



Challenges and opportunities of medical tourism in Bengaluru: An empirical study

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Abstract

Medical Tourism as an industry exists for over years. The relevance of the Medical Tourism is more so in the modern era where the patients cross the borders and go to other countries to avail the best of the treatment. The industry is growing in the volume day by day. The accreditation of the hospitals has made it easy for the patients to avail the world-class treatment in the hospitals. Governments and the Tourism Departments have recognized the importance and are giving the impetus to the Medical tourism to make it work as a revenue generating model. The present study is empirical study of the Medical Tourism in the Bengaluru Context.

Keywords: medical tourism, physical well-being, treatment

1. Introduction

Traveling for medical care is becoming more and more common as an alternative for treatment. The growth of the industry is happening rapidly in today's society, with the development of the Medical Tourism Association. This has helped to take the idea of going to another country for treatment, from being a far out and sometimes scary thought to making a lot of sense to patients insured and uninsured. With hospitals becoming accredited and some insurance companies offering this to clients, it has become a very reputable and smart way to get the care you need. This industry has already grown exponentially in the last few years; one can only imagine what is to come in the future.

2. Origin of the Research Problem

The research arose when the mobility of people started in ancient Greece, pilgrims and patients came from all over the Mediterranean to the sanctuary of the healing God Asclepius at Epidaurus. In Roman Britain patients traveled to the Hot Waters Springs to cure their diseases, a practice that continued for 2,000 years. From the 18th century wealthy Europeans travelled to Spas from Germany to the Nile. Since the early nineteenth century, when there were no restrictions on travel in Europe, people visited neighboring countries in order to improve their health. At first, mere traveling was considered to be a good therapy for mental and physical wellbeing. In the 21st century relatively low-cost jet travel has taken the industry beyond the wealthy and desperate.

The tourist destinations in urban and rural areas to a great extent are devoid and deprived of all kinds of infrastructure and modern facilities. The problem is due to the unexplored potentialities of medical tourism in places both urban and rural. In the same manner the problem is manifested as non-professional approach towards the medical tourism by hospitals. The need of the hour is chalking out ways and means to address the realistic research problem arising out of the topic "Challenges and opportunities of Medical Tourism in Bengaluru - An empirical study".

3. Inter Disciplinary Relevance

In addition to the existence of modern medicine, indigenous or traditional medical practitioners are providing their services over the years. There are over 3,371 hospitals and around 754,985 registered practitioners catering to the needs of traditional Indian healthcare. Indian hotels are also entering the wellness services market by collaborating with professional organizations in a range of wellness fields and offering spas and ayurvedic massages.

Today we have reached the era where Hospitals are more like Spas and Spas more like hospitals. The blend of traditional and modern forms of medicine augmented the significance of medical tourism, post-surgery therapies and rejuvenation centres.

4. Historical Relevance of Medical Tourism

Tracing back to ancient Greece, pilgrims and patients came from all over the Mediterranean to the sanctuary of the healing God Asclepius at Epidaurus. In Roman Britain patients traveled to the Hot Waters Springs to cure their diseases, a practice that continued for 2,000 years. From the 18th century wealthy Europeans travelled to Spas from Germany to the Nile. In the 21st century relatively low-cost jet travel has taken the industry beyond the wealthy and desperate.

5. Researches on Medical Tourism across the World

Kounteya Sinha ^[1] in his article titled "Medical tourism booming in India", Times of India Apr 4, 2008 opines that For Indian doctors, western shores could be greener. But for an increasing number of foreign patients, Indian hospitals are fast becoming their first choice. Over 1.5 lakh medical tourists travelled to India in 2002 alone, bringing in earnings of \$300 million. Since then, the number of such travellers has been increasing by at least 25% every year.

Buyers of Healthcare & Their Growth in the Industry, Q & A with Brad Cook ^[3] Medical Tourism Association May 23, 2011 With hospitals becoming accredited and some insurance companies offering this to clients, it has become a very

reputable and smart way to get the care you need.

