Pre-travel health seeking practices of Umrah pilgrims departing from Assiut International Airport, Egypt

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Abstract:

Objectives: to assess the health seeking practices and their determinants among Umrah pilgrims departing from Assiut international Airport. Methods: We interviewed 300 pilgrims departing from Assiut International Airport while they were in the departure lounge, using a semi-structured questionnaire. Results: Only 60%, 46.3% and 46.3% of Umrah pilgrims believed in importance of pre-travel vaccination, seeking health information, and health examination, respectively. The most frequently practiced pre-travel health related behaviour was getting vaccinated (56.3%), as compared to much lower frequencies of seeking health information (24%) or having a clinical health examination (26.7%). Private clinics, internet and the tourism companies were the main sources of health information of the pilgrims. Positive attitude of pilgrims about health seeking practices, the perception of health risk of travelling to Hajj/Umrah and having a chronic disease were the predictors of pre-travel health practices. Conclusion: Raising awareness among Hajj/Umrah pilgrims about the importance of seeking professional pretravel health advice and communicating the risk of exposure to travel-related diseases to pilgrims could be important strategies to improve the uptake of preventive measures. Training of general practitioners in the public health sector about the travel health information would promote the travel health services.

Keywords:

Pre-travel, Health seeking, Airport, Egypt

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