

From the Chief Medical Officer  
**Dr Henrietta Campbell CB**

## **URGENT COMMUNICATION**

### **HSS (MD) 38/2005**

To: All General Practitioners (including locums)–  
Please ensure this message is seen by all practice  
nurses and non-principals working in your practice  
and retain a copy in your 'locum information pack'  
Out-of-Hours GP Co-operatives  
Medical Directors of HSS Trusts to forward to:  
ID Physicians  
Microbiologists  
A&E Consultants  
Travel Clinics  
And other relevant hospital doctors  
CCDCs  
Regional Epidemiologist CDSC (NI)  
Directors of Public Health

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Your Ref:  
Our Ref:  
Date: 12 December 2005

Dear Doctor

### **FALCIPARUM MALARIA IN TRAVELLERS RETURNING FROM THE GAMBIA**

This is to inform you that there have been six cases of falciparum malaria reported in British tourists who returned from The Gambia and became ill in the last few weeks of November 2005.

Two of the patients have died and two are in intensive care. Five of the cases were on one to two week holidays staying at resorts within 20 kilometres of the Atlantic coast. The sixth had visited The Gambia several times in the last year on business and had travelled a little further inland. None of the cases had taken adequate anti-malarial prophylaxis.

The Gambia is a highly malarious area and a popular winter sun destination for British tourists, who account for half of all visitors there.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has informed the Federation of Tour Operators and the Association of British Travel Agents of these cases. These organisations are taking steps to inform their members of this issue and the need for intending travellers to be encouraged to seek medical advice before travel to malarious areas.

HPA has also issued a press release today about the importance of taking anti-malarial medication when travelling to know malaria destination. This includes sources of further useful information for healthcare professionals and the public. The press release is available on the HPA website at

