

MEDICAL TOURISM IN INDIA: ITS PRESENT TRENDS, STATUS AND ETHICAL ISSUES

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Abstract

India is one of the countries of the world which provides an array of medical services and facilities to the people. Medical tourism in India is increasing by leaps and bounds. Foreigners from different countries of the world travel all the way to the land of India for availing the medical treatments for various ailments. Many of the reputed hospitals of the world are found in India. However, the main objective of the present study is to highlight the nature of medical tourism in India. The paper makes an assessment of the existing trends, advantages that India possesses besides taking stock of the trends in medical tourism at the global level. Based on secondary data the article's major findings are that India has a rich base of medical tourism. It provides countless options for all tourists to explore the facilities of medical sciences. Medical tourism is also a million dollar booming business, drawing loads of overseas patients. As an excellent quality of health care treatment with low-price and an active involvement of the private sector, foreign patients have started perceiving India as a perfect destination to have medical, surgical, and dental care treatments.

Keywords: *Trends, advantages, source regions, tourism zones, facilitators & ethical issues*

Introduction

Medical Tourism involves vacationing, leisure & relaxation along with world class medical treatment & wellness programs at fraction of the cost. It is a term initially coined by travel agencies and the mass media to describe the rapidly-growing practice of travelling across international borders to obtain health care. In fact, Medical tourism can be broadly defined as provision of 'cost effective' private medical care in collaboration with the tourism industry for patients needing surgical and other forms of specialized treatment. Services typically sought by travelers include complex specialized surgeries such as joint replacement (knee/hip), cardiac surgery, dental surgery, cosmetic surgeries, alternative treatments, convalescent care. Medical Tourism in India provides countless options for all tourists to explore the facilities of medical sciences. As a diverse nation, India has many hospitals and healthcare institutions in different parts of India. India is currently a hot medical tourism hub. State of the art equipment, technological advances, qualified medical professionals, personalized patient care and a blend of modern and traditional medicine have put India on the global medical tourism map.

However, the present study first provides the trends of medical tourism in world level and India with leading factors. Then it proceeds to describe the different source regions of medical tourists and reflects medical tourism zones of India. Finally it outlines the role of facilitators who help to grow this tourism activity in India.

Objectives

The main objective of the present paper is to explore the present status of medical tourism in India. The study also attempts to present the advantages of medical tourism in India along with the source regions, facilitators and ethical issues.

Database and Methodology

The present study is primarily based on secondary data generated through author's field survey. Secondary data were collected from various sources like-1. World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) survey (2006), 2. CBC News Online (2004), 3. International Wellness and Healthcare Travel Association (IWHTA), 2010 4. Indi Quest Research Report, (2007), 5. World Travel Market, 2009, 6. Confederation of Indian Industries (CII, 2009) 7. Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham, 2010) 8. The Hindu Business Line, 2007 9. Oxford Analytica, October 26, 2006, 10. US News & World Report, dated May 12, 2008.

To analyze the current status and trends in Medical Tourism in India as well as world different comparative analysis among the countries has been carried out. An analysis of specialization in medical treatment has been made among the countries of Thailand, India, Costa Rica, Argentina, South Africa and Hungary. A study on medical treatment expenses among USA, India, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia have also been represented. Affordable and Non-Affordable countries of the World have been highlighted to have a clear picture of medical tourism. Different source regions of Indian medical tourism like Africa, Bangladesh, Nepal, SriLanka Afghanistan, Europe, Middle East, Iraq and USA have also been incorporated with statistical records. A study of medical tourism zones and

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tourism facilitators who play an important role in shaping the medical tourism landscape of India has also been carried out in the present study.

However, on the basis of the secondary data and information, a literature review has been made by the researcher for the meaningful understanding of the problem of present study. Statistical tools like ratio, percentage and charts have been used to analyze the relevant data and information.

Literature Review

The concept of 'Medical tourism' in tourism studies has blossomed quite late and because of that, scholars have directed their attention to this concept only a few years ago. Medical tourism is undoubtedly one of the significant areas of research in tourism studies today. Despite the growth of research and publications on tourism, our understanding of the nature and effects of medical tourism is limited.

As travel with the aim of improving one's health, medical tourism is an economic activity that entails trade in services and represents the splicing of at least two sectors: medicine and tourism (Bookman & Bookman, 2007). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), it is a growing trend with enormous economic implications (Woodward et al, 2002).