Dr. Antonia arnaert ^[4] in her article titled Telehealth in Medical Tourism ~ Personalizing Health Care Dec 7, 2010 highlights The substantial growth in the medical tourism and the globalization of medicine, in general, has introduced new challenges and opportunities to provide higher quality services to clients. As clients realize access to medical care has expanded and medical choices have broadened beyond the borders of their local providers.

Opportunities and Challenges of Health Tourism in India-Dindayal Swain and Suprava Sahu IIMK⁵ highlights that the key "selling points" of the medical tourism industry are its "cost effectiveness" and its combination with the attractions of tourism. Price advantage is, of course, a major selling point. The slogan, thus is, "First World treatment' at Third World prices". The cost differential across the board is huge: only a tenth and sometimes even a sixteenth of the cost in the West.

6. International Status

Major centers for medical tourism are Bangkok and Phuket, with six medical facilities in Bangkok boasting hospital accreditation from the United States. As in most tourist-oriented medical communities, the major attractions are cosmetic surgery and dental treatments. However, eye surgery, kidney dialysis and organ transplantation also are among the most common procedures sought by medical vacationers in Thailand.

For a few patients, Phuket has another attraction as well: Bangkok Phuket Hospital is the premier place to go for sex-change surgery. In fact, that is one of the top 10 procedures for which patients visit Thailand. For North American patients, Costa Rica is the chosen destination for inexpensive, high-quality medical care without a trans-Pacific flight, and it is the particular mecca for westerners seeking plastic surgery.

South Africa also draws many cosmetic surgery patients, especially from Europe, and many South African clinics offer packages that include personal assistants, visits with trained therapists, trips to top beauty salons, post-operative care in luxury hotels and safaris or other vacation incentives. Additionally, Argentina ranks high for plastic surgery, and Hungary draws large numbers of patients from Western Europe and the U.S. Lastly, Dubai--a destination already known as a luxury vacation paradise--has opened the Dubai Healthcare City in 2010. Situated on the Red Sea, this clinic will be the largest international medical center between Europe and Southeast Asia.

7. National Status

Despite the global economic downturn, medical tourism in India has emerged as the fastest growing segment of tourism industry. High cost of treatments in the developed countries, particularly in the USA and the UK, has been forcing patients from such regions to look for alternative and cost-effective destinations to get their treatments done. Indian medical tourism industry is presently at a nascent stage, but has an enormous potential for future growth and development.

As per the new market research report "Booming Medical Tourism in India", India's share in the global medical tourism industry will reach around 3% by the end of 2013. Moreover,

medical tourism is expected to generate revenue worth US\$ 3 Billion by 2013, growing at a CAGR of around 26% during 2011–2013. The number of medical tourists is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of over 19% during the forecast period to reach 1.3 Million by 2013.

8. Concept of Medical Tourism in India

Some might have difficulty categorizing yoga retreats, Buddhist pilgrimages, and meditation centers as medical tourism, but the unbelievable reach of India's healing arts is not to be ignored. Ever since yoga's birth more than 5,000 years ago, India has enjoyed a constant influx of medical travelers and spiritual students hoping to master and benefit from this most fundamental and revered branch of alternative medicine. When Buddhism came along roughly 2,500 years later, this only added fuel to the fire and helped position India as the epicenter of Eastern, cultural, spiritual, and medicinal progress. Not only is India one of the world's oldest medical tourism destinations, but it has now also become one of the world's most popular ones as well.

Medical Treatment is the latest reason to visit India because of the low cost with world class services and quality treatment. India is promoting the high-tech-healing of its private health care sector as a tourist attraction. The Ministry of Tourism is encouraging Medical Tourism, Operators to sell the idea of traveling to India for low cost but world class treatment. Medical Tourism in India is a combination of several factors which makes India a unique healthcare destination.

9. Medical & Health Care Tourism in Karnataka – An overview

Recently Karnataka has emerged as a hot spot for health care tourism. Karnataka has the highest number of approved health systems and alternative therapies in India. Along with some ISO certified government-owned hospitals, private institutions which provide international-quality services have caused the health care industry to grow by 30% during 2004-05. Hospitals in Karnataka treat around 8,000 health tourists every year.

