There are probably as many sites on health as there are on politics, religion and general medicine. A search for ‘travel health’ in MSNSearch (www.msnsearch.com) retrieved over 1 billion URLs (uniform resource locators – technical name for website addresses).

The first one that looked useful was Travelers’ Health, supported by the US Government’s Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta (www.cdc.gov/travel/) (Fig.1). Among the many links available are:

- Tsunami Disaster: Interim Guidance for Travellers
- Destinations
- Diseases
- Vaccination — recommendations for travellers of all ages; yellow fever vaccination recommendations by country
- Travelling with Children
- Special Needs Travellers
- Cruise Ships and Air Travel — health information about specific cruise ships: list of recent inspection scores (‘green sheets’) and inspection database by CDC’s Vessel Sanitation Program (VSP).

Under ‘Destinations’ I tried the ‘Southern Africa’ link. This section mentions diseases that a traveller may be exposed to, such as malaria, traveller’s diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid, dengue, filariasis, leishmaniasis, onchocerciasis, trypanosomiasis and schistosomiasis. Each name is linked to a fact sheet, with preventive information, clinical symptoms and treatment.

Travel Health Online (www.triprep.com) (Fig. 2), which the Web developers say is ‘for personal, noncommercial use by private individuals only. This information may not be used, reproduced or distributed for any other purpose.’ In order to retrieve information, registration is necessary, and as they state that the information cannot be reproduced, I will abide by their caveat. However, I can recount my experience of the site: In order to retrieve information, registration is required – free and efficient. As I am planning a trip to Halifax, Newfoundland, later this year, I decided to try to obtain some information about the city. It is listed under ‘Canada’. The material on the site has been obtained from the consular websites of the USA (travel.state.gov), UK (www.fco.gov.uk/travel), Canada (voyage.dfait-maeci.gc.ca), and Australia (www.dfat.gov.au/consular/advice). There is some information about current health concerns (flu) and other health-related issues — not as full as the CDC site, however.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has a website labelled International Travel and Health (www.who.int/ith/) (Fig.3). The main links are:

- Disease outbreak news
- Updated disease maps
- Chapter on SARS
- Updated country list
- Yellow fever: endemic countries and countries requiring vaccination.

The disease outbreak news of 14 January included:

- Avian influenza – situation in Vietnam – updates
• Meningococcaemia-like illness in the Philippines
• Meningococcal disease in Chad.

(A printed version is also available.)
The Medical College of Wisconsin has a site with a large number of travel-related links
(healthlink.mcw.edu/travel-links.html) (Fig. 4). The first link is titled ‘Travel Health Information’ – one of the links under this section has the following label:
Flight Plans: What kinds of things can travellers do to keep from getting sick and interrupting the travel plans of others?

On the MCW Web pages there are links to many other sites, all filled with a great deal of useful information.

Lonely Planet is a well-known publisher of travel books, which also has a health site, www.lonelyplanet.com/health/ (Fig. 6). Their main links are titled:
• Health home
• Predeparture planning
• Keeping healthy
• Women’s health
• Diseases & ailments: heat, cold, high altitude & motion sickness, infections & diseases, cuts, bites & stings
• Health links – this also has a very broad coverage of health-related websites.

Next is MDTravel Health (www.mdtravelhealth.com/) which, according to their blurb, is ‘Complete travel health information, updated daily, for physicians and travelers’ — it has the following links:
• Infectious diseases
• Illness prevention
• Special needs
• Travel health clinics
• Useful links
• Offline resources
• E-mail health alerts
• Frequently asked questions (FAQs).
The Travel Doctor is an Australian site (www.tmvc.com.au/) (Fig. 7) which provides medical advice, details of travel medicine clinics and vaccination services, and current health alerts for travel overseas. It provides vaccination advice, travel health advice, clinic details and current health alerts for visits overseas. The TMVC in their URL stands for ‘Travellers Medical and Vaccination Centre’.

Finally just two extra sites for travel health information: Travel Health Resource (www.travelhealthresources.com) is an informational website, offering a web-based tool aimed at international travellers looking for a one-stop site that can offer advice on all travel health issues in a clear and concise format; at travel agents looking to offer international clients complete and comprehensive travel health information from one source; and at travel clinics looking to offer patients complete and comprehensive travel health information from one source.

Health in the Yahoo! Directory: Travel Health and Medicine (dir.yahoo.com/Health/Travel_Health_and_Medicine/) is a directory of health sites, some of which have been mentioned above, but there are many more.

**FUN SITE OF THE MONTH**

World Wide Words (www.WorldWideWords.org)

If you, like me, love to investigate words and learn new words, this is the site for you. For example: Would you like to know more about words like smart alec; swashbucklers; bonzer; jackanapes; you will find them here. Michael Quinion researches words and phrases and gives you the story behind them. There’s a ‘Weird Words’ section, and you can subscribe to a free weekly newsletter. But be careful: time flies when you’re having fun, as they say, and in this site time is sure to run away from you. Where one is using a connection which is not charged based on time, it’s OK, but in South Africa, where every second costs you money, one has to be cautious.

**SINGLE SUTURE**

**TOWARDS A MALARIA VACCINE**

Every year, 1 - 3 million people die of malaria. Most are under the age of 5 years and in Africa. Annually, there are 500 million acute episodes of malaria with a high burden of suffering, disability and economic and social underdevelopment. So it is welcome news that the results of a proof-of-concept phase IIb tolerance, immunogenicity and efficacy trial of a malaria vaccine candidate (RTS,S/AS02A) are encouraging. Pedro Alonso and co-workers studied the clinical efficacy of this vaccine in 1 605 Mozambican children between the ages of 1 - 4 years. They found that the vaccine was safe, well-tolerated and immunogenic. They found an efficacy of nearly 30% in terms of prevention of clinical episodes in the first cohort of children and nearly 58% of malaria episodes were prevented. Attempts to produce a sporozoite vaccine date back to the 1970s and we know that producing vaccines is a very long process, needing decades from the preclinical testing of candidate vaccines to licensing and public availability. And in the case of neglected diseases, such as malaria, there is the question of who will bear the cost of the vaccine once it is available. However, even this small step is a start in the global battle against malaria.