The pioneer work of Hutchinson (2005) has given an impetus to the medical tourism. In his work he mentions that how medical tourism is growing worldwide. Woodman (2008) describes nicely in his work about the American public health care choices. His work is the medical traveller's first complete guide to a world of new health care. Again Grace (2008) explains about the lifesaving surgeries of India. The work of Hancock (2008) highlights the different types of medical procedures including the cosmetic and other treatments. Stephano & Edelheit (2009) in their work point out why patients are travelling for healthcare, what medical and dental procedures they are travelling for and what countries patients are travelling to. Their work provides an understanding of the medical tourism and international healthcare marketplace and a successful international healthcare plans.

World Scenario of Medical Tourism

Medical tourism can be broadly defined as the provision of "cost effective" private medical care in collaboration with the tourism industry for patients needing surgical and other forms of specialized treatment. According to World Health Organisation (WHO), it is a growing trend with enormous economic implications (Woodward, et al. 2002). Rising healthcare cost and longer waiting time are compelling reasons for patients from the western countries to seek treatment overseas. There are 45 million U.S citizens without health insurance and many more consider the healthcare cost exorbitant. In Canada, around a million citizens experience difficulties due to long waiting time.(Oxford analytica,2006) Boggled down by such problems, patients from the western countries, have discovered more affordable healthcare options that exist halfway around the world . Such affordable healthcare destinations not only provide cost savings to the extent of 90% but with virtually no waiting time and that too at comparable quality. These affordable healthcare providing countries in turn have benefited from this increased inflow of foreign revenue and are thus promoting medical tourism as an industry.

Thus Jordan expects to receive 100,000 visitors annually. Argentina hopes to increase its inflow of medical tourism annually by 50% while Costa Rica draws as many as 150,000 medical tourists (Ross, K. 2001).

Countries that actively promote medical tourism include Cuba, Costa Rica, Hungary, India, Israel, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Belgium, Poland and Singapore are now entering the field. Thailand is a significant destination with six medical centers in Bangkok alone boasting of accreditation from the United States. Singapore alone attracted 250,000 medical tourists in the year 2005 (Hutchinson, 2005). South Africa specializes in medical safaris-i.e visit the country for a safari, with a stopover for plastic surgery, a nose job and a chance to see lions and elephants. Popular cosmetic surgery travel destinations include: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico,Turkey,and Ukraine. In South America, countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Colombia lead on plastic surgery medical skills relying on their experienced plastic surgeons. In Bolivia and Colombia, plastic surgery has also become quite common. According to the "Sociedad Boliviana de Cirugia Plastica y Reconstructiva", more than 70% of middle and upper class women in the country have had some form of plastic surgery. Colombia also provides advanced care in cardiovascular and transplant surgery. In Europe Belgium, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine are also breaking into the business. South Africa is taking the term "medical tourism" very literally by promoting their "medical safaris".(*CBC News Online*, June 18, 2004). A specialized subset of medical tourism is reproductive tourism and reproductive outsourcing,(Jones & Keith, 2006) which is the practice of traveling abroad to undergo in-vitro fertilization, surrogate pregnancy and other assisted reproductive technology treatments including freezing embryos for retro-production (Jones, 2007).

Some of the significant leaders in medical tourism globally along with their specialization area has been summarized in the Table-1.

Table 1: Major Competing Countries in Medical Tourism

Country	Specialization
Thailand	Eye surgery, Kidney dialysis, Organ transplantation etc
India	Open heart surgery, hip & knee replacement, Bone Marrow Transplants, Cancer therapy, dentistry, cosmetic surgery
Costa Rica	Plastic surgery
Argentina	Plastic surgery
South Africa	Cosmetic surgery
Hungary	Cosmetic & dental procedures

Source: Medical Tourism growing worldwide (Hutchinson,2005).

According to International Wellness and Healthcare Travel Association (IWHTA) the global healthcare travel industry registered staggering revenues of USD 20 billion in 2005. Later in 2006 Asian countries like India, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia earned USD 2.5 billion approximately. Prediction foresees the medical tourism market doubling to USD 40 billion by year end 2010 and expects Asian market to generate 4.4 billion by 2012. 'A study by Mattoo and Rathindran found that a representative health destination could earn \$ 400 million annually' (Reid, 2003). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) survey (2006) medical tourism will grow at a rapid rate of 8.8% per year for the next ten years, the highest in the world. The Industry is projected to attract a capital investment of \$21 billion by 2014.

