

# PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release: Friday, 6 June 2008

## **“GIVE ADEQUATE HOLIDAY VACCINATION ADVICE,” URGES MDDUS**

Adequate vaccination advice to holidaymakers heading abroad for their summer holidays can help to avoid an unnecessary medico-legal claim, the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland (MDDUS) urges today (Friday, 6 June 2008).

A doctor who fails in his or her duty of care by neglecting to offer appropriate and adequate advice – in addition to the right vaccinations or prophylaxis – is taking a huge risk, points out Dr Gail Gilmartin, medico-legal advisor for MDDUS.

“It’s the time of year when people are heading off abroad for a carefree summer holiday,” says Dr Gilmartin. “If they seek vaccinations or prophylaxis, the advice they receive at the same time must be adequate, or their doctor risks a claim.”

The files of MDDUS include the case of one foreign traveller who died after contracting malaria. His doctor was accused of acting negligently by failing to advise him on how to take the drugs prescribed, but also by failing to advise on other preventative measures such as topical anti-malarial lotions and mosquito nets.

A six-figure sum settled the case. The number of malaria cases among UK travellers is down by 12 per cent, according to the Health Protection Agency (HPA – 2007 figures). However, apparently four out of five (83 per cent) travellers had not taken malaria prophylaxis and many of the rest had not taken what was recommended for their destination.

Adds Dr Gilmartin: “Malaria cases are thankfully down, but there is still a duty of care on doctors to advise patients on how to take anti-malarial drugs correctly and how to minimise their chances of being bitten by mosquitoes.”

Ends

For further information contact Mike Hutchinson on 020 7624 6257 or 07760 155216.

### **Notes to editors**

1. MDDUS is a medical defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medicolegal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK.
2. For further information on MDDUS go to [www.mddus.com](http://www.mddus.com).

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