to the developing world with few western amenities, poor social support and a marginal medical delivery system.
- Travel outside major cities.
- Political unrest sometimes present in country.
- Country at risk for environmental problems (earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, etc.).
- Infectious diseases may be a problem.
- Participation on team involves moderate psychosocial stress, physical fitness and physical effort.
- Ground support team new and/or inexperienced in handling teams.

IV – High Risk

(If any one of the following applies.)

- Travel to the developing world with few western amenities, poor social support, and a poor medical delivery system.
- Anticipated travel to remote areas (All disaster response teams are in this category).
- Travel involves environmental extremes (altitude, cold exposure, high heat or humidity).
- Political unrest often present in country.
- Country at risk for environmental problems (earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, etc.).
- Infectious diseases are a problem.
- Participation on team involves significant psychosocial stress, physical fitness and physical effort.
- Ground support team new and/ or inexperienced in handling teams.

The author's bias is that only low and intermediate risk travel be attempted by team members with chronic medical problems or risk factors and team members new or inexperienced with work in the developing world. Likewise, when participation on a team involves substantial or high risk travel, this should be undertaken with a moderate to high degree of fitness along with seasoned team leaders with special expertise, training and experience involving the conditions of travel.

Reference

The Risk of Travel, W Kuhn, *Global Medical Missions: Preparation, Procedure, and Practice*, W Kuhn, S Kuhn, H Gross, S Benesh editors, Enumclaw, WA, WeinPress Publishing, January 2007. Library of Congress Control Number: 2006900980. ISBN 13: 978-1-57921-847-4, ISBN 10 1-57921-847-4.
<https://www.winepressbooks.com/product.asp?pid=1367&search=kuhn&select=Author&ss=1>
or <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1579218474/campusicom/ref=nosim>

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