



## Aspirin and air travellers

**To the Editor:** In an article in *Update*, a journal for general practitioners, Singh *et al.*<sup>1</sup> state that 'subcutaneous heparin and low-dose aspirin have been recommended as risk-reducing agents for air-travellers at known risk for DVT'. (It is unclear whether this implies heparin *and* low-dose aspirin or heparin *or* low-dose aspirin.) However, in an *SAMJ* article entitled 'The BEST Study – a prospective study to compare business class versus economy class air-travel as a cause for thrombosis', Barry Jacobson *et al.*<sup>2</sup> state that the New Zealand Air Traveller's Thrombosis (NZATT) study has now reported that 'aspirin does not prevent travel-associated venous thrombosis'. This latter opinion seems a rational one in light of the fact that aspirin reduces platelet aggregation in *arteriosclerotic* plaques.

General practitioners are frequently consulted by prospective air travellers as to whether they should use aspirin before and during a flight. The issue is clearly controversial, and it would be helpful to establish consensus. I am accordingly submitting this letter to *SAMJ*, which enjoys a multidisciplinary and academic readership, hoping to solicit such consensus through these columns.

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1. Singh K, Burn G, Smith A. Air travel and venous thrombosis. *Update* 2007; XXIV (July), No. 1, 74-76.
2. Jacobson BF, Münster M, Smith A, *et al.* The BEST Study – a prospective study to compare business class versus economy class air-travel as a cause of thrombosis. *S Afr Med J* 2003; 93: 522-528.