Bangalore and Mysore, together with their super-specialty hospitals and a range of good hotels - even a few ISO certified government hospitals - are being pitched at global tourists and businesspeople. Still flush from the limelight it got from hosting little Noor Fatima, Pakistani heart patient, Karnataka is now looking at snaring at least 20 per cent of the 3.2 lakh total international inflow as healthcare tourists, according to Mr Mahendra Jain, State Tourism Commissioner.

In a first-of-its kind concerted action from a State Government, it will showcase its top-class corporate and government hospitals and star hotels as the new business opportunity offering the best mix of cost-effective medical treatment and tourist proposition. Founded in 2006, the multi-disciplinary super-specialty Wockhardt Hospitals, Bangalore today treats 250 patients per day in its OPD. Wockhardt had undergone many landmark surgeries in 2008. An open-heart surgery successfully performed on the smallest baby in the country, brain tumour surgery through nose, bypass surgery with valve replacement, and removal of tumour from the heart measuring 8x10x12 cm performed at the Hospital are the

biggest achievements of recent years. This Hospital is positioned as a super-specialty Hospital, with focus on cardiac, orthopaedics, neurosciences, minimal access surgery and women and child services. They launched organ transplant programme and oncology center in the year 2009.

10. Medical tourism Bangalore

Rejoice Mumbai and Delhi! Bangalore is your new kin, who has now grabbed the headlines not because of epithets like 'the silicon valley of India' or 'pensioner's paradise', but as a centre of excellence in medical care and an emerging healthcare hub. Bangalore is one of the top medical tourism destinations in India, with professional experts, technological sophistication and health care services that easily match the best in the world. Its reputation as the global technology hub and cosmopolitan city has made it a prominent health care destination for foreigners from developed as well as developing countries. Bangalore has a pleasant weather all through the year.

Some of the lead institutes and private hospitals in Bangalore with regular patients from abroad include: Hosmat, Recoup, Soukya, Manipal, Narayana Hrudayalaya, NIMHANS, Wockhardt, Advanced fertility centre, Sagar Apollo, Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiology, St. John's Hospital, St. Martha's, Victoria Hospital and Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Mallya Hospital, Manipal Hospital and The Bangalore Hospital.

Bangalore has few of the world's best doctors and medical practitioners, who have been trained by the rigorous Indian medical education system as well as in countries like UK and USA. The practitioners are registered with the Indian Medical Association and other Indian and international professional bodies. Many hospitals now have international accreditation to dispel any concerns of patients coming for treatment. Most big hospitals have eminent doctors from abroad as consultants. Also, most hospitals that have foreign patients have facilities and services customized for the comfort and convenience of the patients.

Popular specializations for medical consultation, treatments and surgeries in Bangalore include Cardiology, Orthopedics, Nephrology, Neurology, Neurosurgery, Dentistry, Oncology, Infertility, Gynecology, Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Naturopathy etc.

Bangalore as a Medical Tourism Destination- The Benefits

- Ω Internationally accredited medical facilities using the latest technologies
- Ω Highly qualified Physicians/Surgeons and hospital support staff
- Ω Significant cost savings compared to domestic private healthcare
- Ω Medical treatment costs in India are lower by at least 60-80% when compared to similar procedures in North America and the UK
- Ω No Wait Lists
- Ω Fluent English speaking staff
- Ω Options for private room, translator, private chef, dedicated staff during your stay and many other tailor-made services

Ω Can easily be combined with a holiday/business trip

11. Significance of the Study

According to the confederation of Indian Industry India has the potential to attract 2 million tourist per annum which could contribute to \$ 5 billion to the economy. India must leverage its competitive edge especially cost advantage. It is only one fifth of the cost in the west. Bangalore enjoys a unique position as it offers holistic medicinal services. With yoga, meditation, Ayurveda, allopathic and other systems of medicines, Karnataka offers a unique basket of services to an individual that is difficult to match by other countries. Also, clinical outcomes in Bangalore are at par with the world's best centers besides having internationally qualified and experienced specialists.

