The dengue viruses (DENV) are flaviviruses consisting of four antigenetically distinct serotypes, and cause the most common arthropod borne disease in humans. Two-thirds of the world’s population lives in affected areas, and there are up to 100 million infections annually, whereof 500 000 cases are the severe form of dengue, dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF). Since neither vaccine, nor effective antiviral drugs exist, only vector control of the DENV transmitting mosquitoes Aedes aegypti and albopictus remains as a measure of DENV control. Travelers visiting endemic areas may both acquire and spread DENV infection, why prevention of mosquito bites is of crucial importance.

Dengue fever (DF) has become, next after malaria, the most common cause for fever in Swedish tourists returning from tropical and sub-tropical countries. We have analysed data from 1995-2010 and the number of Swedish DF cases has increased since the beginning of 2000; partly due to improved diagnostics based on IgM detection, and partly due to an increase in the number of tourists traveling to, and between, endemic areas. The incidence can be as high as 250/100 000 during epidemics, i.e. in Thailand during June of 2002. Young adults aged 20-29 are mostly affected and epidemiological data indicate increased incidence rates from 2008 and onwards.

Our data pose a call for attention when traveling to DENV endemic areas, as well as an increased awareness among physicians when treating returning travelers.