

MAIN TRENDS OF DEVELOPING MEDICAL TOURISM IN GEORGIA

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Abstract

Medical tourism is becoming increasingly popular. This phenomenon is driven by marketplace forces and occurs outside of the view and control of the organized healthcare system. Medical tourism presents important concerns and challenges as well as potential opportunities. In the recent past, a trend known as medical tourism has emerged wherein citizens of highly developed countries choose to medical care offered in their own communities and travel to less developed areas of the world to receive a wide variety of medical services. This trend will have increasing impact on the healthcare landscape in industrialized and developing countries around the world. Medical tourism in Georgia is developed unequally. Along with Turkey the recognised leader of Medical tourism, who remain the world's top destinations for medical tourists and foreign investors, in Georgia this direction only starts to develop. At the same time in the country there are all conditions for development of this branch:

- Internationally recognized quality standards.
- Extensive diagnostic and therapeutic resources.
- Modern healthcare facilities - the infrastructure and the healthcare facilities available in South Caucasian countries conform to the world standards.
- Highly efficient medical staff - one can find a large number of medical professionals
- The cost of getting the treatment can be done at less than half the cost and the patient gets the best possible treatment available.

Keywords: Medical tourism, internationally recognized quality standards, Health Care system

Introduction

Certainly, development of the tourist industry, and the more so, such it complicated for direction development, as medical tourism well for enough

limited number of the countries. It is obvious that in case of absence of political and economic stability with the country, presence of the conditions providing safe stay of foreign citizens, presence of enough developed infrastructure, sanitary-and-hygienic and climate-geographical conditions, qualified personnel, transport, communication etc. At the same time, it is necessary to underline that a competition in the international market of tourism including medical tourism becomes more and more rigid that demands acceptance of urgent and effective decisions.

Although there are no verifiable statistics regarding the magnitude of medical tourism, the available information suggests that a substantial number of patients travel to developing nations for healthcare. In 2012 more of the 1.5 million patients traveled to India, more of the 1,6 million in Turkey, 1.1 million – in Israel, 1.0 million medical tourists traveled to Thailand etc It is estimated that medical tourism to Asia could generate as much as \$6.5 billion by 2018, with approximately half of this revenue going to India, Turkey and Israel. It has been estimated that the global medical tourism industry currently generates annual revenues up to \$50 billion.

But in Georgia Medical tourism developed unequally. Along with Turkey the recognised leader of medical tourism, who remain the world's top destinations for patients and foreign investors, this direction only starts to develop. At the same time in the country there are all conditions for development of this branch:

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The presented work is one of the first attempts to estimate the market of the medical services given in Georgia from the point of view of its active inclusion in the international sphere of the organization of medical tourism. It is obvious that in prospective it will allow not only to involve additional means in sphere of public health services of Georgia but that isn't less important, will impulse to more active introduction of modern medical technologies in treatment-and-prophylactic establishments of the country.

It is necessary to notice that now in Georgia variety of medical institutions, with good equipment, qualified personnel, laboratory supply, treatments don't concede to leading western samples. Along with it there are

many polyclinic and hospitals establishments of the medical services providing certain kinds also seriously claimed abroad.

The part of such establishments demands improvements of conditions of stay of patients; however, it is obvious that in case of increase in their profitability at the expense of attraction of additional incomes these problems are quite removable. The spent expert estimation allows concluding that for today in Georgia granting at high enough level of medical services, which sharply abroad is possible. Ranging is spent taking into account such indicators, as presence of two and more centers which can carry out the given service, tool and laboratory maintenance, presence more than 3 and highly more skilled doctors on the given specialty, etc. (see table 1)

Table 1 The list of some services which can be given Georgia in the international market of medical services:

Complex diagnostics			
Complex treatment			
		Granting of separate services	
		(including carrying out of operations)	
Heart surgery	+	+	+
Oncology	+	+	
Neurosurgery	+	+	+
General surgery	+	+	
Urology	+	+	
Plastic surgery	+	+	
Dental services			
(Including surgery)	+	+	+
Prosthetics of teeth	+	+	+
Ophthalmology	+	+	+
Gynecology	+	+	+
Neurology	+	+	+
Pediatrics	+	+	+
Otolaryngology	+		+
Reproductology	+	+	+

It is necessary to underline that fact that on it is necessary to underline that fact that by approximate calculations in medical institutions of the country (mainly in big cities), besides the foreign citizens living in

Georgia, addresses for reception of medical aid to 6 thousand inhabitants of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, Ukraine, of some the western countries (mainly for the purpose of carrying out of clinic-tool inspection, surgical treatment, prosthetics of teeth, etc.). At the same time, in the country there are enough ample opportunities for attraction of patients from the

Arabian countries, Central Asia, Ukraine for the purpose of reception of necessary medical services.

Certainly, active connection of Georgia to number of the countries developing medical tourism, demands realization of variety of the state actions directed not only on increase of standards of medical services, rendered to the population, but also signing of some the international agreements, membership in the international organizations, etc.

For some decades of existence of medical tourism has arisen about ten international organizations which have united professionals in the given line of activity. And every year their quantity constantly there are regional associations and the organizations in separate medical directions.

Conclusion

Medical tourism is the movement of patients through a global network of health services. Medical tourists seek affordable healthcare on a timely basis in a variety of destination nations. The expansion of global medical services has sparked immense economic growth in developing nations and has created a new market for advertising access to care. Beyond offering a unique untapped market of services, medical tourism has invited a host of liability, malpractice and ethical concerns. The explosion of off-shore “mini-surgical” vacations will surely incite global unification and increased access, quality and affordability of care.

Medical tourism is a dynamic subset of global health care that incorporates a variety of services, procedures and venues of care. Health insurance coverage, the impact on domestic and global markets, and the use of international standards of care will be examined in combination with quality, access and cost parameters. The global nature of medical tourism invites a variety of legal and ethical issues and calls for an organizational body to monitor this new phenomenon. Finally, the future implications of the globalization of health services and systems will be discussed.

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