

PRESS RELEASE



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DOCTORS MUST BE WARY OF "WORLD CUP FEVER".

As the 2010 World Cup kicks off next week in South Africa, doctors are being warned to be aware of potential outbreaks of so-called "World Cup Fever" amongst patients returning from the football tournament.

The UK-wide medical defence organisation MDDUS is advising GPs to consider the possibility of Rift Valley Fever and other conditions that will rarely be seen in the UK such as malaria or rabies when diagnosing illness among patients who have visited South Africa this summer.

The advice comes as around 25,000 England fans are expected to travel to South Africa in the hope of watching their team repeat their famous 1966 victory and lift the Jules Rimet Trophy.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has reported that there is currently an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever in some areas of South Africa.

Health authorities in the region have now reported 186 human cases including 18 deaths from the disease.

The WHO is advising visitors to protect themselves from infection, especially if travellers intend to visit farms or game reserves. The advice is to avoid contact with animals, eating raw meat or unprocessed milk and to protect themselves against mosquito and other insect bites.

Dr John Holden, a senior medical adviser at MDDUS says: "With so many fans across the UK expected to travel to South Africa for the World Cup, doctors are advised to bear in mind the possibility that some of their patients may have been exposed to diseases such as Rift Valley Fever.

"Good clinical care, as recognised by the General Medical Council, includes making an adequate assessment of a patient's condition, taking into account the relevant history, the patient's views and where necessary examining the patient."

The advice to GPs from MDDUS is that a patient's recent travels may be relevant to their illness and that identification of a recent trip to South Africa may be an important step towards making a correct diagnosis.

Dr Holden adds: "A full and relevant assessment of a patient who has been abroad will minimise the risk of overlooking the diagnosis of an exotic illness in football fans who will be heading to South Africa with the hope of cheering England on to victory in the World Cup final."

Ends

For further information contact Colin Calder on 0141 616 2677 or 07850 510881.

Note to editors

MDDUS (Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland) is a medical defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medico-legal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK.

For further information on MDDUS go to www.mddus.com.