

Medical Tourism as a Promising Direction for the Development of Tourism

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Abstract: Medical tourism is gaining more and more strong positions in the economic space. The flow of those wishing to receive highly qualified medical care at affordable prices, and at the same time broaden their horizons, is increasing. The amount of funds spent on health improvement is increasing, and the market for medical tourism services is growing accordingly. The main aspects of tourism development considered, problems and prospects are defined.

Keywords: medical tourism; medical services; medical tourism development; tourism development strategy; tourism; service; travel; medicine; recreation; health improvement; economics.

Despite the attractiveness of medical tourism both and abroad, at present there is no unambiguous interpretation of this concept in the scientific literature. There are discrepancies in interpretation, which are largely due to the diversity of goals, objectives, as well as methods and means used in this field of activity. Depending on the ultimate goal, two segments are distinguished in medical tourism: sanatorium or medical tourism (health resort treatment) and clinical tourism (specialized treatment) [4].

Medical tourism is a kind of travel, the purpose of which is to receive health and medical services [2]. The tourist component is manifested in the fact that those recovering can, using the services of the healthcare system, also visit natural, cultural and historical sites of other countries. A medical tourist is ready to pay for quality service, finds financial benefits, gets emotional uplift, expands his horizons in the host country.

Within the framework of the article, we will adhere to the concept of medical tourism as a purposeful receipt of medical services by a patient outside his usual place of residence with the opportunity to visit the sights of other countries [5].

When writing the article, statistical methods, literary, content analysis were used.

Research results The International Health Research Center (IHRC), together with the International Medical Tourism Association (MTA), published the Medical Tourism Index in 2020. This rating takes into account 34 criteria in total, such as the competence of medical workers, medical standards, the general psychological climate of medical institutions, etc.) - a rating of countries where foreign patients are provided with the highest quality medical services [2].

In the description and analysis of the MTI rating, a special place is occupied by three positions of indicators, according to which a separate table can be compiled (Table 1).

Table 1 Rating of the development of medical tourism in the countries of the world.

Ranking MTI	Country	State of the environment	Level of development of medical tourism infrastructure	Quality of medical services
1	Canada	1	7	4
2	Singapore	2	3	1

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3	Japan	5	2	2
4	Spain	4	4	8
5	United Kingdom	3	22	11
...				
41	Russia	41	41	37

Compiled by the author according to [3].

1. The quality of medical services and equipment.

This criterion allows you to evaluate the quality of medical care, which is influenced by how many experienced doctors in the clinic, accepted healthcare standards, compliance with their international requirements, what medical equipment is used to work and provide services. The quality is influenced by both the reputation of doctors and clinics, hospitals, the absence of a language barrier, the ability to communicate in English with staff, the client-oriented medical institution, and so on.

2. Development of the sphere of medical tourism.

This criterion considers both tourism and medical components. Since the development of tourism is primarily influenced by the attractive factors of the destination, the country as a whole is assessed as a tourist site, natural conditions, historical and cultural attractions, and world heritage sites. In addition, an important factor is the cost of the medical services provided: the cost of treatment, recovery, accommodation, meals, transport costs, excursions.

3. The state of the environment.

The formulation of the state of the environment as a criterion suggests the general background of the proposed trip, in the form of political, economic, social, sanitary and epidemiological aspects. It is important for a tourist to feel safe and comfortable during the trip. Parameters such as the exchange rate, corruption in the country, cultural affinity, the overall positive image of the country in the world are of no small importance.

For example, in the same MTI rating, in the description for the, the background of sanctions is indicated, the country's dependence on hydrocarbon production, the unreliability of the currency, and its fall, general stagnation in the economy, and a sharply continental climate, with a temperature of -30 degrees.

Nevertheless, analysts positively assess the prospects for the development of medical tourism. The country has public and private medical centers of various specialized clinical orientations, which carry out diagnostic, therapeutic, surgical activities, as well as sanatorium-resort and rehabilitation complexes and recreational centers for the provision of preventive and restorative medical care in this area. [6].

Forbes notes that there is an active flow of travelers or the purpose of medical tourism from China, Vietnam, Japan, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany and Israel. Most often these are former citizens and members of their families. Forbes also found out that tourists from Southeast Asia and Central Asia account for up to 60% of medical tourists. Citizens from the CIS go for qualified assistance, which is difficult for them to get in their own country. Tourists are attracted by the phenomenal results of IVF, for example, oncology treatment, dental services.

Large consortiums are actively attracting medical tourists, first of all, by the quality of the services provided, the absence of queues, and the preparedness of the staff for foreign tourists. "Medsi", "Mother and Child", "SM-Clinic", "European Medical Center", "Medicine - Clinic of Academician Roitberg", most of which have branches throughout the country.

Medical tourism occupies a share of domestic tourism, since not all clinics in the country have the ability to carry out a complete list of necessary actions. In addition, there are a number of factors that provoke trips both to central and from the center to the regions. This kind of movement is due to the difference in the cost of treatment, in the regions it is several times less than in Moscow and St. Petersburg. And, on the contrary, people go to the center for high-tech medical care, which requires



highly qualified doctors and the use of modern diagnostic and treatment technologies, devices for treatment, more accurate diagnostics and innovative approaches.

Up to 90% of domestic medical tourism is for the treatment of complex diseases such as oncology and cardiology.

The development of medical tourism causes both optimistic moods, the expectation of an increase in the income of enterprises providing medical services, transport, catering and accommodation, as well as negative expectations associated with a possible increase in prices in this segment. The influx of solvent tourists can create a base for such a situation. Which, in turn, can make high-quality medical services inaccessible. This is quite possible if medical institutions improve the level of service, the quality of medical services, train medical personnel in English, and pass international certification.

Among the CIS countries, is the leader in most medical technologies and services. In such individual areas as IVF and implantology in orthopedics the absolute leader in terms of price and service efficiency in the world, which is what should be focused on in the first years of the country's work in this market.

Along with these positive aspects, we note a number of points that require a systematic approach and solution:

- poor financing of the healthcare sector;
- insufficient supply of modern medical equipment;
- a global backlog, both in equipment and in the education of physicians;
- concentration of institutions with high standards of medical services in Moscow and St. Petersburg;
- poor quality of services in the regions;
- low level of marketing in the field of medical tourism.

Historically, among many types of domestic medical tourism, medical and health tourism (sanatorium and resort) prevails, which can be called one of the most popular and profitable types of medical tourism business in the world. To date, the development of the sanatorium and resort industry has been included in the list of presidential instructions, a draft strategy for the development of resorts has been developed, as well as an action plan to increase their investment attractiveness, export of services in the field of medicine and tourism.

For the successful implementation of the federal project "Development of the export of medical services", it is necessary to systematically, comprehensively approach the solution of the issue: prepare medical centers for international certification, train staff in English, establish a legal framework, and act in close cooperation with government bodies. Creating a clear roadmap to allow medical institutions to prepare step by step to receive international medical tourists as well.

Conclusion Summing up, we can say that medical tourism as a separate direction for the development of international tourism for very promising, which is also noted by foreign researchers. According to researchers' estimates, 30,000 patients in the future could consider as a country for receiving medical services. If the state seriously develops this topic, then in the future the emergence of large medical projects, including international ones, attracting tourists from all over the world, is possible.

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