



The Concerns of Travel Medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected travel medicine. There are some precautions and concerns about traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel restrictions are implemented. Anticipation is raised when international travel is opened. This paper aims to describe the concerns of travel medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic. Method: It is a narrative literature review. Literature was taken from Science Direct, PubMed, and Google Scholar. Inclusion criteria were review and research studies that were published within 5 years. Exclusion criteria were unavailable in full-text journals. Results revealed that travel medicine providers must prepare for the patterns and dynamics of SARS-CoV-2 transmission. This virus is dynamic. The virus undergoes some changes recently. Integrated approaches such as physical distancing, wearing masker, improving ventilation, screening test, quarantine, vaccine, and therapeutic are implemented. Sterilization of vehicles (planes, buses, ships, cars, etc.) should be done to prevent any new transmission after traveling. Updated investigation and management must be implemented to prevent more severe pandemic happens. Conclusion: the concerns of travel medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic include precautions from the people (wearing masks, physical distancing, testing, vaccine, treatment, and quarantine) and travel providers (vehicle sterilization after each traveling and updating special precautions).

Keywords: *COVID-19 pandemic, health, travel medicine, travel restriction*



INTRODUCTION

Since the COVID-19 pandemic attacked the world in March 2020, many changes had happened, including tourism. Therefore, the pattern of transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus was extensively studied. It was found that commercial aircraft, buses, rail, ships, and mass gatherings could increase the possibility of transmission. This situation causes mitigation to reduce traveling. Besides that, the emergence of the Omicron variant causes further mitigation models such as quarantine, testing, physical distancing, masking, improvement of ventilation, and sterilization (Acosta et al., 2022; Flaherty et al., 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected travel medicine. There are some precautions and concerns about traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel restrictions are implemented. Anticipation is raised when international travel is opened. Travel risk and management are critical factors in travel destination determination (Khalilur et al., 2021).

The perception of tourists regarding the travel destination will influence their behavior in determining the travel destinations. The view of traveling risk will be different due to the possibility of COVID-19 infection. Tourists tend to avoid traveling. Uncertainty about the pandemic situation will increase anxiety when traveling. Tourists and travel providers must adapt to new situations when dealing with tourism. Therefore, the decision to travel is affected by multifactor (Acosta et al., 2022; Khalilur et al., 2021).

Acosta et al. in 2022 studied the adaptations and attitudes of The International Society of Travel Medicine (ISTM). The researchers gave an anonymous 27-item questionnaire. The questionnaires comprised of multiple-choice questions, ranked, and free text responses. ISTM is the largest travel healthcare professionals group. This was a cross-sectional study that was done in April-May 2021. Results revealed that it is hard to update because the travel rules quickly change from day to day in each country (Acosta et al., 2022).

The risk perceptions of traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic include psychosocial, physical, financial, performance, and time risks on travel intention. Based on the 409 questionnaire results, the most influence was brought by social risk. Understanding the risk will make the strategic plan easier (Falahuddin et al., 2020). A similar result was shown by the research on Serbian tourists in May 2020. Psychological,



destination, health, and financial risks could negatively impact the travel destination (Perić et al., 2021).

Therefore, this paper aims to describe the concerns of travel medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The recovery strategy has to be done to increase the revenue from the travel industry after the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The strategies are rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure. Destinations must be revitalized. Creative businesses can improve promotions to increase tourist attraction (Susanti & Amelia, 2021). The tourism sector can increase the labor prospect in the service and employment sectors (Scarlett, 2021).

Falk et al. investigated how the overnight stays of tourists affect the economic activity in France. Domestic travel is affected by regional economic activity. Regional characteristics such as the presence of national parks and coastal locations determine the tourism attraction. Regions near national parks had a higher growth rate in domestic overnight stays. However, the COVID-19 pandemic could induce behavioral changes and persistence in tourist demands. Tourists reduce their traveling activities due to being frightened of could not distance themselves from others when traveling. Analyzing travel destination preferences (lakes, cities, mountains, etc.) and characteristics of the tourists will be beneficial for planning the strategy for travel recovery (Falk et al., 2022).

Kruger & Viljoen studied tourism suppliers' perspective on managing future travel behavior due to COVID-19 in 2021 by online questionnaire. The result revealed that health and safety were the most prevalent determinant of future travel behavior. Therefore, strict procedures such as health certificate requirements, sanitation stations, and quarantine procedures could give positive or negative impacts on tourists' behavior and decision-making process (Kruger & Viljoen, 2021).