12. Objectives of Study

1. To explore the potential for Medical Tourism industry in the city of Bangalore.
2. To examine the variation in cost of treatment in Karnataka and rest of India and Other Countries.
3. To ascertain the problems in regard to organization and management of Medical Tourism Destinations in the state of Karnataka and to suggest its remedial measures.
4. To review the government Policy on Medical tourism.

13. Department of tourism on medical tourism: government of Karnataka

The previous Tourism Policy (2002-2007) with an "inside-out" view began the development of tourism in Karnataka with a congenial environment for private investors. The present Karnataka Tourism Policy reshapes the same by incorporating an 'outside-in' view to cover larger markets and higher share of the tourist's wallet. This necessitates listening to the "Voice of the Tourist" and working towards "Exceeding tourist expectations". Accordingly, the emerging trends of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) Health tourism, Wellness tourism, Cruise tourism, Adventure tourism, Heli-tourism, Wilderness tourism, etc., should be understood and developed meaningfully. At the same time, the present policy would reinforce the good aspects of the earlier policy.

Health and wellness tourism – one of the thrust areas of the Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka

1. Karnataka will be positioned and promoted as India's premier Health and Wellness destination.
2. A virtual Healthcare and Wellness City will be developed in the form of a grid that links all major existing facilities with international standards. The proposed Health City will be integrated into the grid and the major facilities will be inter-linked through high speed transit systems.
3. Karnataka's potential in traditional systems of wellness and medicines like Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Yoga, etc. will be leveraged and the state will. Be projected as a unique destination for spiritual healing.
4. Accreditation guidelines will be issued in consultation with the National Board of Hospitals and Ayush, and certification will be done with two or three levels of

classifications. Only certified centres will be eligible for Incentives that are available.

14. Wellness centres accreditation in Karnataka guidelines

Wellness Centres includes Ayurveda, Holistic, and Naturopathic. The Government of Karnataka has issued guidelines to these wellness centres as below:-

Resurgence of interest in Ayurveda has provided impetus to medical tourism in India. There has been a phenomenal increase in the demand for specialized therapies of Ayurveda not only for treatment of diseases but also for Rejuvenative healthcare. As a result many health centres and tourist resorts providing Ayurveda therapy have come up in various parts of the country and in Karnataka with or without adequate facilities.

Over the years, Karnataka has had a number of excellent wellness centres operating in the Wellness Tourism space. This activity of Tourism is also being highly promoted by the Tourism Department of Karnataka.

But, it has been observed that many Wellness centres being run in the name of Ayurveda are actually not providing for authentic Ayurveda but in a form that has deviated from original concepts and practices. Many of these centres are manned by unqualified persons without basic knowledge of Ayurveda, thereby subverting the real purpose of these therapies. Many aspects of administration of Ayurvedic medicines & therapies like climatic & constitutional considerations, selection of oils etc. are often neglected.

Body relaxation procedures such as massaging, fomentation, steam bath etc. based mainly on western approach are practiced in deviation from the classical form. Even therapeutic and preventive procedures are done in the wrong way without observing basic requisites for such procedures. This kind of activities will harm the growth of Wellness Tourism in the state and affect the credibility of Karnataka as a Wellness destination.

Thus, there is a need to prevent deviations or misuse of therapies provided from Wellness Centres. It is important to ensure that Ayurveda therapy is administered as per standard operating procedures and there should be some minimum pre-requisites of infrastructure that must be complied with by every Wellness center.

The following guidelines are a step to prescribe minimum requirements of Wellness centers to be established or being established in private sector.

15. Categories and Classification

Under these circumstances, Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka has worked out a scheme for the Accreditation and Classification of Wellness centres in order to promote Wellness Tourism in a way that is safe and secure for tourists. The centres will broadly be classified into Rejuvenative Wellness Centres and Curative Wellness Centres

- Rejuvenative Wellness Centres that combine a holiday/leisure experience with Rejuvenative treatments
- Curative Wellness Centres that purely address health problems; with or without leisure settings

15. Hypothesis

Ho : There is no relationship between cost of the treatment and preference towards medical tourism.

