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Medex 2010 Porter Morbidity Project to Nepal Basic understandings

Medex in association with Porters Progress is organising a medical research project to take place in Nepal in the pre monsoon trekking season of 2010.

Medex has undertaken a number of medical research projects in Nepal, to Everest in 1994, Kangchenjunga in 1998, the Hongu in 2003 and the Hidden Valley, Dhaulagiri in 2008. On each of our trips we have encountered Nepalese Staff and porters who have experienced illness during their work in support of expeditions but it is unclear how often and to what extent this occurs. It is also apparent from our experience that the treks and expeditions they support are ill equipped to assist them when they fall ill.

The research project is being conducted to provide a robust scientific basis to assist in raising the awareness of treks and expeditions who are going to the less travelled areas of Nepal of the need for them to be equipped to look after not only themselves but also the Nepalese that work for them.

Data will be collected through questionnaires to gain better understanding of the nature of any incidents, the preparedness of the expedition/trek and the awareness of foreign nationals of responsibility.

The research is being led by Dr Mary Morrell, a reader in respiratory physiology at the Royal Brompton Hospital, London. UK ethics committee approval has been obtained and Nepalese approval is currently being sought.

Participants in the research will be encouraged to take part in the pre trip planning and organisation of the research as well as conducting the questionnaire survey in Nepal and writing up and presenting results.

The questionnaire survey is to be conducted at two villages, Muktinath for the Annapurna circuit trek and Marpha for the Dhaulagiri circuit trek.

It is expected that the researchers will spend two weeks in Muktinath and two weeks in Marpha. A provisional itinerary/timetable is given below.

The travel arrangements to enable the research to be conducted in Nepal are being arranged by Medex using our agent in Kathmandu. Medex and Porters Progress will arrange and fund the costs of two Nepalese trek experts to assist the teams in data collection.

If you are interested in joining this research project we would strongly urge you to join Medex and participate fully in the club activities. Medex produces frequent email updates keeping members abreast of plans and news. To join contact Simon Currin at simon@medex.org.uk.

Itineraries

Sample Itinerary for the Medex 2010 research project

Assuming that participation is for the full four weeks of research with no additional trekking

- Day 1 Arrival in Kathmandu
- Day 2 flight Kathmandu to Pokhara
- Day 3 flight Pokhara to Jomson
- Day 4 walk to Marpha/Muktinath
- Days 5 to 17 conduct research in Marpha/Muktinath
- Day 18 to 19 walk to meeting point e.g. Kagbeni or Jomson/break
- Day 20 walk to Marpha/Muktinath
- Days 21 to 34 Conduct research in Marpha/Muktinath
- Day 35 walk to Jomson
- Day 36 flight Jomson to Pokhara
- Day 37 At leisure in Pokhara
- Day 38 Flight Pokhara to Kathmandu



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Day 39 At leisure in Kathmandu

Day 40 International flights

This amounts to 6 nights in hotels and 33 nights in tea house accommodation

Please note that flights to and from Jomson can be delayed by weather conditions – low cloud/wind direction and are not certain to operate on the stated days and consequently the at leisure days in Pokhara and Kathmandu may not occur if flights do not operate as expected.

Costs

The cost of participating in the research in Nepal is £560 (US\$880) per person based on single occupancy of hotel and tea house accommodation and includes:

1. Airport transfers in Nepal
2. 4 Internal flights in Nepal – Kathmandu to Pokhara and Pokhara to Jomson and return
3. 6 nights Hotel accommodation in Kathmandu and Pokhara
4. 33 nights Tea Lodge accommodation in Marpha and Muktinath
5. Annapurna national park conservation fees

If all accommodation is on a two person to a room basis the cost is reduced to £420 (US\$660)

The number of nights is based on a trip which is solely focussed on research for the full duration. Other itineraries can be quoted on request.

Internal flight luggage allowance is 15kg

Payment can be made in sterling or in US\$ direct into Medex bank accounts. Bank account details will be provided on request.

