

Travel bug leads to killer diseases

THE boom in international air travel is likely to lead to new killer forms of common diseases, Scottish scientists predict.

Parasites such as tapeworm and malaria may become deadly, while it's feared super-strains of viruses will emerge.

While it is already known that travel can help bugs to spread, the scientists found they will also evolve to become more deadly.

Dr Andy Gardner, of Edinburgh University's school of biological sciences, said: "The parasites were managing their host population in a sustainable way, but if there is a continual supply of new uninfected hosts they don't need to bother doing that.

"There is no incentive for the parasite to hold back. They can exploit the host quickly and move onto someone else.

"As more people are travelling the globe, we are taking away the incentive the parasite has to be less harmful.

"Parasites that cause minor illnesses today could become deadly."

The research is published in the journal Nature.