

Medical Tourism in India

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Abstract

There is a medical tourism trend in India today. Many foreign and domestic tourist patients choose Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and Gujarat Indian states for medical treatment and as tourism. Health is considered to have enormous potential. There is strong growth rapid expansion in this field, specially driven by foreign patients, due to the availability of efficient infrastructure and comparatively cheaper (at a global stage) medical treatment. Best medical expertise have made India one of the best medical tourism's locations. Foreign tourists prefer this country not because of its holidays, but also because of its health care facilities such as surgery, knee transplant, beauty surgery, problems related to dental etc. Most of the tourist prefer India to use natural resources for Ayurveda treatment. Article will discuss about the rise & challenges related to medical tourism in India taking ideal example of Karnataka.

Keywords: Growth rate, medical expertise & cost efficiency, medical tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

People travelling to foreign countries for the purpose of medical treatment is called Medical Tourism. It is not comparatively new concept, but near past the speed at which it is growing it makes it famous & new to the people. In the past people from economically weaker sections of the society used to travel too much, more advanced countries for advanced treatment. Now the scenario is such that people staying incomparatively more developed countries are willing to relocate & travel to lesser-developed country due to financial prospect. The current data reflects that the size of value of medical tourism in India is to be estimated at marginally over \$3 billion approx., with estimation of 230,000 tourist arrivals. When comparing to US & Europe, India has positioned itself as an inexperienced medical treatment destination. Private hospital possess huge no. of qualified doctors, nurses & other support staff capable of attracting medical tourists, particularly from south east part of Asia and the Middle East.

"A large pool of medical professionals, multiple private healthcare infrastructure, increasing technical expertise, economical medical procedures, world-leading healthcare system & government support are believed to increase the no. of medical tourists approaching in India to expected level of 4 lakh by end of 2018," by Sharad Jaipuria. Report cited the shortage of a dedicated site where hospitals, tour operator and medical facilitators could be listed as a disincentive to the growth of tourism of medical sciences with specialists and doctors.

Health tourism has become accepted form of holiday, covering wide range of medical facilities. This contain recreation, relaxation and fun along with health and wellness. The factors that influence patients who go to various nations for medical cure or medical procedures differ from nation to nation. [1][2]–[8]

India is experiencing a sudden boom in respect of medical tourism, since foreign tourist are always looking for affordable but excellent customer service in overseas locations for high-quality healthcare services in overseas locations for high-

quality healthcare services, India becomes an ideal destination for them. Medical coverage has attracted attention to this tourism; whereas facilitators for medical travel emerged to advice, foreign patients go abroad for medical treatment. India, Thailand, Malaysia, etc. are currently incorporating medical tourism in their strategies for economic development.

Medical tourism cannot be a direct trade from a commercial point of view, but it offers health care facilities beyond boundaries. In Medical Tourism, not every procedures is comprised in the medical market, such as Beauty Chirurgy used for esthetic other than recovery purposes, is not comprised in health boundary. In other countries such as Brazil, Singapore, Argentina, Mexico, Greece, Dominican Republic, Jordan, Lithuania & Malaysia. In mentioned countries, the medical tourism is effective & aspirations are certainly on higher side. Health care services in home in India is demanding to occupy the worldwide health market that is expanding. The thought behind medical tourism has the advantageous potential to be attached. Most clients requiring medical aid are the people who belong to among the world's developed countries. Persons from different nations do look for places where they can spend some free time from a holiday together & receive medical aid at an affordable price. India is entering the global position of universal healthcare & according to various study it is becoming a future juggernaut in this tourism.

Growth isn't restricted to selected hospitals; though a variety of healthcare offers such as naturopathic, Ayurveda & yoga facilities are also achieving huge profits from this flourishing.

According to McKinsey, 2008 "humans first purpose is to obtain medical aid by traveling across the border, excluding: wellness tourists, disaster tourists, emigrants trying to find care in their own country, inmates traveling to border countries that are closest to their own country."