H₁ : There is a relationship between cost of the treatment and preference towards medical tourism.

16. Methodology

The study proposes to adopt survey method through questionnaire has selected and secondary data is collected through internet and articles.

16.1 Sampling

Medical tourism Survey made through asking questions to 200 medical professionals in Bangalore. The selection of professionals was based on a random basis applying simple random sampling technique. Sample of 200 respondents were covered using well-structured questionnaire. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in Bangalore city.

16.2 Data Collection

The required data for the study were collected using both primary and the secondary sources.

▪ **Primary Data**

The primary data were obtained through survey method using structured questionnaire.

▪ **Secondary Data**

The Secondary data were gathered from magazines, articles, newspaper, and websites.

16.3 Collection Instruments

- Questionnaire- for 200 Medical Professionals
- Personal interview- with Tourism Department Officials

17. Plan of Analysis

The collected data were analyzed with the help of statistical tools & techniques such as averages and percentage; wherever necessary the tables, charts, graphs & diagrams will be used.

i) Medical Tourism-A Boon

Table 1

Statement	Scale	Responses (N=200)	
		Number	Percentage
Medical tourism is a boon to Bangalore	Strongly agree	64	32
	Agree	96	48
	Neutral	36	18
	Disagree	04	02
	Strongly disagree	00	00
Total		200	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Analysis

Bangalore and IT, BT and Education hub, is fast getting recognized for medical boom. This was agreed by 80% of the sample practitioners [N=200]. 18% of the practitioners remained neutral to the given statement. While the remaining 2% of the respondents were declined to the given statement.

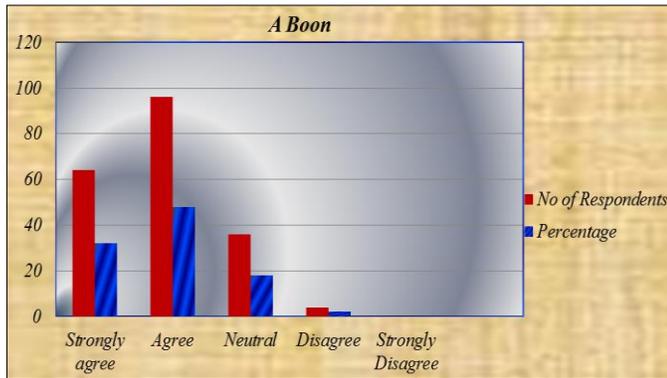


Fig 1

Inference

Bangalore being a brand has a multiple reasons to attract people across the world. As an extension to this medical tourism is widely accepted and there is an increase number of patients coming to Bangalore leading to increase in the corporate hospitals.

ii) Medical Tourism facilitates patients to avail cost effective treatment

Table 2

Statement	Scale	Responses (N=200)	
		Number	Percentage
Medical Tourism facilitates patients to avail cost effective treatment	Strongly agree	60	30
	Agree	80	40
	Neutral	40	20
	Disagree	16	08
	Strongly disagree	04	02
Total		200	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Analysis

70% of the respondents accepted that Medical tourism would help patients to avail treatment at cheaper cost.

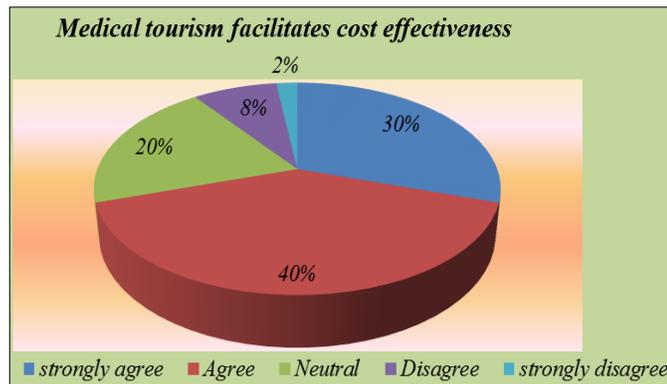


Fig 2

Inference

The cost of treatment in India and Bangalore is very less compared to other advanced countries.