Medical Tourism in India

Offering the latest technological advances, experienced and expert physicians and surgeons and the very best in patient care, Medical Tourism Packages in India is flourishing and has secured her place in the world as a premier medical travel destination. In fact, India has emerged as one of the prime countries in surgical treatment and a hot spot for medical tourism. This is possible because of the cost effective criteria with same level of expertise as provided by the west.

Trends indicate that, due to sky rocketing health care costs and insurance premiums which is beyond the reach of low and middle class income people in the advanced countries, patients from the western world have started seeking life saving treatment/surgeries in low wage countries especially India. New England Journal of medicine calls this new breed of growing patients as '*Medical Refugees*'. They use low cost destinations like India for life saving surgeries.(Milstein & Smith, 2006) Thus, with established edge in surgical treatments, India is poised to play an important role in one of the world's fastest growing industry of 'medical tourism'

Highly skilled medical fraternity, low treatment costs, cutting edge technological advancements & rich cultural heritage have made India the most sought medical tourism destination. India has the potential to attract 1 billion medical tourists a year (Indi Quest Research Report, 2007). In 2004, 150,000 foreign patients travelled to India for treatment (Landers, 2005) and the number of patients in India is growing by 30% every year (Hutchinson, 2005). According to Confederation of Indian Industries (CII, 2009) medical Tourism in India is expected to grow at an annual growth rate of 37% from 2009-2012. Medical Tourism is expected to generate revenue of US \$ 350 million by 2013 in India. (World Travel Market, 2009).

Moreover, the potential for medical tourism to continue generating income is perceived to be great. According to a study conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham), the current market size of the Indian medical tourism is Rs 45 billion and this is expected to cross Rs 108 billion by 2015.

However, India offers world-class healthcare that costs substantially less than those in developed countries, using the same technology delivered by competent specialists attaining similar success rates. A liver transplant costs in the range of Rs 60 lakhs-70 lakhs in Europe and double that in the US, but the Hyderabad based Global hospital has the wherewithal to do it in around Rs 15 lakh-20 lakhs. Similarly, a heart surgery in the US costing about Rs 20 lakhs is performed at the Chennai-headquarter Apollo Hospitals Group in roughly Rs 2 lakhs (The Hindu Business Line, 2007). According to the American Medical Association data, a spinal fusion would cost \$62,000 in the US, \$5,500 in India, \$7,000 in Thailand and \$9,000 in Singapore. Foreigners account for almost 12% of the patients treated at the leading hospitals like Apollo. Escorts, Hinduja, etc. These hospitals have established distinct edge in surgical treatments. For instance, Apollo claims to have achieved 99.6% transplant success rate and the death rate among patients during open heart operations performed at Escorts Heart Institute is 0.8% , which is less than half

that of major hospitals in the U.S.(Hutchinson,2005). Most of the operational treatments in India are done on the basis of exclusive package system for overseas and domestic tourists. The main advantage of this system is that patient parties do not have to be worried about their expenditures since it is fixed prior to operation. Table-2 shows a comparative analysis of medical treatment expenses (in dollars) in some countries-

Table-2: Comparative Analysis of Medical Treatment Expenses (In Dollars) among the Countries

Treatments	USA	India	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia
Coronary artery bypass surgery	70000—133000	7000	22000	16300	12000
Bypass surgery with heart valve replacement	75000-- 140000	9500	25000	22000	13400
Hip replacement	33000-- 57000	7200	12700	12000	7500
Knee replacement	30000--53000	7200	11500	9600	12000
Prostate surgery(Turp procedure)	10000--16000	3600	4400	5300	4600
Gastric by pass	35000—52000	9300	13000	16500	12700
Face lift	10500--16000	4800	5000	7500	6400

Source: US News & World Report, dated May 12, 2008.