Kristiningsih et al. in 2022 found that the input from the reference groups, consumer attitudes, and the image of the destination gave potential influence for the tourists' interest in traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The managers of tourist destinations should build a good image of the travel destinations. The reference group



should be well managed to attract visitors come to the tourist attraction places (Kristiningsih et al., 2022).

The concerns about travel medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic could come from tourists and travel providers. Precautions for the people are wearing masks, physical distancing, testing, vaccine, treatment, and quarantine. Meanwhile, travel providers should provide vehicle sterilization after each traveling and update special precautions. Tourists' behavior is determined by the changes in protocols and the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding their behavior will help the recovery strategy plan. Golets et al. in 2021 studied the role of health risk perception and uncertainty on travel intentions in Brazil from 2021 until 2021. There were 1150 Brazilians participants who attended the survey. It was revealed that the predictors of travel intentions were infection probability, COVID-19 severity, and the possible duration of the COVID-19 pandemic (Golets et al., 2021).

METHOD

It is a narrative literature review. Literature was taken from Science Direct, PubMed, and Google Scholar. Inclusion criteria were review and research studies that were published within 5 years. Exclusion criteria were unavailable in full-text journals.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Travel medicine providers must prepare for the patterns and dynamics of SARS-CoV-2 transmission. This virus is dynamic. The virus undergoes some changes recently. Integrated approaches such as physical distancing, wearing masker, improving ventilation, screening test, quarantine, vaccine, and therapeutic are implemented. Sterilization of vehicles (planes, buses, ships, cars, etc.) should be done to prevent any new transmission after traveling. Updated investigation and management must be implemented to prevent more severe pandemic happens.

Garcia-Gomez et al. in 2021 studied that by using the Event Study Method (ESM), it was revealed that there was a negative influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on hotel revenues in the US. The impact was higher compared with the previous outbreak. Furthermore, The ALFO (assets-light, fee-orientated) strategy was a special strategy to predict the market value drop during the COVID-19 pandemic. This strategy was done by using a fee-based income instead of a fixed assets-based model. This method is useful for



preparing companies for handling unpredicted shocks and market value drops (Garcia-Gomez et al., 2021).

Virtual tourism and shopping tourism

Virtual tourism is one of the strategies to recover tourism revenue post-COVID-19 pandemic. Augmented reality is one of the virtual tourism methods. This method can increase the activity of shopping tourism. Shopping tourism is a unique activity of tourism with retail and shopping as cultural experiences. Shopping tourism is a very enjoyable activity while traveling (Azmi et al., 2020). Shopping tourism is a strategy to promote the sustainability of tourism. It also has a positive impact on the economy and employment. Therefore, it needs diversification. Shopping tourism has a role as an engine of social and economic growth (Muro-rod r guez et al., 2020)

Tourists have different motivations for traveling. One of the motivations is looking for different products. Selling products from a traveling journey has become a business. Therefore, shopping tourism gives benefits to neighbourhoods and tourist destinations. Based on Punzon et al. online survey in 2021, it was revealed that augmented reality and shopping tourism demonstrated positive responses. The Technology Adoption Model (TAM) use can support the design and implementation of augmented reality to enrich the tourists' experiences. This method will create a more pleasant moment for the tourists. There was a correlation between perceived value and augmented reality tourism experiences (Punzon, 2021).

Neuburger & Egger et al. studied the relationship between perception of COVID-19, travel behavior, and travel risk perception for travelers in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The results showed that classifying tourists based on the travel risk perception could help in analyzing the influence of the behavior changes and planning the strategy for recovery. The government objectives have to be followed to reduce the travel risk perception. Travel media should provide balanced information, i.e. travel risk (number of cases) and safety measures to increase the trust of the tourists to travel again (Neuburger & Egger, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The concerns of travel medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic include precautions from the people (wearing masks, physical distancing, testing, vaccine,



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treatment, and quarantine) and travel providers (vehicle sterilization after each traveling and updating special precautions). Virtual tourism plays important role in increasing the tourists attraction. Therefore, the resumption of the travel practice during the COVID-19 pandemic will depend on the preparation and adaptation of future travel.

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