iii) Medical tourism is preferred because of the less waiting period and safety of medical procedures compared to that of home country

Table 3

Statement	Scale	Responses (N=200)	
		Number	Percentage
Medical tourism has less waiting period and safety of medical procedures	Very true	56	28
	True	96	48
	Partly true	48	24
	Not at all true	00	00
Total		200	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Analysis

Medical tourism is both safe and fastest therefore it attracts general public says 76% of the respondents. While 24% of the respondents have agreed this fact partly.

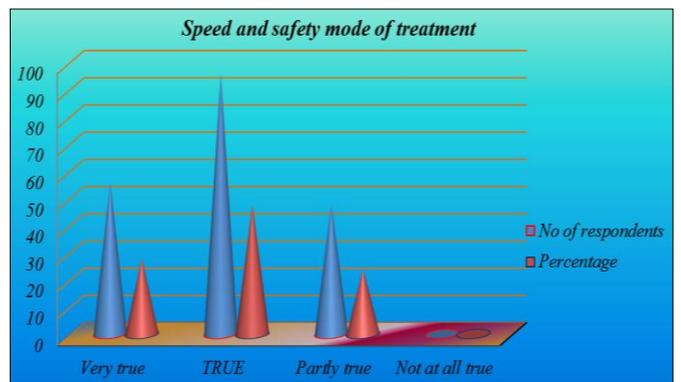


Fig 3

Inference

All over the world Medical tourism is known for speed and safety in developing countries compared to developing countries. And it is the same in Bangalore also.

iv) Medical Tourism – Preferred because of medical facilities and procedures

Table 4

Statement	Scale	Responses (N=200)	
		Number	Percentage
Medical facilities and specialized procedures impact the choice of hospitals	Strongly agree	48	24
	Agree	92	46
	Neutral	48	24
	Disagree	12	06
	Strongly disagree	00	00
Total		200	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Analysis

80% of the total sample professionals have agreed that the facilities and the procedures adopted impact the choice of hospitals outside home country.

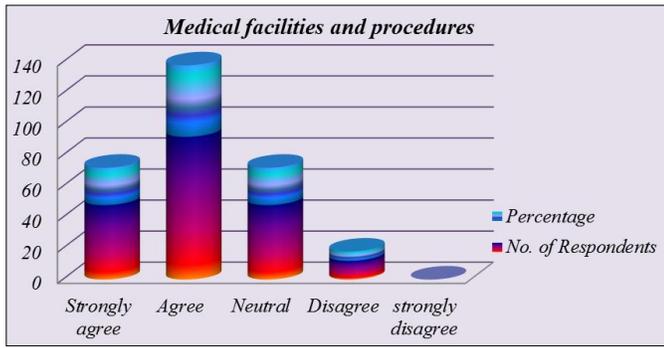


Fig 4

Inference

The corporate hospitals are built with advanced technology and collaboration. The patients are driven more by the precision in the treatment when travelling abroad for treatment purposes.

v) Medical tourism provides value added services

Table 5

Statement	Scale	Responses (N=200)	
		Number	Percentage
Medical tourism is pursued because it facilitates the patients to avail value added services	Strongly agree	60	30
	Agree	96	48
	Neutral	44	22
	Disagree	00	00
	Strongly disagree	00	00
Total		200	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Analysis

78% of the professionals agree that value added services provided by hospitals like MRI scan,CT scan, ECG scan, conveyance, personal safety and security etc.