Added advantage of Medical Tourism in India

The advantages that drive international patients from developed country towards India include-

- India offers several super specialty hospitals dedicated to providing cardiology and cardiothoracic surgery, orthopedic surgery (including knee and hip replacement surgery), organ transplant surgery (including liver, kidney), Neurosurgery, Ophthalmology, Pediatric Surgery, Pediatric Neurology, Urology, Gynecology / Obstetrics / Surrogacy, Psychiatry, General Medicine and General Surgery, Cancer management, Cosmetic treatments, and Dental care. With a gigantic boost in medical tourism, India has seen a massive upsurge in private sector hospitals that are devoted to overseas and inland patients.
- Affordable and inexpensive costs of medical care services, approximately 30 % to 70 % lower than the costs in the United States and UK, make Health Tourism to India highly appealing to an overseas patient. The country offers a highly advanced treatment at substantially low cost due to scales of economy, lesser operational costs and high currency conversion rate as compared to West.
- Vastly skilled, experienced and trained doctors, physicians and surgeons, of international fame and repute, perform the most complicated surgeries and procedures. Further, the doctors are supported by a strong, comprehensive and well trained paramedical force comprising of nurses, technicians, attendants, clinical coordinators, and nutritionists.
- Long wait times for certain procedures of the first world countries. In a nutshell the treatment in USA/UK=Treatment in India +Tourism+ Savings -Waiting Time.
- Lack of advanced medical facilities in underdeveloped & some developing countries,e.g. Middle East, Africa, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, etc
- Internationally accredited medical facilities using the latest technologies
- Highly qualified Physicians/Surgeons and hospital support staff
- the ease and affordability of international travel,
- improvements in medical technologies and a growing compliance on international quality standards in India
- Foreigners are less likely to face language barriers in India.
- rising numbers of uninsured citizens in the first world countries
- development of advanced software, information technology, business services and outsourcing of the health care sector
- India offers best mix of Western & Eastern health care systems. Besides Allopathic treatment, India offers various traditional treatment options like Ayurveda & Homeopathy.

- The information revolution made gathering information easy by way of the internet while extensive media exposure of all geographical corners of the globe brought distant countries closer in time and space
- India also offers various internationally acclaimed alternate (medical & wellness) therapies like Yoga, Reiki, Pranik healing & Accupressure & Naturopathy.
- India is the capital of the modern world for spa & massage wellness programs
- Cost effective vacationing at breathtaking locales in India
- Easy foreign exchange facilities due to globalization
- Easy medical visa
- India offers affordable insurance costs & cashless benefits.
- Fast growing economy has led to privatization & corporatization in the field of healthcare, thereby leading to the setting up of world class hospitals that provide highly advanced treatment facilities through high end technology & world class doctors.
- Due to the reasons cited above, India also has a strong Pharmaceutical base comprising of Indian & foreign companies that further strengthen the healthcare industry by bringing
- The Government of India has recognized the economic potential of medical tourism. It has facilitated travel by introducing a special visa category known as 'medical visa' for patients as well as introduced tax incentives for hospitals.

Apart from these, affordability in India plays an important role for the accelerating growth rate of medical tourism. Affordability in healthcare is measured by the amount of money a household can spend on health costs, while still having enough left over to pay for other necessities. This includes premiums and any out-of-pocket costs. Affordability remains the key factor in healthcare, be it for national or international patients. In fact, access to healthcare for individual's suffering depends on the affordability and one country is more affordable than other. Table- shows affordability of different countries of the world.

Table-3: Affordable and Non-Affordable countries of the World

Most affordable countries	Least affordable countries
India	Canada
Malaysia	Brazil
Thailand	UK
Taiwan	USA
Mexico	Australia
Hungary	Spain
Czech Republic	Singapore
Jordan	Turkey

Source: IWHTA, News letter 43, 2009

From the table- it is seen that India is the most affordable medical tourism destination globally followed by Malaysia and Thailand. On the other hand Canada ranks first among the least affordable countries of the world. High cost of health care and long wait times has made Canada as a least affordable country in medical tourism.

Source Regions

The International Wellness and Healthcare Travel Association (IWHTA) analyzed about the source regions of international tourists who come in India for treatment. Their analysis confirms that although Europe and the USA are often mentioned as a source of medical tourists, together they only account for one in ten travelers. The analysis provides the following facts-

Table-4: Different source regions of Indian medical tourism

Countries/Continents	Percentage
Africa	18
Bangladesh/Nepal/SriLanka	17
Afghanistan	9
Europe	6
MiddleEast	16
Iraq	8
USA	4
Non resident Indians from all countries	22

Source: IWHTA, News letter, 38, 2009

South Indian states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka are popular places for medical tourism in India. All these medical sites of India provide the best clinical services to all tourists. These places also welcome former ayurvedic services to patients. Apart from all these procedures for treatment, health tourism in India also includes some medical applications and rejuvenated programs such as rejuvenation therapy (Rasayana Chikitsa), the body of vaccination and treatment of longevity, body sweating (Sweda Karma), mental and physical well-being and Panchakarma treatment. With a healthy climate and rich greenery, Kerala is a State of India which has a wide variety of herbs and medicinal plants as well as ancient ayurvedic treatments.

