



MEDICAL TOURISM: A GREAT BOOST TO INDIAN TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Travelling for the purpose of medical treatment and care is known as medical tourism. Over the years, India has grown to become a top-notch destination for medical value travel because it scores high over a range of factors that determines the overall quality of care. From quality of therapy, range of procedural and treatment options, infrastructure and skilled manpower to perform any medical procedure with **zero waiting time**, the list of benefits of travelling for medical treatment in India are many. This paper tries to analyze the benefits Medical Tourism is going to provide to Indian tourism sector.

Keywords: Health, Tourism, India, care, benefits

Tourism has made a major contribution to the economies of many countries of the globe and particularly developing nations. It has proved to be their growth engine. Tourism has also contributed immensely to the poverty eradication, lessening economic disparity and environment conservation as well. Tourism is the backbone of many countries at present like France, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal and Caribbean Islands etc. Presently tourism is the highest contributor of foreign exchange in countries like Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Nepal. It is second highest forex earner in Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Philippines and occupies third position in Singapore and Indonesia. Such a rapid expansion of tourism has resulted a number of positive impacts like strong economic development; increase in standard of living; lessening of travel restrictions; successful positive image projection of a nation and recognition by the host nations that tourism is a powerful engine of growth and a catalyst of economic development.

But tourism growth and development has its dark belly also. It has resulted in some negative things as well. Major among them are: negative cultural impacts, graffiti on archeological properties, prostitution and negative environmental impacts etc. This has forced policy makers, researchers and all major stakeholders to think over and design newer innovative forms of tourism having minimal negative impacts. This has given birth to newer form of tourism like eco tourism, nature tourism, farm tourism, agri tourism, health and medical tourism.

McKinsey has defined these types of travelers as medical tourists who demand the most advanced technology and these types of high advanced medical facilities are not available in their origin countries. The travelers who travel for medical reasons fall within the ambit of definition of tourist. Along with this, as these type of medical tourists are moving for a special purpose, they can also be termed as a special interest tourist.

Table 1: The Service bonanza on offer in India

	Advanced Life Saving And caring	Cosmetic surgery	Alternative System of medicine	Wellness Tourism
Services on Offer	Eye Treatment, Skin Treatment, Organ Transplants, cardio vascular surgery	Dental care, Plastic Surgery for breast enhancement, Belly reduction, Skin plastic surgery	Ayurvedic treatment, Siddha, Arthritis treatment, Rheumatism	Spas, Resorts, Health Parks, Stress relieving centers, Massage centers

Normal Treatment of Normal Diseases

This type of medical care includes normal routine medical checkups, health screening, Dental treatment, organ transplants, neurosurgery and other medical procedures which require the supervision of a competent medical expert. Some chronic diseases are not curable in developing countries because of lack of availability of advanced healthcare facilities and patients look to advanced countries like UKA, USA AND European countries but these countries services can be availed by only well to do tourists and are out of the preview of low income group.

India along with Thailand and Singapore rank as the top three medical destinations in Asia. India has gained this position due to very unique advantages. India has a very low cost of treatment, excellent healthcare infrastructure and to top it all, availability of highly professional & skilled doctors and para medical staff.

KPMG and FICCI have prepared a report called “The report Medical Value Travel in India” which comprehensively concludes that these three countries together contribute for or about 60 per cent of the total Asian revenue in 2012.

This research was conducted in India and other Asian countries Between July and August 2014, and major stakeholders like public sector and renowned CEOs of major private sector health giants were interviewed. Health sector has emerged as the largest service sectors in India and in 2012, it was estimated to be at \$78.6 billion. Its growth rate has been predicted to be 15 per cent annual and expected to reach about USD 158.2 billion by 2017. Many Asian countries have introduced new marketing strategies to woo these medical tourists.

During the past few years, Asia has emerged as the leading and one of the most preferred destinations for wellness tourism. Main reasons for this increasing trend are because of low priced treatment options, availability of a number of varied treatments, world-class medical

healthcare infrastructure and in addition to these, a wide spectrum of attractive tourist destinations to spend time at after recuperation. Thailand projects itself as a dual purpose. One a destination for medical tourism and other being an economic holiday destination, Singapore projects itself as a destination for high and fine quality in medical treatment.

India is known all over the world for its high standards in cardiology, orthopedics, nephrology, oncology and neuro surgery and that too at a cost-effective price. India is also famous for its alternate medical treatment options such as yoga and ayurveda.