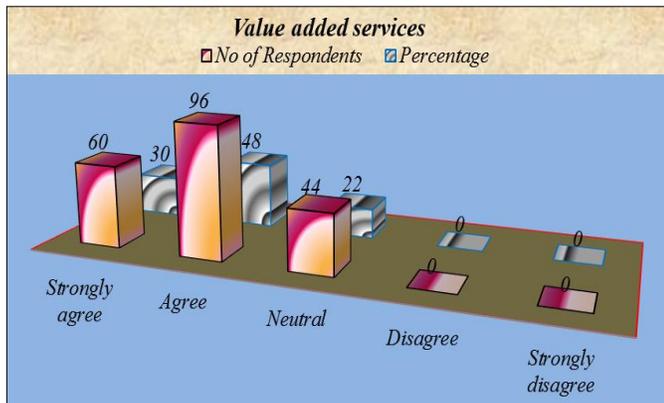


Fig 5

Inference

Value added services are one of the major factor that pulls patients to come out of their home countries to be treated outside home country.

vi) Medical tourism is recognized as a very integral part of the marketing department in the hospitals

Table 6

Statement	Scale	Responses (N=200)	
		Number	Percentage
Medical tourism is an important wing In the marketing department in the hospitals	Strongly agree	128	64
	Agree	72	36
	Neutral	00	00
	Disable	00	00
	Strongly disable	00	00
Total		200	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Analysis

Cent percent of the respondent’s agree that the medical tourism is a niche marketing segment and needs to be managed effectively.

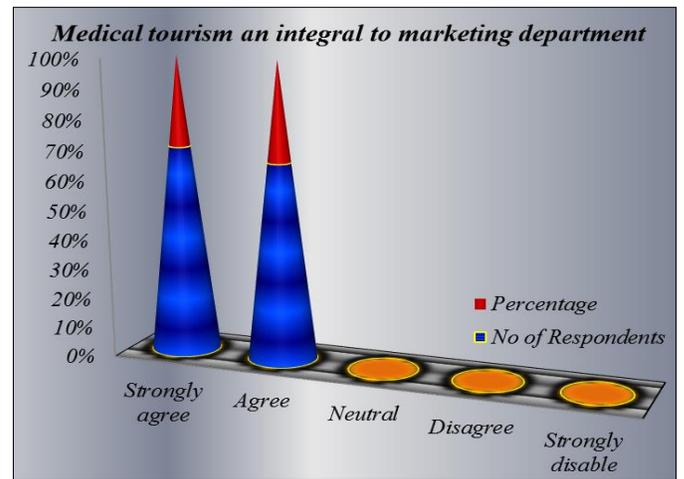


Fig 6

Inference

Today the medical tourism is recognized as a fast growing industry and it has become a lucrative chance for the hospitals to leverage on it.

vii) Sources of knowledge about medical tourism

The question is intended to know as to what sources supplements the patients to get knowledge about Medical Tourism. Responses got for the question is presented in the Table 7 and Fig 7 respectively.

Table 7: Sources of knowledge about medical tourism

Source of knowledge of medical tourism	Number	Percent %
Media	102	56
Friends and Relatives	28	14
Brochures	40	20
Films	---	---
Prior knowledge	20	10
Total	200	100

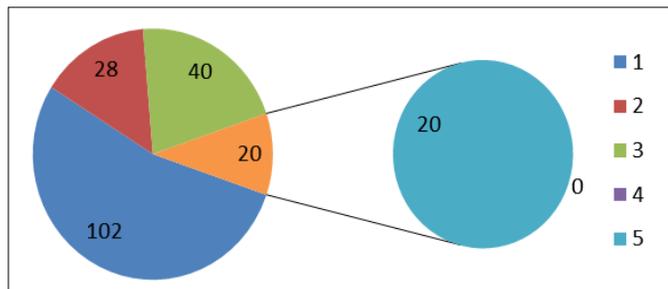


Fig 7: sources of knowledge about medical tourism

viii) Factors influencing in choosing a particular hospital

There are numerous factors, which influence the patients to go about treatment in the chosen hospital. The parameters in this regard are identified to be as follows. The responses are analysed and exhibited in the Table 9 and Figure 9 respectively.