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Table-5: Major Hospitals of India providing medical tourism

NAME OF THE HOSPITALS	PLACES	TREATMENTS
SOUTHREN ZONE		
Christian Medical College	Vellor, Tamil Nadu	Multi speciality Hospital
Apollo Hospitals	Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad & Madurai	Multi speciality Hospital
Sankara Nethralaya	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Eye treatment
MIOT Hospitals	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Orthopaedic, spinal surgery, trama centre,cardiology,neurology
The Madras Medical Mission	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Cardio vascular disease, organ transplant, nuclear medicine
Billroth Hospitals	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Kidney transplantation, by-pass surgery,cancer,gastroentological problems
Madurai Eye Hospitals	Madurai, Pandicherry	Eye treatment
NIMHANS Hospital	Bangalore, Karnataka	Mental & neuro problems
Narayana Hrudayalaya Institute of Cardiac Sciences	Bangalore	Heart surgery, neuro surgery, nephrology, bone marrow transplantation,liver transplantation
Manipal Hospital	Bangalore	Heart surgery, neuro surgery, nephrology, bone marrow transplantation,liver transplantation
St. John's Medical College	Bangalore	Multi speciality Hospital
Asian Institute of Gastroenterology	Hyderabad, Andhra pradesh	Gastroentological & liver treatment,
WESTERN ZONE		
Tata Memorial Hospital	Mumbai	Cancer treatment
Dr.Balabhai Nanavati Hospital	Mumbai	Multi speciality Hospital
Jaslak Hospital and Research Centre	Mumbai	Multi speciality Hospital
Breach Candy Hospital Trust	Mumbai	Multi speciality Hospital,plastic & cosmetic surgery
Bombay Hospital	Mumbai	Multi speciality Hospital
Lilavati Hospital & Research Centre	Mumbai	Multi speciality Hospital
NORTHERN ZONE		
All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)	New Delhi	Multi speciality Hospital
Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals	New Delhi	Multi speciality Hospital
Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PGI)	Chandigarh	Multi speciality Hospital

Medical Tourism in India is becoming very popular today catering to a large number of people from neighbouring countries to India for medical care. In the last two decades, India has emerged as one of the leading countries in the world to impart the highest quality care and service to the population. These tourism companies help the medical tourists from the moment of arrival of patients in difficulty and their families in India to set up in hotels and resorts in nearby hospitals where they are interested in taking their treatment.

Medical Tourism has reached a new dimension with a host of agencies dealing with the welfare of these patients flocking to India for medical treatment and care. These medical tourism companies in India extend a wide range of services to their potential customers. The services extended by these organizations are:

- Free of cost opinions from super specialist.
- Direct interaction of client with the doctor.
- Visa assistance letters for obtaining visa for visit to India.
- Scheduling of all pre and post surgery hospital appointments.
- Arrangement of both arrival and departure airport transfers.
- Hotel bookings and internal transfers for pre and postoperative visits to the hospital.

- Personal visits by our office staff at the hospital to ensure the patients comfort
- If required, nursing services post surgery.

Medi Connect India

Medi Connect India is the largest medical tourism facilitation company in India. Medi Connect India, set up in 2005, promotes advanced medical treatments available in India to patients all over the world. It is the only HealthCare Facilitator approved by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. The organization is closely associated with internationally accredited hospitals across India catering to a range of treatments and procedures to medical value travelers such as Oncology, Orthopedics, Cardiology, Neuro, Spine, Obesity and Plastic surgeries, surrogacy, and IVF, Bone Marrow, Kidney and Liver Transplant etc. In addition, Medi Connect India extends consultation regarding choice of hospitals and treatments as per clients' budget and preferences. Medi Connect India is a division of Indian Holiday Pvt. Ltd (IHPL) and caters to patients at all major entry points in India including Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bangalore. IHPL, with 19 years of services in inbound tourism, is a leading brand and is associated with several international travel organizations such as PATA, ASTA, IATO and Indian Medical Travel Association (IMTA). Its head office is located in New Delhi (www.medicalindiatourism.com).

