

# Analysis on the Development Prospect and Problems of Medical Tourism Industry

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## ABSTRACT

With the increasing interaction of the international community, business contacts become more frequent, promoting the combination of different industries to form new industries and create new business opportunities. Among them, medical tourism has become one of the emerging hot industries in the world due to the increase of income, improvement of life, convenient transportation and other factors. The World Health Organization (who) once estimated that by 2020, perhaps the world's largest industry will be the health care related service industry, and the tourism related service industry is the second only to its industry, accounting for 22% of the world's GDP in total.

**Keywords:** *Development of medical tourism industry, sightseeing, health care and leisure*

## 1. PREFACE

According to the "complete manual of medical tourism" of the United States, about 500000 people go abroad for medical treatment every year in the United States, and 50000-150000 people cross the sea to receive international medical treatment in the United Kingdom every year. Compared with Asian countries, such as Japan with aging population and China with rapid economic takeoff, the demand for arranging tourism and receiving medical treatment is growing. In other words, due to the high cost of health care in advanced countries, the increased cost of insurance, the lack of medical equipment, long waiting time and many other factors, its people or insurance companies actively seek to go to countries with low cost, good quality, no need to wait for a long time, and good environment for medical treatment, while taking into account tourism and leisure, this thinking has set off a global medical treatment Development trend of tourism industry.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF MEDICAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

Looking back to the above, although the government has listed medical tourism as one of the emerging industry projects so far, compared with other mature industries, it belongs to the industrial development pattern of combination of different industries. This paper summarizes the category and definition of medical tourism industry as follows:

### 2.1. Category of medical tourism industry

Medical tourism refers to the combination of medical treatment and tourism, in which medical treatment includes disease or injury treatment, and tourism is for the purpose of pleasure and leisure. However, medical tourism is often compared with medical travel, health tourism, medical travel, overseas medical, surgery overseas, medical outsourcing and offshore medical. At present, for medical tourism, the government means the industry formed by attracting foreigners to Taiwan to receive medical tourism services with the competitive advantages of medical price, medical technology, medical quality and tourism resources.

### 2.2. Definition of medical tourism industry

Medical tourism is a kind of profit-making, private international medical activity and enterprise behavior in international medical treatment. It is the source of foreign exchange income in many countries at present. In 2000, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defined the medical tourism industry as: "providing medical care, disease and health, rehabilitation and recuperation as the theme of tourism services, including medical tourism and health tourism.". Among them, the former is mainly sightseeing, supplemented by health care; the latter is mainly medical treatment, supplemented by sightseeing. That is to say, medical tourism is a kind of tourism based on medical operation to treat diseases, which has the characteristics of health improvement and rehabilitation; health tourism is a kind of tourism based on promoting and recovering health, which

has the characteristics of maintaining health and prevention.

As a whole, medical tourism refers to a global emerging service industry market developed by combining local leisure tourism services and medical services, in which people have to wait for a long time due to the high medical cost or insufficient service quantity in their country, so they have to go abroad to seek cheaper and immediate medical services. According to the international experience, promoting the medical tourism industry not only has the "convergence effect", but also gradually develops into a specific international medical area, such as Bengal health city, Dubai medical city and medical center of Iskandar Special Economic Zone in Malaysia.

### **3. SWOT ANALYSIS OF PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM INDUSTRY**

From the above categories and definitions of medical tourism industry, it can be seen that this kind of industry will become the largest industry in the world in the future, based on the premise of medical treatment and further combined with the extended industry of tourism and leisure. At present, many countries in the world, especially emerging countries in the Asia Pacific region, have listed this industry as one of the development projects of emerging industries. Comparatively speaking, the development of China's medical tourism industry is relatively late, limited by the size, coupled with a relatively lack of tourism resources in geography; however, China has high medical quality and low cost, and still has certain potential in development. The SWOT analysis of promoting the development of medical tourism industry in China is summarized as follows:

#### **3.1. Strength**

- a. The average level and quality of medical treatment are better than those of India, Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea and other countries, while the cost is lower than those of Europe, America, Japan and other countries.
- b. The language of Chinese areas is interlinked and the living environment is good for a long time.

#### **3.2. Weakness**

- a. The development of medical tourism started late, and the international brand hospitals were lacking.
- b. The hospital's hardware and software equipment (including signs and document output) are not in line with the international standards, and the foreign language ability of medical staff has not been popularized.
- c. Relevant medical management regulations (including talent introduction, major equipment procurement, medical

marketing, etc.) are rigorous and complex, which is not conducive to the expansion of investment.

- d. Legal restrictions, such as restrictions on foreign people's application for medical treatment in China, as well as restrictions on medical practice places, lack of flexibility and convenience.