India's medical expertise is the most finest across the world when compared to other countries, and even the work implemented by doctors is accepted across the world. The main reason for India's emergence as a major health care destination is

due to the world-renowned Indian health center's good reputation. There are about 35,000 specialist physicians of Indian origin in the US alone. For their caring approach, international tourists like mostly Indian nurses as they feel it's almost like a motherly treatment. It is believed that the expensive of the medical treatment across the world and at the same time the quality is best.

2. BACKGROUND THEORY

Rise of Medical tourism across India

Rising healthcare costs in major developed nations such as the USA and the UK along with increasing inflation in above countries, patients unable to bear such expensive healthcare costs are looking for medical treatment in nations offering the same treatment at very cheap cost. In reality, these countries are flocked by celebrities, sportsmen and other people from western nations. This has given lift to medical tourism which is now increasing as it makes many job opportunities & adds further to the country's growth. The trends of medical tourism that indicate that they are ambiguous and unidirectional in nature have been studied over recent decades. As in ordinary tourism the traveler checks preferences for example type of holiday, time to spend, amenities & sum which is to be spent on a vacation, after which they think about area where they choose hotel to stay & choose the best cost-effective option, it is one of the alternative ways of medical tourism. But it can be said that the right mechanism for medical tourism is that patients first decide on their own needs and medical preference.

India as a nation offers not only allopathy, but even yoga, Ayurveda, homeopathy and even other medicine facilities, which is an exclusive basket of medical facilities compared to other countries around the globe.

Most foreign patients are drawn to Ayurveda care because of the natural and inherent cultural element. There are many private and government hospitals that provide patients with medical treatment regardless of even ethnic group. In India, there are a few private hospitals that lead to a rise in medical tourism.

Issues in Medical Tourism in India

The legal issues faced when visiting India as medical tourist is the extent of which tourists insurance might cover itself. It may find difficulties to claim damages in case of malpractice suits, simply because of insurance laws fluctuate from country to country. Although, hospitals and clinics have medical malpractice insurance, the actual settlement asked for false diagnosis, negligence may not be the amount you expected simply because you understood the insurance regulations and laws in your own nation. Tourist should make note that they will get the details before they reach to India. Thousands have traveled in the recent past because medical visitors are only going for cosmetic surgery, which is known to be an optional procedure. Because selective approaches are normally not covered by insurance, insurance coverage is not a major component for medical tourists to look into it. Nonetheless, few other nations including India have started to pitch some of which are life-rescuing medical procedures for example transplant. For this sense, it is essential to use a clear insurance policy to travel to India for a moment and seek professional medical treatment.[9]

Few problems:

- Medicare and basic health insurance & even sometimes additional medical insurance, mostly do not pay for the treatment, ensuring that the patient has to pay liquid amount. Little bit of follow-up care is available.
- Patient is normally in hospital for only a handful of days, and eventually goes home on trip's holiday part or performance. Side effects, complications and post-operative treatment in the home nation of the patients are for the responsibility of health care system.
- Many countries providing health tourism have lax rules on liability, so if something goes wrong, the person will have small recourse to medical boards or local courts.
- There are growing concerns that lucrative medical travel and leisure in the private sector are attracting medical source & workers far from the local community, although

some medical trades that sell to outsiders take steps to advance nearby service.

Capabilities

Eventually, the medical tourism trend will rebuild the internal capability of healthcare providers and their host nations. Few of the capacities are focused on facilities of provider: the modernity of clinics and hospitals, the accessibility of specific medical services requested by outsiders, the condition of care given, & the education of providers. Meanwhile others are based on care delivery process: for e.g., providers' communication skill, interpreters' presence & others also deal with the destination nation's infrastructure: e.g., number of in& out flights from the airports, effortless travel from country to and, even quality of local transportation network and roads, quality of telecommunications systems, appeal as a tourism site. Other deals with government policies designed to address the iron triangle's three dimensions: e.g., reducing care

Costs, promoting and regulating the quality of providers, auditing healthcare services delivered, pursuing promotion strategies.

Focused hospital initiatives:

In order to achieve better results, Indian hospitals need to conserve and improve their quality standards. We need to standardize their processes in order to reduce price (e.g. lean production) and thus retain their price advantage.