The following are not included in the price and need to be provided by the researchers themselves:

1. International flights
2. All food
3. Travel insurance, to cover search and rescue insurance including from any independently organised trekking
4. Visas for Nepal (currently US\$100 or £75 for 90 days and US\$40 or £35 if staying less than 30 days)
5. Airport duties, internal and international (Int Departure tax 1130 rupees, domestic tax 169.5 rupees per flight)
6. Cost of transport by jeep from Jomson to/from Muktinath or Marpha
7. Cost of employing porters to carry baggage
8. Any trekking cost incurred independently of the research project including accommodation, flights, permits etc
9. Any additional nights in Tea Houses or in hotels
10. Tips and gratuities for Nepalese staff

We strongly advise you to make your International flight reservations as soon as possible as flights to Kathmandu can be expensive if left too late.

Tea house accommodation is basic. Food is not provided as part of the package to enable researchers to vary the places they can eat in the villages. It should be possible to buy food for circa \$10 per day excluding drinks. An equipment list is being provided for guidance on kit required. Sleeping bags will be needed in the lodges and a down jacket is very useful for cold evenings.

Current (10.12.09) foreign exchange rates are: £1 = 120 rupees, €1 = 110 rupees, US\$1 = 75 rupees

The next Medex event takes place at the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel in the Lake District over the weekend of 16th/17th January 2010. This is a must for everyone planning on participating in the research project as we will be testing out the questionnaires and providing briefings. Details are on the Medex web site or contact simon@medex.org.uk



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Terms and Conditions for Medex Trips

1. Your contract Your contract is with Expedition Equipment Ltd, (registered with company number 3479132), 'the Company', trading as Medex. The following conditions, together with the basic understandings for each Trip issued prior to each Trip, will form your contract with the Company. The contract, including all matters arising from it, is subject to English law and the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts. For the purposes of these terms and conditions a 'Trip' should be interpreted as any journey or expedition undertaken by land or sea by any means of transport organised by Medex.

2. Booking and deposit All bookings must be made with the Company. The booking form must be completed and sent to the Company together with a non-refundable deposit of £500. By making a deposit payment and by signing the booking form, you will be accepting the terms and conditions. The Company or its agents reserve the right to decline any booking at their discretion. For bookings made within 16 weeks of the Trip departure date, full payment is required, to accompany the booking form.

3. Balance of payment The balance of all monies due (including inter alia any notified or known increases) must be paid to the Company 16 weeks before departure. If for any reason payment is not received by the due date, the Company reserves the right to treat the booking as cancelled by you and cancellation charges set out in paragraph 5 will apply.

4. Prices and surcharges The Company reserves the right at any time to alter the price of the Trip. You will be notified of any price increase before or at the time of booking. The price of your Trip may be increased after you book following a surcharge to take into account changes in the exchange rates of those countries forming part of the Trip, increases in general taxation (such as VAT or its equivalent) imposed by any country forming part of the Trip.

If the price increases by more than 10% (excluding any insurance premium and amendment charges), you may cancel the booking within 14 days of written notification of the surcharge and obtain a full refund. Failure to pay the surcharge within 30 days of the date specified on the written notification will be treated as a cancellation of your booking.

5. Cancellation

5.1 By you: Any cancellation made by you shall be subject to a cancellation charge expressed as a percentage of the total price (including inter alia any increase) and is as follows: 56 and more days before departure: the amount of the deposit; 55-42 days before departure: 30%; 41-28 days before departure: 60%; 27-14 days before departure: 90%; less than 14 days 100%.

5.2 By the Company: In addition to the right of cancellation set out in paragraph 3, the Company reserves the right also to cancel a Trip at any time, for any reason. The Company will not cancel a Trip less than 21 days before that Trip's departure, except for force majeure, unusual or unforeseen circumstances beyond the Company's control. In the event of cancellation by the Company you will be entitled to a refund.

6. Damage to equipment Should breakages or damage be caused by you to any of the Company's equipment or any equipment hired by the Company for the purposes of the Trip, including, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, if

you cause damage due to being under the influence of alcohol or drugs or disobeying the instructions of the Company's staff, the costs of repair must be borne by you. Additionally, the cost of any personal use of communications equipment must be paid by you.

7. What the price includes and what the price does not include See basic understandings issued for each Trip. There will be no refund for any services included in the Trip price that you decline to use.

