

MedFit programme

Many employees go on an international assignment unaware of their personal health, occupational health and destination risks. We help manage the health risks of our clients and their global workforce through MedFit, a health screening programme. The MedFit programme can also be applied to the employees' dependants. In 2017, we conducted 20,000 health checks and questionnaires resulting in targeted medical feedback to our clients' employees. Through the programme, we provide our clients with the reassurance that medical issues have been addressed before work assignments and business travel begin.

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Mental health

A research paper titled, *'Keeping International Business Travellers Happy, Healthy & Engaged at Home and Away'* (produced by the International SOS Foundation, together with Kingston Business School and Affinity Health at Work) found that nearly one-third (31%) of international business travellers experienced emotional exhaustion - a core feature of burnout - on a weekly basis. Organisations need to have greater awareness of the actions and mental wellbeing of employees, and implement measures to protect and support them. Supporting materials from the research include, an action planning tool, checklists and guidance documents. These are to help organisations, employers, managers, international business travellers, and their support networks, identify and manage potential behavioural and psychological issues.

International SOS has partnered with Workplace Options (WPO) to offer clients and their people emotional support along with integrated medical and security risk management solutions.

http://learn.internationalsosfoundation.org/Psychology_Study

Case study: mental health support to a client

International SOS worked with one of our United Kingdom-based clients to offer emotional and mental support and guidance following a traumatic accident. A group of individuals from the United Kingdom travelled to Geneva for a work conference. Prior to the conference, they decided to take a road trip to explore the countryside. Their vehicle collided with an oncoming truck 100km outside of Geneva. Tragically, three individuals within the group were killed, two of the travellers were uninjured and one woman was left in critical condition. The critically injured woman was airlifted from the scene by emergency services to a local hospital. She needed immediate surgery to resolve her life-threatening injuries. Her children and family travelled to Geneva and remained by her side throughout her hospital stay.

The challenge

This tragic accident left all survivors and their families in a very vulnerable state. Their employer faced a challenge which needed to be delicately handled. The immediate concern, besides the physical trauma, was safeguarding the emotional wellbeing of the individuals involved; helping them cope with the shock and trauma associated with the incident. The employer was unsure how to offer psychological support to the survivors. Their assumption, like most, was that the survivors would request support if they felt it was necessary. A second challenge was that the incident occurred outside their home country. Although Switzerland has high quality emergency services and medical care, the differences from UK local medical treatments, language and procedures were evident.

The solution

None of the survivors requested emotional support. However, our medical team knew that the employer needed to proactively provide support for their psychological wellbeing. Once we were notified of the incident, we made contact with our partner, WPO, who sent a local counsellor to help. A session was arranged with the counsellor, the survivors and their families. They ruled out any critical immediate psychological issues that would prevent the survivors from travelling home. They were, however, going through a phase of denial and were susceptible to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). WPO was able to advise the employer and their colleagues on the physical and psychological signs to look out for, and what to do in the case of any future incidents. Meanwhile, we

deployed an English-speaking local nurse to provide the hospitalised patient with medical and non-medical translation services. This gave the patient and her family the reassurance that she was receiving the best care for her needs. We also deployed a local coordinator to assist with on-the-ground support including liaising with the funeral home, local authorities, and the UK embassy. Both local representatives were in constant communication with the employer so they remained up-to-date.

These solutions reassured the employer they had taken the right approach to protect the emotional wellbeing of their employees. The survivors continued to receive treatment and support to ensure a smooth recovery and were able to return to work.