

THE RISE OF MEDICAL TOURISM

What we need to know

It should be said, however, that cost should never be the only determining factor in what type of healthcare a patient receives. Most medical tourists often travel so that they can be seen quicker and in an environment where they can feel relaxed and looked after. In more economically developed countries, the waiting time for a patient can span months at a time, whereas waiting lists abroad are often much shorter, allowing for easier access to the medical care needed. Pair this with the excellent medical care attributed to places like Malaysia, and medical tourism is a well-rounded, well-executed industry.



Nevertheless, one thing that's for certain is the necessity for research before anything is done. The Medical Tourism Association bases their referrals on the "maturity of the development of the medical tourism initiative [in the country]"³, and there is absolutely no reason why potential patients shouldn't follow suit. Where medical tourism is concerned, knowledge is key, and too much is never enough. Now, that's not a warning! It's a fair assumption (based solidly on fact) that medical tourism is often the way to go. An expert in the field, Michael Horowitz, MD, MBA even said that it was "naive to think that just because someone practices elsewhere they are not as well trained, or qualified"⁴. The cardiothoracic surgeon seems to think that there are many advantages of travelling elsewhere for medical care and so one must stop and think, is there something in this?

With India taking the industry by storm, not only with their innovative medical techniques, but with approximately 10 000⁵ nurses graduating annually, there is nowhere to go but up for medical tourism. Considering this, in conjunction with Singapore's medical market expected to grow to \$1.71 billion in 2018⁶, and it is becoming evident that the industry hasn't even peaked yet, and its steady and constant growth suggests it might never.

Whether medical tourism is a necessity for health, a cosmetic want that can't be found in local surgeries, or even a relaxation technique needed to refuel energies, the industry caters for everybody. Recommended by experts and backed by associations dedicated to making the most comfortable experience possible, medical tourism is clearly a growing and innovative way of moving forward, oftentimes without having to dip into a piggy bank or two (which always helps).

Sources:

1. <https://www.frankit.in/blog/5-best-countries-for-medical-tourism>
2. <https://www.frankit.in/blog/5-best-countries-for-medical-tourism>
3. <http://www.medicaltourismassociation.com/en/fam-tour.html>
4. https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/710279#vp_3
5. <http://tourism.gov.in/wellness-medical-tourism>
6. <https://www.frankit.in/blog/5-best-countries-for-medical-tourism>