8. Travel and cancellation insurance Personal travel Insurance cover is mandatory for all those participating in Trips offered as part of the Medex activity programme and participants should arrange this themselves. It is compulsory that such insurance has a minimum cover of £500,000 which covers personal accident/ medical expenses/loss of effects/helicopter evacuation/repatriation costs/mountain rescue and all other expenses, which might arise, as a result of loss, damage, injuries, delay or inconvenience occurring to you. You acknowledge that the price of the Trip does not include the cost of any insurance. You agree and acknowledge that you will inform the insurance company of the details of the Trip. The Company accepts no liability whatever for any action or activity undertaken by you arranged independently of the Company or outside the itinerary as amended, if appropriate, by the Company and/or against the advice or instructions or orders of any member of the Company. If you decide to absent yourself in the course of the Trip you do so entirely at your own cost and risk. You agree to accept the authority and decision of the Company and any of its directors during the Trip. The Company has no insurance policy covering any liability to you.

9. Changes and Trip transfers

9.1. By you If you wish at any time to alter your booking, we shall endeavour to make the necessary changes, but cannot guarantee to do so. We must receive written notification of your request to make any such change and you are subject to the conditions set out below.

You may transfer your booking to another person provided that a written request for such a transfer is received by the Company at any time prior to 50 days before Trip departure. This request must be accompanied by the full name and address of the person to whom the Trip will be transferred. This person must fulfil any conditions which apply to the Company's acceptance of the booking. Please note that airlines may impose 100% cancellation charges plus the cost of a new ticket. Any request to transfer your booking to another person made less than 50 days before Trip departure, will not normally be accepted.

9.2. By the Company The Company reserves the right without prior notice and without providing any reason to alter and/or modify and/or cancel the Trip and/or itinerary and/or departure date and/or method of transport and/or any other aspect of the Trip and the Company does not accept any liability or responsibility for any aspect of the Trip affected by such alteration and/or modification and/or cancellation. The Company does not accept any liability or responsibility for any circumstances, matters or events which are unforeseeable and/or unpredictable and/or outside its control and/or



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amounting to a force majeure and/or act of God. If the Company cancels the Trip it will offer an alternative arrangement or a full refund of any monies paid to the Company excluding sums already spent which cannot reasonably be recovered. No further payments will be made.

10. Factors outside the Company's control (Force Majeure)

The Company will endeavour to minimise effects of matters outside its control but cannot accept any liability for these matters which shall include, but not by way of limitation, outbreak of hostilities, civil commotion, riot, riotous assembly, storm, hurricane, tempest and any other acts of God and supervening impossibilities not capable of avoidance by the Company. If any such event of force majeure occurs, the Company shall not be liable to pay any refund or compensation to you.

11. Limitation of liability

a. The Company will accept liability for the negligence of its staff causing you injury or death only to the extent that it is obliged under English law. The Company shall not (subject to any statutory requirement to the contrary) be liable for any injury, death, loss or damage caused by other passengers, nor will it be liable for any uninsured losses of your property, nor for any illness, injury or death sustained during any Trip.

b. The Company accepts no responsibility for airport or flight delays but will give such assistance as is reasonable in supporting any valid claim you may have against the carrier. It is your responsibility to arrive at the point of Trip departure by the time specified and all costs incurred are to be borne by you

c. You shall not be entitled to any refund or compensation in the event of withdrawing during your Trip, due to health, personal or other reason. If you withdraw prior to Trip departure, the cancellation charges set out in paragraph 5 shall apply.

d. No responsibility can be accepted for variations in standard of services or facilities generally which occur after the issue of the Company's programme or due to causes beyond the Company's control.

e. The Company acts as agent for various local agents, local operators, suppliers of transport, owners and contractors and the Company does this on express condition that it is not liable or responsible for any loss, damage or injury or breaches of conduct caused directly or indirectly by such independent parties. You acknowledge and accept that when the Company is acting as an agent you are subject to the conditions of business of the aforesaid independent parties providing the particular arrangements and/or services and/or items.

12. Authority You agree to accept the authority, decisions and instructions of the Company's employees, representatives, and agents during your Trip. At all times the decision of the Company's representative will be final on all matters.

At all times you must strictly comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug requirements of all countries visited. Any failure to comply with the above or should you interfere with the well being of other persons on the Trip or with the Trip, or any associated expeditions, or any research or any project, the company may order you to leave the Trip without recourse to any refund and without any claim against the Company.