Safemedtrip.com

Safemedtrip.com is a proud member of Indian Medical Travel Association. Its offices are located in New Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Chennai. From arranging opinion from India's best hospitals, hospital appointment bookings, travel to hotel accommodation, Safemedtrip.com helps patients across the world who are looking for medical treatment in India. Safemedtrip.com focuses on safety aspect of Medical Travel by addressing the fears, anxieties and concerns of medical travelers. It helps its customers with advice and support so that they can experience a good and safe medical travel. Safemedtrip.com is a Medical Travel Facilitation Company established by healthcare management professionals and doctors having decades of combined experience in the field of healthcare. Most of them have had a very rich and vast experience of working in world class hospitals in India and abroad. With experience of successfully establishing International Patient Services departments at India's Top hospitals, the team members are well experienced, right from customer service to clinical care. Some of the team members have cross functional experience of working in other industries like information technology, travel, and hotels etc. This vast and diverse experience pool helps Safemedtrip.com to create and deliver great value offerings to its customers.

The Meditour

The Meditour is affiliated and accredited by the Indian Medical Travel Association. Its main offices are located in Ahmedabad (India) & New Jersey (USA). The Meditour is managed by experienced doctor and IT professionals with vast experience in healthcare services. Best quality, affordable cost and prompt treatment are always key elements for opting treatment in foreign country. We have specially focused on these elements in selecting various hospitals and doctors for satisfying your needs. Our partner hospitals and medical centers are amongst the largest, most trusted and internationally accredited. The specialists doctors we work with are all board certified by reputed medical institutions and have extensive experience treating international patients. We add value to the clients, starting from deciding the best and suitable service provider, treatment option and medical advices during treatment and follow up. We also provide additional services, from the moment of arrival in India right until leaving for your own country. These include alternate medicine services, travel and leisure services (www.themeditour.com).

Ethical Issues

There can be major ethical issues around medical tourism. For example, the illegal purchase of organs and tissues for transplantation had been alleged in countries such as India (Chopra, 2008) and China prior to 2007. The Declaration of Istanbul distinguishes between ethically problematic "transplant tourism" and "travel for transplantation". As far as ethics are concerned, medical tourists should be aware of issues surrounding organs and tissues that could be purchased illegally. Surrogate pregnancy in terms of money is also an important ethical issue. Medical tourism may raise broader ethical issues for the countries in which it is promoted. For example in India, some argue that a "policy of 'medical tourism for the classes and health missions for the masses' will lead to a deepening of the inequities" already embedded in the health care system. In Thailand, in 2008 it was stated that doctors in Thailand have become so busy with foreigners that Thai patients are having trouble getting care (Lindvall & Hyun, 2009). Medical tourism centred on new technologies, such as stem cell treatments, is often criticized on grounds of fraud, blatant lack of scientific rationale and patient safety.

Findings

As an excellent quality of health care treatment with low-price and an active involvement of the private sector, foreign patients have started perceiving India as a perfect destination to have medical, surgical, and dental care treatments. With privatization of health care services (private sector controls about 80% of the health care market in India), enormous and massive growth of infrastructure, improved technological support and facilities, and increasing awareness regarding quality and international accreditations like JCI (Joint Commission International), India has surfaced as a strong contender in the Medical Tourism Market. Coming to India for a Medical Trip helps save a significant amount of money, sometimes to the tune of 50 % to 70 %. Importantly, low cost of medical care, in no way indicates substandard or poor quality. Indian hospitals provide first-class services and facilities. Also, Medical Travel to India, helps to do away with the long waiting lines that patients experience in their home country, and thus, assists them in gaining easy access to timely medical care. The geographic conditions and the increase in the quality health care services are all conducive to boost the medical tourism facilities in India.

Medical Tourism in India is a million dollar booming business, drawing loads of overseas patients. It is an employment intensive industry having an impact on the economy of our country. With this success in medical tourism proper attention should be given on some ethical issues especially the illegal purchase of organs and tissues for transplantation.

Conclusion

India the glorious country has found yet another way to contribute to the world through quality health care. Favourable government policy and regulation for the health care, travel, and tourism sector may enable India to become a 'Global Health Destination'. The government of India should come forward more to assist this sector.

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