Enhancement Surgeries: - These type of surgeries are mainly carried out for aesthetic and beautification. These surgeries are of complicated nature and so require the services of a highly specialized surgeons. These types of surgeries are of non disease nature unless some disfigurement is caused by some disease. These procedures include all cosmetic dental work, all cosmetic surgeries, breast enhancement surgeries, facelifts, and liposuction. India has an immense potential for enhancement procedure facilities lies in India. For example Indian film industry Bollywood. The film professionals especially actors, actresses regularly require this type of medical facilities because they have to hide their age and look young before the audience.

Cost Comparison of Selected Surgeries:

Treatment Cost Comparison							
Procedures	US (\$)	Costa Rica (\$)	India (\$)	Korea (\$)	Mexico (\$)	Thailand (\$)	Malaysia (\$)
Heart Bypass	\$144,000	\$25,000	\$5,200	\$28,900	\$27,000	\$15,121	\$11,430
Angioplasty	\$57,000	\$13,000	\$3,300	\$15,200	\$12,500	\$3,788	\$5,430
Heart Valve Replacement	\$170,000	\$30,000	\$5,500	\$43,500	\$18,000	\$21,212	\$10,580
Hip Replacement	\$50,000	\$12,500	\$7,000	\$14,120	\$13,000	\$7,879	\$7,500
Hip Resurfacing	\$50,000	\$12,500	\$7,000	\$15,600	\$15,000	\$15,152	\$12,350
Knee Replacement	\$50,000	\$11,500	\$6,200	\$19,800	\$12,000	\$12,297	\$7,000
Spinal Fusion	\$100,000	\$11,500	\$6,500	\$15,400	\$12,000	\$9,091	\$6,000
Dental Implant	\$2,800	\$900	\$1,000	\$4,200	\$1,800	\$3,636	\$345
Lap Band	\$30,000	\$8,500	\$3,000	N/A	\$6,500	\$11,515	N/A
Breast Implants	\$10,000	\$3,800	\$3,500	\$12,500	\$3,500	\$2,727	N/A
Rhinoplasty	\$8,000	\$4,500	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$3,500	\$3,901	\$1,293
Face Lift	\$15,000	\$6,000	\$4,000	\$15,300	\$4,900	\$3,697	\$3,440
Hysterectomy	\$15,000	\$5,700	\$2,500	\$11,000	\$5,800	\$2,727	\$5,250
Gastric Sleeve	\$28,700	\$10,500	\$5,000	N/A	\$9,995	\$13,636	N/A
Gastric Bypass	\$32,972	\$12,500	\$5,000	N/A	\$10,950	\$16,667	\$9,450
Liposuction	\$9,000	\$3,900	\$2,800	N/A	\$2,800	\$2,303	\$2,299
Tummy Tuck	\$9,750	\$5,300	\$3,000	N/A	\$4,025	\$5,000	N/A
Lasik (both eyes)	\$4,400	\$1,800	\$500	\$6,000	\$1,995	\$1,818	\$477
Cornea (both eyes)	N/A	\$4,200	N/A	\$7,000	N/A	\$1,800	N/A
Retina	N/A	\$4,500	\$850	\$10,200	\$3,500	\$4,242	\$3,000
IVF Treatment	N/A	\$2,800	\$3,250	\$2,180	\$3,950	\$9,091	\$3,819



Fast Track – Zero Waiting Time

Surgeries in India are assured on a zero waiting time. Going for an appointment for a bypass surgery, a neuro spinal procedure require a waiting time of almost 3-6 months in most of the countries but in India it has zero waiting time and in addition to that it is cost effective also.. It's zero waiting time in India for any procedure, be it weight loss surgery ,heart surgery, knee/hip/joint replacements , neuro-spinal procedure, kidney care, cosmetic surgeries ,cancer treatment, , dental surgery etc.

Feeling the pulse

An higher level of understanding and personal bonding is a must between patients and healthcare personnel. The warmth and hospitality extended by Indian hospitals has emerged a big factor in choosing India as a healthcare destination. India has the advantage of having the highest percentage of English speaking people among the leading medical destinations of the world. If there is one thing that is common in India Amidst the variety of culture and traditions, that is the English language. For people from other languages, hospitals also provide the services of expert interpreters. All these factors ensure world class services and even a better after care services.

Financial Savings

Quality of services is a must to attract people but these care services must be affordable also. Quality at an affordable cost is an unbeatable advantage and India scores heavily on that account as compared to other leading medical destinations of the world. The benefits in cost of major treatments such as for leukemia are unimaginable and the difference in cost is 10 to 20 times. It could be anything from a fifth to a tenth when compared to Western countries in case of other treatments and 80 to 90 per cent of when compared to other South Asian medical destinations. Approximately 600,000 people who come to India from other countries don't have cheap healthcare in mind but they arrive in India with a certain surety that they will be getting quality healthcare at an affordable cost. They will never be compromised at any level; rather they will regain health at a fraction of the cost.



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