13. Hazardous nature of Trips. Medex Trips are of an adventurous nature, visiting sometimes remote politically unstable and underdeveloped parts of the world, without the facilities and sophistication found in Western European countries. You must appreciate and acknowledge that your Trip requires considerable flexibility and should therefore allow for alternatives. The outline itinerary, as set out in the basic understandings issued for each Trip, must be taken as an indication only of places that might be visited and activities undertaken.

In addition, the Trips are potentially hazardous and may involve a significant element of personal risk and may include inter alia injury, disease, loss or damage to property, inconvenience or discomfort and you accept such risk. You specifically acknowledge and agree that the Company and its agents, directors and/or employees carry no liability for any loss, damage, injury, expense, delay or inconvenience arising from any hazard or risk.

14. Medical Research Many of the Trips of Medex will be undertaken in conjunction with Medical Expeditions Charitable Company in order to conduct medical research.

There may be an element of personal risk involved in medical, clinical or scientific research and/or experiments and/or investigations ("Research"). You are not, nor shall be, under any duty or obligation to assist, carry out or be involved in any Research carried out during the Trip but if you assist, carry out or are involved in Research carried out during the Trip the Company shall not be liable in any respect for any damage and/or loss and/or injury and/or expense and/or inconvenience suffered by you.

15. Age limit Due to the recent changes in the law and the adventurous nature of the activities undertaken on Medex Trips, the minimum age for participating in a Medex Trip is 18 years at the time of your Trip departure. The Company may use its discretion when accepting people of any age group onto its Trips.

16. Travel documents Whilst we aim to provide you with current requirements, you shall be responsible for ensuring that you have a valid passport and visa(s) and any inoculations and vaccinations and certificates which you may be advised are necessary. Any advice given by the Company or any of its agents, directors or employees with regard to such matters is given in good faith but without responsibility on the part of the Company or any of its agents, directors or employees.

17. Health and experience Medex Trips can be dangerous activity and require an average level of fitness and good health. Sufficient physical fitness and health and experience are essential before embarking on the Trip and it is assumed by the Company that you have the required level of fitness and health and experience. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are sufficiently healthy and experienced enough to undertake the Trip (including for the avoidance of doubt but without limitation any activities you may undertake during the Trip). Without prejudice to the above or any other condition the Company reserves the right to order you not to attempt any particular activity if it considers that you or other persons or property may be at risk.

18. Complaints If you have a complaint against the Company, you must first inform the Trip leader or any other Company representative present during your Trip, so that action can be taken to remedy the problem. If you are not satisfied with their response, you should notify the Company's head office in



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Wales, and the Company will do its best to resolve the problem. If at the end of your Trip, you do not think that your complaint has been satisfactorily resolved, you must notify the Company in writing, submitting all details relating to your complaint, within 21 days of the end of your Trip.

19. Severalty Each and every clause in these terms and conditions shall be considered to be independent of each other, and if any clause, or part thereof, be deemed unenforceable, that clause or part thereof shall be severed from the other clauses or parts thereof, and those remaining shall exist intact and enforceable.

These conditions can only be waived by a director of the Company in writing

20. Medex is the trading name of Expedition Equipment Limited, a private limited company set up to support Medical Expeditions by running the logistics of expeditions and providing a club environment to promote interest in the research activities of the charity. Medical Expeditions is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Neither Medical Expeditions nor Medex is a commercial travel agency and neither have significant reserves nor are bonded.

21. Medex (the company)

Directors: Simon Currin & Sally Currin

Medex was formed in 1997, initially to provide a route for members of the Kangchenjunga 98 expedition to purchase climbing and expedition equipment at reduced prices. Hence the corporate name is Expedition Equipment Limited. The company has now taken over the running of a club "Medex" and the logistical support for research and environmental expeditions, leaving the charitable company, Medical Expeditions, to focus on its core charitable activities.

22. Medical Expeditions (the charity)

Directors: James Milledge, David Collier, Annabel Nickol, George Wormald, Paul Richards, David Lawson & Alistair Duff (Company Secretary)

Medical Expeditions was formed in 1996 from the charitable company that organised the very successful British Mount Everest Medical Expedition 1994.

Medical Expeditions commissions research into all aspects of altitude related illness and promotes greater public awareness of these potentially lethal conditions.