

Mondial Assistance Group reviews Summer 2005 and publishes the latest exclusive evaluation of healthcare infrastructures in 114 countries

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World leader in travel insurance and assistance, Mondial Assistance Group carries out a first-time assessment of the summer holiday season, and publishes the second edition of its exclusive evaluation of healthcare infrastructures in 114 countries.

Summer 2005 – a dynamic season

« Mondial Assistance Group analysed the number, type and places where different incidents and accidents occurred during the summer of 2005 for a total of 3 million people in over 200 countries. The result is a pertinent analysis of this past vacation period, the holiday locations themselves, the means of transportation and the types of problems people encountered, » explains Ida Luka-Lognoné, a member of Mondial Assistance Group's Executive Committee and Director of Europe. 1.3 million assistance files were opened in July and August, a figure indicating that the summer of 2005 was indeed a dynamic one.

Two-thirds of these files were concentrated in 10 countries¹ and only 5% of all cases occurred outside the country of origin. The remaining one third of all files concerned another 190 countries.

Latin America, particularly Panama, Mexico, Colombia and Costa Rica, has emerged as an increasingly popular region among those destinations currently enjoying strong growth in tourism; its rising popularity underlines the commercial success of several tour operators specialising in these destinations. Croatia continues to be an increasingly favourite destination, particularly for French tourists. Bosnia is also becoming more popular, and like Serbia and China, its evolution will be closely followed.

However, tourism in Asia has drastically decreased due undoubtedly to the devastating effects of last year's Tsunami. Summer tourism in traditional destinations such as Tunisia, Morocco, the Balearic Islands, Turkey and Greece remains stable.

Mondial Assistance Group in France handled 206,000 files and assisted more than 500,000 people in July and August. Automobile assistance represented 63% of all files; of which accidents comprised 24% and breakdowns 76%. One quarter of all files was concentrated within 10 French regions². Medical assistance represented 10% of all files and was concentrated in the traditional regions and countries (France's ocean and mountain areas, and Spain and Morocco).

One year of assistance in a few key figures

- 250 million clients (4% of the world population)
- 9 million files
- 400 000 service providers
- 240 correspondents
- 40 languages
- 1 200 000 automobile repairs
- 240 000 automobile rentals
- 16 000 airline tickets
- 10 200 ambulance interventions
- 765 chartered airplanes
- 700 stretchers on passenger aircrafts

¹ Spain, France, USA, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Germany, Croatia, Morocco, Portugal (in descending order according to number of opened files)

² Bouches du Rhône, Var, Gironde, Hérault, Rhône, Paris for the first 6.

Summer 2005 confirms the extension of the holiday season, which now begins early June and finishes end September. Holidays are increasingly broken up and composed of several short vacations, involving more frequent travel, but dispersed throughout the entire period and less concentrated during the traditional peak time. Although there continues to be a decline in the number of road accidents, the fact that long-distance travel has become accessible to many more people is creating increasingly difficult situations for holidaymakers, subjecting them to new forms of stress (multiple time zone changes, physical endurance, abrupt changes from one's familiar environment).

Of particular note - remote destinations are no longer only for younger travellers. There are an increasing number of calls coming from older people, some of whom suffer from chronic illnesses and whose medical situation could deteriorate in the event of incidents such as infection or trauma.

Although the latest terrorist attacks seem to have had an immediate impact on the affected destinations (there have been 5% fewer visitors to the U.K., for example), their effect quickly subsides. On the other hand, the absence of tourists travelling to Southeast Asia confirms the long-term consequences of the tsunami and other major natural catastrophes. And lastly, airline accidents have not seriously deterred people from using air travel as a mass means of transportation.

<p>Figures: Summer 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1.3 million files ▪ More than 3 million people assisted ▪ 8 million calls 	<p>Summer 2005 in France</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 206,000 files (+2% compared to 2004) including : ▪ 63% automobile (24% accidents (-3%) and 76% breakdowns) ▪ Interventions in more than 100 countries ▪ More than 500,000 people assisted ▪ All-time record : August 16th, 2005 – 5,000 assistance files
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Exclusive evaluation of healthcare structures in 114 countries

For the second consecutive year, Mondial Assistance Group has published the results of its exclusive evaluation of 895 hospitals and clinics in 114 countries and 370 cities. This report includes 95 additional establishments and 6 new countries³, thereby demonstrating the Group's aim to continue expanding the evaluation's geographic coverage.

Every year, Mondial Assistance Group treats nearly 200,000 medical assistance files and carries out more than 27,000 repatriations from 200 different countries. In order to optimise patients' healthcare and the treatment of their illnesses, Mondial Assistance Group continually evaluates hospitals and clinics in countries with heavy, widespread tourism, and countries where the level of medical coverage is weak or inconsistent. The objective is to provide its doctors and regulatory medical teams with all the information they need to make the best decision in case a medical problem or accident occurs in an area where there is little healthcare or the healthcare levels are inconsistent.

The information regarding these countries and the healthcare facilities is exclusively available on Mondial Assistance Group's intranet site for the 500 doctors and personnel responsible for managing these medical cases. This database restates the information gathered within each establishment during the detailed annual evaluation visit (quality of the healthcare, hygiene, equipment, personnel, contact with local doctors, administrative data, languages spoken, etc...). Each facility is given an overall rating from 1 to 5 stethoscopes. Comments and photos taken by the Group's doctor who carried out the evaluation complete this rating.

Of the 114 visited countries, 69 have good level medical infrastructures, including 15 in Asia Pacific, 18 in Africa and the Middle East, 19 in Europe and 17 in Latin America.

³ The Philippines, the Azores, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates

Compared to the evaluation carried out in 2004, today's situation is considered stable. The number of average establishments (1 or 2 stethoscopes) has progressed from 30 to 31.8%. The number of acceptable establishments (3 stethoscopes) has increased from 32 to 34.8%. And the number of excellent establishments (4 and 5 stethoscopes) has decreased slightly from 38% last year to 33.4% in 2005.

Seventy-three per cent of all establishments maintained the same position they had in 2004. Fifteen per cent have seen their ratings drop while 12% have seen them improve.

The 2005 campaign provided the opportunity to strengthen the evaluated establishments' network capacity in treating coronary angioplasty and providing intensive care units in order to better respond to emergency needs related to heart trouble and other serious illnesses such as trauma and infection. This study shows that among the 265 best-evaluated establishments, 242 have intensive care units and 190 are able to carry out coronary angioplasty interventions.

« Due to this continually updated survey, we have all the information we need to make the best decisions for our patients, according to their illnesses and the immediate medical resources available. More often than not, an immediate medical repatriation does not represent the best solution because there is the additional worry as to where to transfer the patient to the best, nearby quality establishment, » comments Dr Guy Bellaïche, Medical Director of Mondial Assistance Group.

Mondial Assistance Group: an intervention every 3 seconds, anywhere in the world.

Worldwide leader in assistance, travel insurance and customer services, today Mondial Assistance Group counts nearly 7,600 staff members speaking over 40 languages. They work throughout the world in collaboration with a network of 400,000 service providers and 240 correspondents. 250 million people, or 4% of the world population, benefit from the Group's services, which it proposes on 5 continents in 28 countries. The Group mainly operates under its three international brands: ELVIA, Mondial Assistance and World Access.

Mondial Assistance Group is a member of the Allianz Group through AGF and RAS International, each holding a 50% capital stake. www.mondial-assistance-group.com

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