

題名: Clinical Guide to Travel Medicine.

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摘要: BACKGROUND: Access to the Internet and electronic mail has created opportunities for online discussion that can facilitate medical education and clinical problem solving. Research into the use of these information technologies is increasing and the analysis of these tools can support and guide the activities of professional organizations, including educational endeavors. OBJECTIVE: The initial objective was to analyze patterns of information exchange on the International Society of Travel Medicine's (ISTM) travel health electronic mailing list related to a specific area of society interest. Secondary objectives included the analysis of listserv use in relation to subscriber demographics and rates of participation to support travel health educational activities. METHODS: This study examined the use of the ISTM TravelMed listserv over an 8-month period from January 1, 2006, to July 31, 2006. Descriptive data analysis included TravelMed user demographics, the type of posting, the topic and frequency of postings, and the source of information provided. RESULTS: During the study period, 911 (47%) of the eligible ISTM members subscribed to the TravelMed listserv. About 369 of these subscribers posted 1,710 individual messages. About 1,506 (88%) postings were educational; 207 (12%) postings were administrative. A total of 389 (26%) of the educational postings were primary queries and 1,120 (74%) were responses, with a mean string length of 2.9 responses per query (range: 1-51). Twenty participants contributed 40% of the educational postings. The topics with the most frequent postings were vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases

(473/31%) and malaria (258/17%). Postings focused on special populations, including pregnant women or immigrants, comprised a total of 14 postings (<1%).

CONCLUSIONS: During the study period, a limited number of ISTM members (19%) authored postings on the listserv. Regular discussion centered on a limited number of recurring topics. The analysis provides several opportunities for the support of educational initiatives, clinical problem solving, and program evaluation.