How much does it cost to have a heart attack?

Wednesday 10 April, 2019

70% of consumers say they always purchase travel insurance when going on holiday. Do the 30% who travel uninsured, know just how much they could have to fork out in the event of a medical emergency abroad?

Specialist insurance broker PayingTooMuch.com reveal the costs for having a heart attack in some of the world's top holiday destinations…

In 2018, approximately 18.5 million Brits travelled to Spain for their holiday[1]. Should any of those travellers have suffered a heart attack whilst away, they could have faced a bill of up to £45,400 if travelling uninsured.

Figures obtained by PayingTooMuch.com[2] show the average claim costs on a travel insurance policy for a heart attack, or related condition can vary from £2,200 to a staggering £72,400 depending on your holiday destination.

And that's just the average cost!

These claims could reach as much as £362,700 depending on the severity of the condition, the type of treatment and whether repatriation to the UK is required.

If you were one of the 30% travelling uninsured, could you afford to foot the bill if the unexpected were to happen to you?

Here's how the figures stack up (based on claims relating to heart attacks:)

[illegible]

[illegible] Cost:

[illegible]:

In their 2019 Travel Trends Report[3], ABTA cited Denver (Colorado, USA) and Galicia (Spain) as 'up and coming' destinations to travel to. If you're planning on travelling to one of these places (or anywhere else) it's important to make sure you have the correct cover in place.

A comprehensive travel insurance policy is designed to pay out to cover medical costs such as those mentioned above, regardless of whether you've had a heart complaint previously (provided it has been declared to the insurer), or if you suffer a new medical condition.

Declaring pre-existing medical conditions to your insurer will ensure you are covered for all eventualities, however when surveyed, 36% percent of people said they didn't think they would have to declare a previous heart attack to their insurer and 18% believe it is not necessary to declare ANY pre-existing conditions on a policy. This would leave these travellers at risk of having to pay out for their own treatment if they travelled with an invalid policy.

Statistics from the ABI[4] (Association of British Insurers) show that in 2017, 159,000 travellers requiring medical treatment abroad, had claims supported by insurers which cost £201,000,000. These claims included £187,000 to cover a 33-day stay in a Las Vegas hospital, several outpatient appointments and a flight back to the UK following a heart attack, £90,000 treatment for a fractured rib and punctured lung, £20,000 to treat a blocked intestine and £3,800 to cover damage to a knee ligament.

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Beth Macer, travel insurance expert at PayingTooMuch.com explains: “A lot of travellers fail to declare certain medical conditions because they occurred ‘a long time ago’ or because they don’t realise the importance or costs involved should they fail to disclose something they may deem irrelevant. Surprisingly we also find people are unsure why they are taking medication in the first place.

Few of us have a perfect medical history, so if you are prescribed a medication for treating or controlling a current or previous medical condition then you need to declare the condition for which the medication is prescribed, to your insurer. Failure to declare your conditions could mean your policy would not be worth the paper it is written on!”

Travel insurance for a fit and healthy couple (both 50 years old) travelling to Spain for one week, could cost as little as £33, or £80 if one traveller had previously suffered a heart attack (had a stent fitted and is taking medication to control blood pressure and cholesterol) – a small price to pay when compared to the cost of needing treatment abroad!

Example quotes available from PayingTooMuch.com for travellers with and without medical conditions:

All insurers have different underwriting criteria, so it’s important to check your policy terms and conditions carefully, to ensure you are correctly covered.

Notes to Editors:

Survey research was carried out by PayingTooMuch.com with Usurv amongst 100 people in the UK who had travelled abroad in the last 12 months. Survey date 29/03/2019.

[1] Taken from Wikipedia, https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_Spain

[2] Information provided by PayingTooMuch.com’s leading travel insurance underwriter.

[3] Travel Trends brings together news and insights from ABTA Members, market information and ABTA research, offering a review of the last 12 months and looking ahead to 2019.

[4] Taken from ABI website,

& https://www.abi.org.uk/news/news-articles/2018/08/from-holiday-to-horror-day/

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