- Partnerships with overseas blue chip firms willing to outsource medical aid of their employees in India.
- Analyze partnerships with healthcare insurance.
- Explore partnerships with hospitals & physicians.
- Conspire with foreign universities offering MBA.
- Upgrade standards of hygiene & cleanliness.

Focused government initiatives:

By investing some millions of dollars in medical tourism system over two years, India's central government is lending support. The National Hospital

Accreditation Board has launched a secondary and tertiary hospital accreditation program. The government also tried to provide medical tourists with priority medical visas; moreover, the biggest bottle neck in case for medical tourists coming from the UK and the USA for majority of surgeries is not a visa but rather their insurance firms'

inability to take Indian care. The Central govt. has also confirmed to care of foreign patients is eligible for all tax enticement added to export income and is deemed to be 'export.'

Performance of Karnataka:

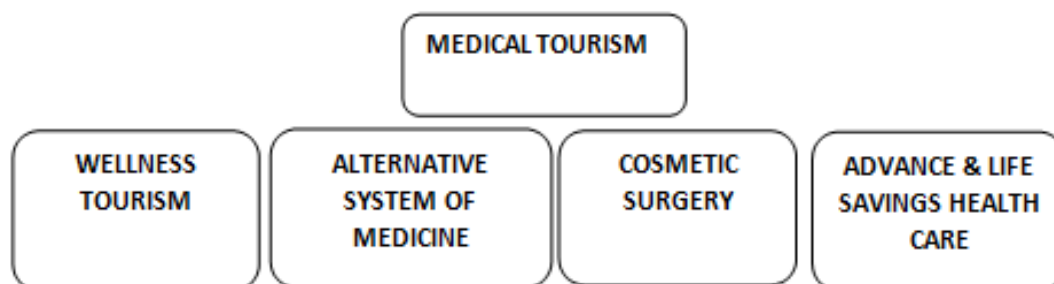


Figure-1: Structure of Medical Tourism in Karnataka

PROCEDURE	USA	INDIA	KARNATAKA
Heart valve replacement	1,60,000	9,000	8,000
Hip replacement	43,000	9,000	9,000
Knee replacement	40,000	8,500	7,000
Heart bypass	1,30,000	10,000	9,000
Angioplasty	57,000	11,000	10,000
Hysterectomy	20,000	3,000	3,000
Spinal fusion	62,000	5,500	5,000

Table 1: Cost comparison between USA, India, and Karnataka (Approximated figures in US\$)

Source:

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/12163631/Medical-Tourism/P/36>

The biggest attraction of tourism of medical in India is quality care & aid, relatively economical services when compared to the west, cheap services & package deals from the hospitality & tourism industries. Price differentials for India and the USA of different procedures reveal the economic advantage that Karnataka offers to interested patients.

India surely offers world leading treatment at very economical prices, which in the United States and UK is comparatively very high. The Indian

healthcare system is expanding very quickly & by 2020 the sector is expected to reach US\$ 238.76 billion. Because of increase in average life expectancy, increased awareness of health insurance among customers & average income rates the Indian Medical Industry Investment Commission has experienced exponential growth of almost 12 percent per year over the past 4 years.[10]–[12]

3. CONCLUSION

In spite of global economic downfall still tourism for medical aid in India has emerged as the fastest expanding & growing segment in tourism system. India not only provides facilities to just Indians, but also foreigners at a very low-cost services. Patients from the USA and the UK come to here to seek substitute and cost-effective place for their medical treatments. Indian medical tourism industry has been recently flourishing, but in spite of that it has huge potential for future development & growth. Taking example of Karnataka, different states can also take leaf out of Karnataka's strategies and implement it in their own state. The departments of tourism, communication, health & information need to work together to ensure effective patient care. These include developing and promoting the reputation of Northern Karnataka as a destination for good quality medical tourism, promoting & creating new combinations & alternatives of medical tourism items, maintaining high standard

of quality treatments at economical price, providing comprehensive offline & online materials and even making them easily available to desired clients.

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