#### **3.3. Opportunity**

- a. With the trend of overseas medical treatment and the potential of Chinese market, the white-collar class in mainland China can be attracted to Taiwan for medical treatment and sightseeing.
- b. Medical tourism as a key development industry, coupled with the introduction of international medical quality certification (JCI) by the medical community, will contribute to the opportunity of medical operation management in line with international standards.

#### **3.4. Threat**

- a. Thailand, Malaysia and India are the first places to visit. With low service prices and large-scale leisure resorts, they attract people from all over the world to visit doctors and clubs.
- b. International cooperative marketing channels have not been unblocked, medical talents have flowed out, and the development of product brand differences needs to be broken through.

### **4. SEVERAL PROBLEMS TO BE CLARIFIED IN PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Medical tourism industry is a new market opportunity, which can not only create tourism benefits, but also improve the domestic medical level, quality and international standards, and even introduce new medical equipment and technology. However, there are still some problems to be clarified in the promotion, including:

#### **4.1. Questioning the fairness and rationality of medical service**

Generally speaking, in order to attract and meet the needs of foreign patients, medical tourism hospitals will pay special attention to the use of high-tech medical equipment and expensive drugs, and provide first-class services and comfortable environment; compared with the Chinese who participate in the national health insurance, if they are different from foreign patients in terms of service level and quality treatment, they will provide first-class services and comfortable environment. If it is too large, it may cause the

domestic people to question the fairness and rationality of enjoying the national medical resources service.

#### ***4.2. It is not easy to transfer the benefits of medical tourism to the domestic people***

Although the promotion of medical tourism can induce private investment, promote the development of related industries and increase employment opportunities, at the same time, under the support of government policies, the hospital operators in the medical tourism area have no way to return the benefits to the national health insurance medical care system, and the domestic people have no benefits. Moreover, in order to attract business, the hospital operators in the medical tourism area provide sophisticated and careful medical services and life care for foreign patients, which may affect the allocation of national medical resources.

#### ***4.3. Harm of medical waste to environment***

In addition to affecting the allocation of national medical resources, medical waste is another problem that can not be ignored. According to the estimation of medical wastes, each hospital bed produces 3kg of medical wastes every day, of which infectious wastes account for about 20%. Although these infectious wastes are incinerated, they have become an important source of toxic substances in the environment, such as arsenic, cadmium, lead, dioxin and so on. Therefore, while promoting the development of medical tourism industry, how to properly deal with the medical waste produced by a large number of foreign people coming to receive medical services is a link that cannot be ignored.

#### ***4.4. Medical tourism as a new value and the hidden worry of colonialist differentiation***

In order to promote the development of medical tourism industry, hospitals in the medical service and hospital equipment in the medical tourism area will actively adopt measures that meet the advanced national standards and provide favorable conditions to attract excellent medical staff. Such measures to attract international patients are not only likely to become another new type of value and social worries of colonial differentiation, but also cannot be improved Local medical level and quality. That is to say, the difference between service treatment and health care is too big. If we don't regulate it properly, we may make our people become inferior national service treatment.

## **5. SUGGESTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM INDUSTRY**

First of all, with the development of medical technology globalization, the difference of medical level in various regions will gradually reduce in the future. Under such a development trend, the status of tourism in disease treatment medical tourism will further improve, and consumers will pay more attention to the tourism projects and services in the process of medical tourism.

Secondly, China will guide enterprises and financial institutions with international competitive advantages to gather, introduce international advanced medical equipment and technology in stages, and gradually form the world's leading medical tourism industry cluster, combining medical care, health management, rehabilitation and health care, leisure and health care, and tourism and tourism.

Finally, in terms of development relationship, the government is the main leader, and relevant enterprises in the medical tourism industry chain follow-up; in terms of development form, there will be four major forms, namely, city, town, park and district; in terms of development sequence, the first stage mainly includes market demand and research, resource promotion, packaging and design of medical tourism products; in the second stage, medical tourism supporting and professional training are developed The third stage is to establish the development fund of medical tourism industry, relevant laws and regulations of medical tourism.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

With the development of internationalization and globalization of medical tourism, the growth of demand for medical tourism services in developed countries and the rise of medical tourism services provided by developing countries, it is estimated that by 2020, medical tourism industry will become the largest industry in the world. In the face of this development trend, the government is actively promoting the development of medical tourism industry, and its input resources are no less than the development of other industries. Although the medical tourism industry can create a lot of benefits, it has a bright future. However, Peter Drucker mentioned that education and health care are national resources that cannot be marketed and commercialized, so whether health care should return to the nature of "non-profit and public welfare" is a topic worthy of discussion. In addition, the crowding out effect of medical resources and human resources, the possibility of super bacteria infection caused by hospitals, the possibility of environmental damage caused by medical waste, and the possibility of new colonialism caused by medical tourism in countries that have promoted medical tourism are all issues that must be considered in promoting the development of this industry.

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