

India Gaining Momentum in the Medical Tourism...



IIHMR Delhi — India Gaining Momentum in the Medical Tourism...

In the recent decades, the healthcare sector of India has presented ample growth with respect to enhanced healthcare services and improved facilities, and has contributed significantly to the country's economic development.

In that sense, the booming healthcare sector today has provided immense scope for growth and development of various sub-sectors within the industry. Particularly, talking about medical tourism, India is seeing tremendous growth in this sector, attracting medical tourists from all over the world. In fact, India has become the primary medical tourism hub, owing to its global recognition and top-notch services. With the favorable investment environment and advanced medical treatments, the sector is poised to grow multifold in the coming years, contributing advantageously to the future prospects of medical tourism. The quality of care available in India is comparable to the best in the world and India is gaining momentum as a global medical tourism provider and with the trend going this way, this industry is sure to become a billion dollar business in near future.

What is Medical Tourism?

Medical tourism is a niche tourism, in which people travel to other countries for obtaining healthcare services and facilities, particularly, medical, dental and surgical care. There are websites offering Medical tourism packages that include everything from treatment, transportation, flights, hotels, to rejuvenation therapies and post-operative vacations. The trend earlier was people from developing countries went to developed countries if they could afford but it is reversing now.

Boom of Medical Tourism in India

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India ranks second in the world as a potential destination for medical tourism. Today, there are hundreds and thousands of tourists traveling to India for medical treatments. According to reports, an estimated average of 1,50,000 medical tourists, travel to India every year. This tremendous growth has been achieved through providing high standards of medical treatments and quality hospital facilities to the patients. As per reports, the medical tourism in India is currently growing at a rate of 30%, and this tremendous growth is expected to reach around \$8 billion by the year 2020.

The primary selling points of the Indian medical tourism sector are high standard facilities, well qualified and competent medical professionals, and cost-effective medical and surgical procedures. Some of the most sought-after advanced treatments in India are cardiac bypass surgery, bone-marrow transplant, eye surgery, knee replacement treatments, hip resurfacing and alternative medicine.

Cost plays a vital role in the growth and expansion of the medical tourism sector, as medical, dental and cosmetic surgeries are around three to four times costlier in other Western countries than in India. This makes the medical tourism in India to grow exponentially over the years, attracting more and more people from across the world to our country for their medical treatments.

Apart from that, Indian government regulations and policies favoring immigration of medical tourists to the country has also come up as a big boom for the medical tourism sector in India.

Factors Influencing Medical Tourism in India

Relatively Low Cost Treatment

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As mentioned earlier, the cost of medical treatments in India is relatively much lower than that of the developed countries. The treatments in India are around 50-80 percent less expensive than in USA, UK, and European Countries. For instance, an open heart surgery in the U.K. and U.S. costs up to \$ 70,000 and \$ 1,50,000 respectively, while in India it could cost only between \$ 3000 and \$ 10,000, and that too, when the treatment is received at the best private hospitals. To add to the fact, the treatments are done without compromising the quality of medical services offered. This is why more and more people from developed countries are coming to India for getting medical treatments and cosmetic surgeries.

Expert Hospital Staff:

India has a large pool of very well qualified and highly professional medical staff, including doctors, nurses, and supporting staff with specialization and expertise in various fields. India's trained doctors are done very well in the countries such as USA and UK. Moreover, the Indian medical sector also has the language advantage, with highly proficient English speaking staff, who are equally capable of serving to the patients from Western countries as well. Moreover, there are many expert medical professionals in India who have specialized in research and studies from the world's best medical institutes, and are certified by American Board Certificates. They are deemed to deliver medical services with high standards and better precision to the patients.

Excellent Service and Minimal Waiting time

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One of the greatest advantages of receiving medical treatment in developing countries like India is the ease of getting appointments for treatment. Unlike the U.S. and U.K. hospitals, where there is a long queue for waiting time, Indian hospitals provide a patient-friendly appointment process, zeroing down the waiting time for procedures. Also, Indian hospitals have enough qualified surgeons and numerous operating theaters to accommodate patients without complex and invasive procedures. In addition to that, the level of service offered is virtually unprecedented. It is commendable that India has some of the leading hospitals and medical facilities, which are globally lauded for their world-class standards.

High-end Technology

Indian hospitals feature state-of-the-art technology to offer the highest degree of medical treatments and services to the patients. All of the medical examinations and diagnostics are conducted with the latest technologically advanced diagnostic equipments. The stringent quality assurance practices in the hospitals ensure reliable and high-quality test results done in a timely manner for the patients.

International Standard Quality

As for now, 21 Indian hospitals have been accredited by the JCI (Joint Commission International). The JCI is the International arm of the Joint Commission Accreditation of Hospital Organizations (JCAHO). When a hospital gets JCI accreditation, it follows the International safety standards, and offers better assurance to the medical tourists with respect to the quality meeting the international standards.

Role of Government

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The government of India along with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Tourism has jointly taken efforts to promote India as the leading health destination across the globe. The Indian government is aiming to expand the medical tourism in India in the international market through streamlining of the immigration process and introducing Medical Visa (M-Visa) for patients to stay in the country for a specific period. Apart from that, the Indian Ministry of Tourism (MoT) is also making plans to extend its MDA scheme to cover JCI and NABH certified hospitals.

Needless to say, the medical tourism sector today is projected to continue its rapid expansion in the coming years and would certainly contribute gainfully to the country's economic growth. The current development suggests that India is tapping a large share of foreign medical tourists for its low-priced healthcare procedures and uncompromising quality services. Having active support from government policies and private sector investment, Indian medical tourism is poised to reach the top position soon. However, to make this happen the standards of medical services are to be maintained well, meeting the state-of-the-art facilities and technological advancements.

Implication of Hospital, Health and Health IT Managers

There is a shortage of these managers in India. Their demand is increasing rapidly. The institution like [IIHMR Delhi](#) offers such course in these areas i.e. 2 year full time postgraduate course specialized in Health Management, Hospital Management and Health Care IT Management.