

Probable links / actors of the Medical / Health tourism service sector:

- ✦ The traveler
- ✦ Foreign tour operator
- ✦ Indian hospitals
- ✦ Insurance companies
- ✦ Indian Travel Agents
- ✦ Tourist destination/place
- ✦ Local tour operator
- ✦ Local guide
- ✦ Local hotels
- ✦ Local market

Positive Aspects of Medical Tourism

- ◆ Brings in valuable foreign exchange
- ◆ Generates large scale secondary employment
- ◆ Development of world class medical infrastructure
- ◆ Option of combining wellness with tourism

Negatives of Medical Tourism

Some of the concerns associated with medical/health tourism relating to India are:

- ✦ Hygiene / Unsanitary conditions
- ✦ Pollution
- ✦ Not developed and bureaucratic country
- ✦ Accreditation of hospitals
- ✦ Medical insurance frauds
- ✦ Terrorism prone

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Contact Us

SINET Secretariat
c/o Network for Preventive Environmental Management (NetPEM) Public Trust,
301, 3rd Floor, Samved Sankul,
Temple Road, Civil Lines,
Nagpur – 440001
Phone: +91 - 712 – 2552725/26
Telefax: + 91 - 712 – 2562723
Email: coordinator@sinetinfo.org

SINET Home Page:
www.sinetinfo.org



Sustainable Industrial Network and its Application on Micro-Regional Environmental Planning (SINET)

(Medical/Health Tourism Service Sector)





Medical Tourism: A new thrust area for tourism

Defining Medical Tourism

Medical tourism is a term that has risen from the rapid growth of an industry where people from all around the world are traveling to other countries to obtain medical, dental, and surgical care, while at the same time touring, vacationing, and fully experiencing the attractions of the countries that they are visiting.

Medical or Health tourism has become a common form of vacationing, and covers a broad spectrum of medical services. It mixes leisure, fun and relaxation together with wellness and healthcare. The idea of the health holiday is to offer an opportunity to get away from daily routine and come into a different relaxing surrounding. Here one can enjoy being close to the beach and the mountains and at the same time able to receive an orientation that will help improve one's life in terms of health and general well being. It is like rejuvenation and clean up process on all levels - physical, mental and emotional.

Key Drivers of Medical Tourism

Overburdened healthcare infrastructure and high costs in the West are the key drivers for the boom in medical tourism. The healthcare infrastructure in Europe and the United States is under severe pressure. In Britain, the National Health Service (NHS) has a long wait list of patients for surgery. In US, the healthcare crisis has different dimensions — it has 50 million uninsured citizens while the insured have to pay dearly for healthcare facilities. To add to this, the stringent visa regulations imposed by US and European countries after 9/11 episode has led to a growing number of foreign patients from Middle East to visit Asian countries for treatment. All these factors have opened up avenues for hospitals in various Asian countries to promote medical tourism.

Leading countries in the field of Medical Tourism



India and the medical tourism industry

India with advanced medical services paired with exotic natural bounties has become a heaven for medical tourists. The Medical Tourism Industry in India is poised to be the next big success story after software. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and McKinsey have predicted that the industry will grow to earn additional revenue of \$2.3 billion by 2012. 'Medical Tourism' can contribute Rs. 50 to 100 bn additional revenue for upmarket tertiary hospitals by 2012, and will account for 3-5 percent of the total healthcare delivery market, says the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)-McKinsey study on healthcare.

The Indian medical tourism industry, growing at an annual rate of 30 percent, caters to patients chiefly from the US, Europe, West Asia and Africa. Although in its nascent stage, the industry is outsmarting similar industries of other countries such as Greece, South Africa, Jordan, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore. In 2004, 1,50,000 medical tourists visited India.

India in Medical Tourism – SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Quality service at affordable cost ✦ Vast pool of qualified doctors ✦ Strong presence in advanced healthcare e.g. cardiovascular, organ transplants – high success rate in operations ✦ International reputation of hospitals and doctors ✦ Diversity of tourism destinations and experiences ✦ High confidence level in Indian doctors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ No strong government support /initiative to promote medical tourism ✦ Low coordination between the various players in the industry – airline operators, hotels and hospitals ✦ Customer Perception as an unhygienic country ✦ No proper accreditation and regulation system for hospitals ✦ Lack of uniform pricing policies across hospitals
OPPORTUNITY	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Increased demand for healthcare services from countries with aging population (U.S, U.K) ✦ Fast-paced lifestyle increases demand for wellness tourism and alternative cures ✦ Shortage of supply in National Health Systems in countries like U.K, Canada ✦ Demand from countries with underdeveloped healthcare facilities ✦ Demand for retirement homes for elderly people especially Japanese ✦ Reduced competitive cost of international travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Strong competition from countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore ✦ Lack of international accreditation – a major inhibitor ✦ Under-investment in health infrastructure