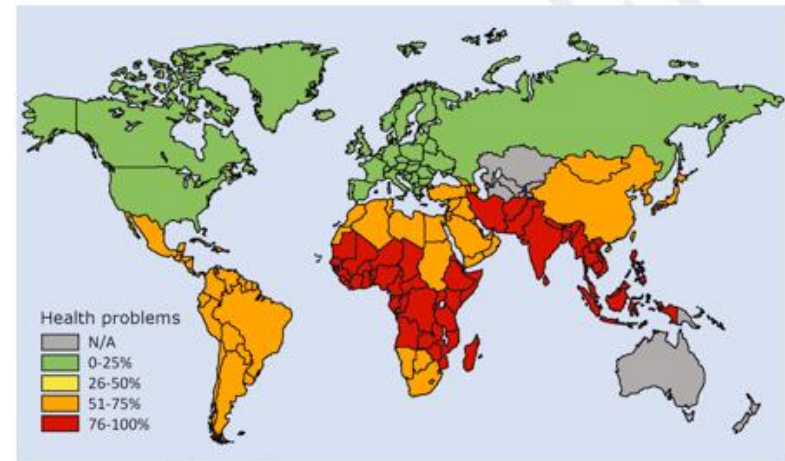


Anu Kantele



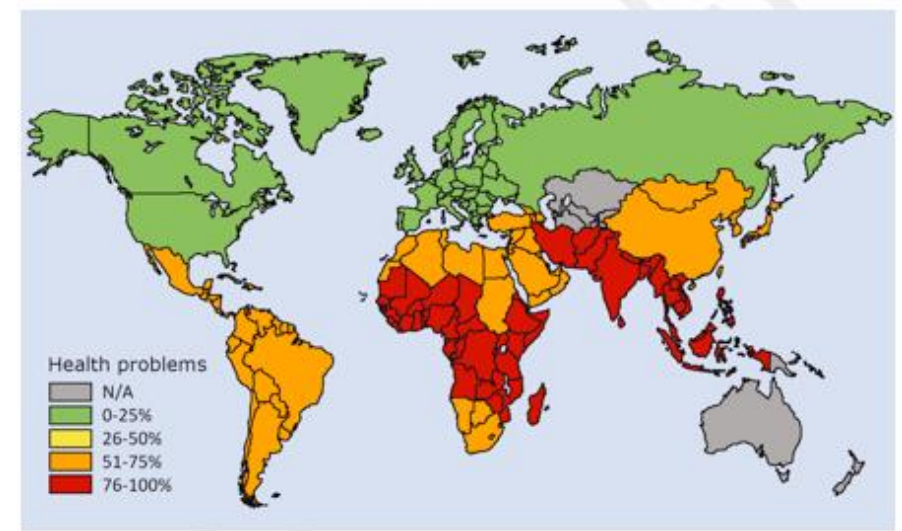
- Country:** Finland
- Affiliation:** University of Helsinki (UH); Helsinki University Hospital (HUS)
- Function:** Professor of Infectious Diseases (UH)
Chief Physician (HUS)
Head, Meilahti Vaccine Research Center MeVac (UH, HUS)
- Main expertise:** Infectious diseases
Antimicrobial resistance
Vaccines
Diarrhoeal disease
Tropical + travel medicine

Vaccines for Finnish travellers



Background & current situation

- Guidance? Main responsibility with THL
- THL's guidance
 - Based on guidelines of WHO, ECDC, etc
 - Traveler's Health Guide (Matkailijan Terveysopas)
 - Country-specific advice
 - Electronic (free access)
 - Vaccine Advisory phone
- Who provides travel vaccines?
 - Responsibility of Wellbeing service counties → health centers
 - Private sector
 - occupational healthcare
 - travel clinics
 - mobile vaccination units = "vaccination busses"
 - others



Who funds travel vaccines?

Routine vaccinations

- Provided under the National Vaccination Program (funded by taxes)

Travel-specific vaccines

- Through occupational healthcare (work-related travels)
- At individual's own expense

Travel vaccines as part of National Vaccination Program:

Routine vaccinations

- **MMR** (measles, mump, rubella)
 - basic vaccination in childhood
- **Tetanus-diphtheria**
 - basic vaccination in childhood
 - dtap booster at 25 years of age
 - booster interval 20 y (≥ 65 y, every 10 y)
- **Polio**
 - basic vaccination in childhood
 - booster if travels to polio-risk areas for >4 weeks (+ >12 mo since last dose)
- (Vaccines for certain risk groups)



Travel-specific vaccines

- BCG
- Cholera
- **COVID-19**
- Dengue
- Hepatitis A & B
- **Influenza**
- Japanese Encephalitis
- Meningococcus
- Typhoid Fever
- Yellow Fever
- Rabies
- Tick-borne encephalitis



Use of travel vaccines in Finland

- Which vaccines are most common?
 - No comprehensive data on numbers available
 - 2022–24 HAV 34490, HBV 142567
 - 2015–24 JEV 26 702, cholera 6250, typhoid fever 25 795
 - underreporting
 - Routine vaccinations: high coverage
 - Travel-specific: Hepatitis A (+ B)
- What is the uptake?
 - Vaccine hesitancy low
 - Occupational healthcare covers work-related travels
 - For others, varies by individual (awareness, funds, ...)
 - A special group of concern:
VFR (visiting friends and relatives) difficult to reach



Future changes

- THL's role will decrease in 2025
 - no longer responsible for the Traveler's Health Guide
 - Vaccine advisory hotline discontinued
 - Updates and guidance on infectious agents (e.g. polio) will continue



Future solutions?

- **Will other actors take more responsibility?**
 - **Traveller's Health Guide:** Finnish Medical Society Duodecim 2025–
 - **Vaccine advisory phone:**
 - no national solution, activities will vary by Wellbeing service county
 - ID specialists at hospitals: focus on treatment, not prevention
 - Roles for health centers, private travel clinics, mobile units?
 - **Global Health Finland /Travel Medicine Section**
 - Special competence in Travel Medicine since 2017: 35 certified
 - Guidance on webpages does not cover travel vaccines
- **Challenges in guidance and education**
 - **Guidance on Websites:** Need for comprehensive information
 - **Education:**
 - *Basic education:* improve coverage in MD curriculum
 - *Continuing education:* MDs and nurses
 - **Resources for travelers and healthcare workers:**
 - Webinars
 - Web-based materials



Thank you for your attention!

