

Risk behaviours and health problems in humanitarian travellers

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Humanitarian workers are known to be at high risk of having health problems

BUT data is still scarce

→ We aimed to assess risk behaviours and health problems in humanitarian travellers

METHODS :



Retrospective observational study



Jan. 1st 2018 – Dec. 31st 2021



All humanitarians seen upon return

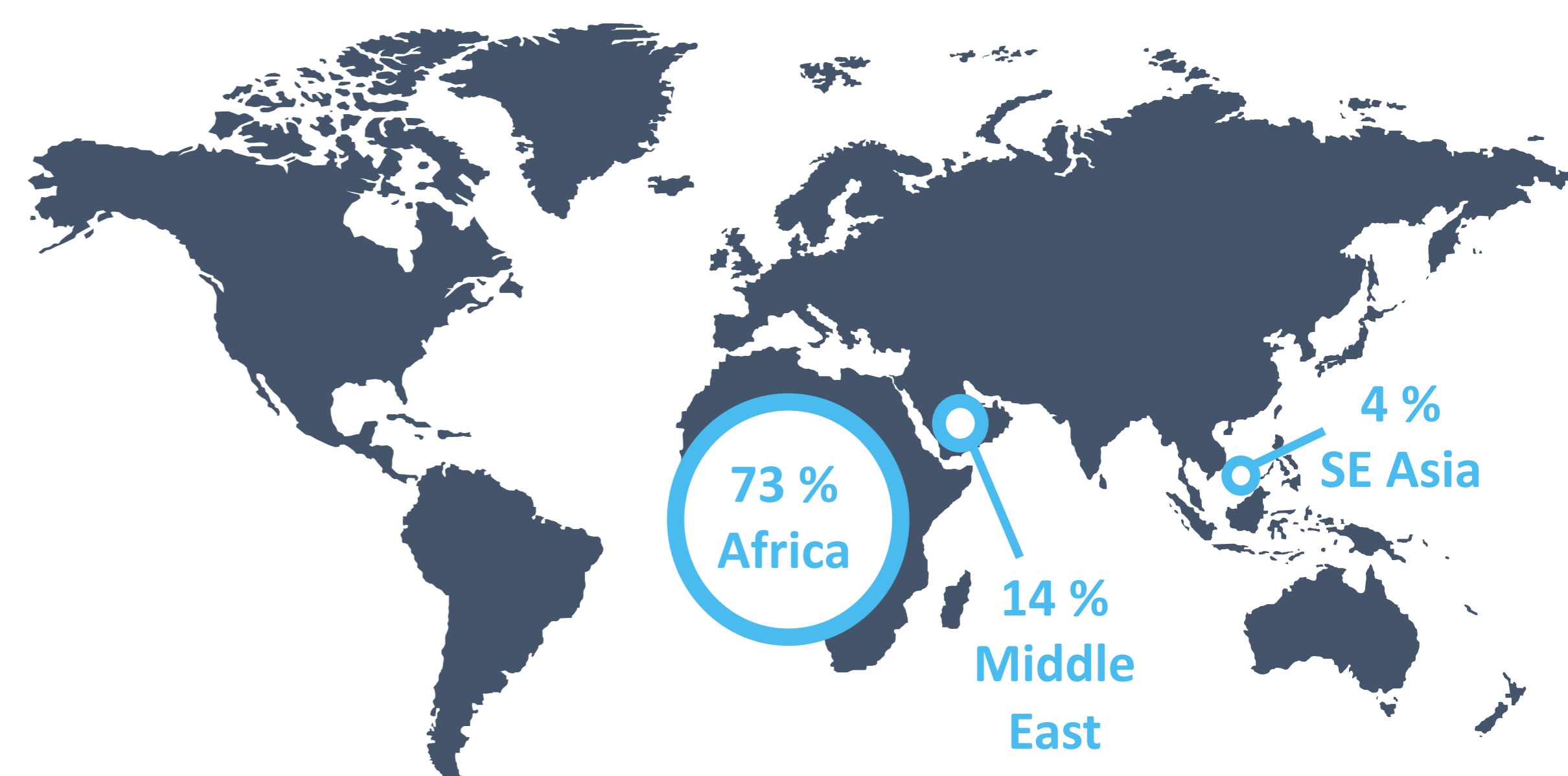


Standardized medical form
Multivariate analysis

RESULTS :

1529 Medical visits

- 47 % woman
- median age 37.2 years (IQR 31.7-44.3)
- median mission duration 6 months (IQR 3-12)



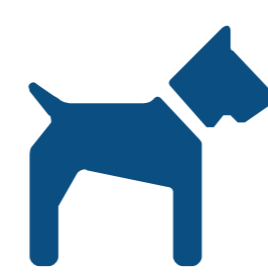
Risk behaviour in 35.3 % :



Exposure to schistosomiasis **12.4 %** (187/1529)



Reported unprotected sex **9%** (138/1529)



Exposure to rabies **3.7 %** (56/1529)



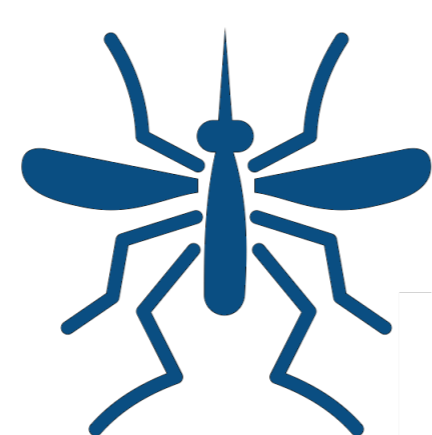
Accidental exposure to blood **2.9 %** (44/1529)

Health issues in 60.4 % :



Gastrointestinal
31.9 % (487/1529)

Higher in rural areas and in Africa
Higher among women and < 30 years



Malaria *
15.5 % (237/1529)

* 12.6 % (192) confirmed by RDT
3.4 % (52) w/o RDT

Higher in rural areas and in Africa
Higher if no malaria prophylaxis
Higher for missions > 1 month



Respiratory infections
6.2 % (94/1529) **

** including 11 COVID-19



Medical evacuations
1.2 % (19/1529)



Hospitalizations
1 % (15/1529)

(during travel)

CONCLUSION :

Humanitarian travelers encounter significant rates of health problems and self-reported risk exposure to infectious diseases is high. These findings can guide pre-travel consultations that should emphasize on reducing risk behavior as well as adherence to malaria prophylaxis.