Table 8: factors influencing the choice of hospitals

Factors	Number	Percent (%)
(a) Low cost of medicines	80	40
(b) Competent doctors	28	14
(c) Compassionate doctors	10	5
(d) People friendly atmosphere	10	5
(e) Brand image of Bangalore	30	15
(f) Sterile Procedure	26	13
(g) Affectionate nursing	16	8
TOTAL	200	100

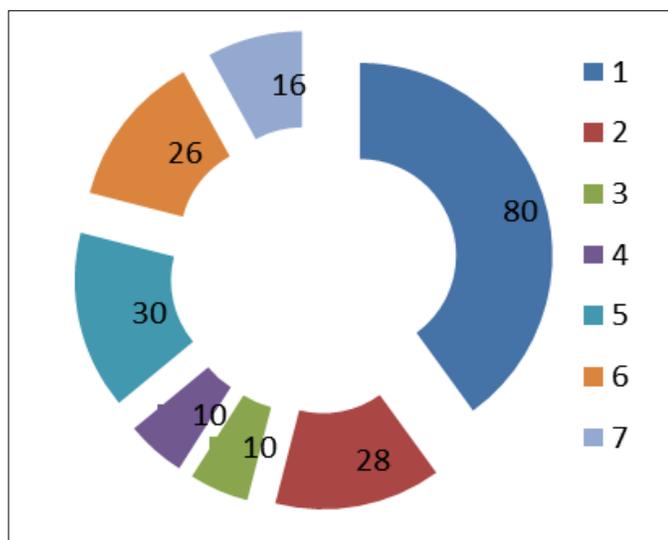


Fig 8: factors influencing the choice of hospitals

According to the data, competent doctors is one of the dominant factors. Cost is also thought to be a major driver for the patients. Brand Bangalore has also been a significant factor for the patients.

ix) Sources of knowledge about the hospital of treatment

The patients who have underwent treatment in the sample hospital were asked as to how they came to know about the

hospital. The responses were as under:-

Table 9: Knowledge about the hospital of treatment

Knowledge about the hospital of treatment	Number	Percent
Direct contact	110	55
After online research	58	29
through friends & relatives	16	8
Other Sources	16	8
Total	200	100

Majority of the respondents feel that patients get to know about the hospital of treatment through direct contact. The online search has been a second largest source of knowledge.

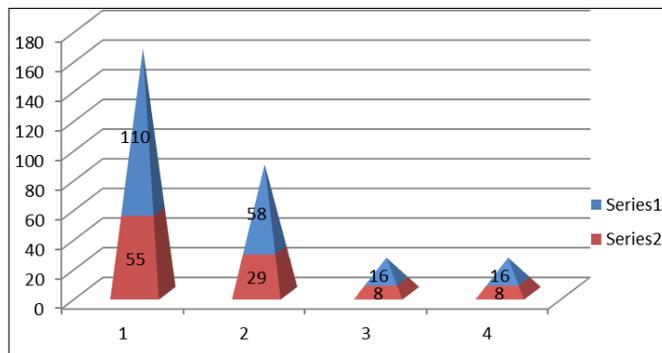


Fig 9

Direct contact and online search combined together has been a major influencer accounting to more than 2/3rd percentage.

Hypothesis Testing

Ho : There is no relationship between cost of the treatment and preference towards medical tourism.

H1 : There is a relationship between cost of the treatment and preference towards medical tourism.

Table 10: Medical tourism facilitates cost effective treatment to the patients

Elements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
O	60	80	40	16	4	
E	40	40	40	40	40	
(O-E)	20	40	0	-24	-36	
(O-E) ²	40	80	0	576	1296	
(O-E) ² /E	1	2	0	14.4	32.4	49.8

Alpha = 0.05
 Degree of freedom = 5-1=4
 Chi square = 49.8
 Table value of F (0.05) = 9.94

Conclusion

Hypothesis is rejected
 Degree of freedom is exceeded to chi square
 Hypothesis is rejected but the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

18. Suggestions

After an in depth study of the topic and enumerating the findings the study offers constructive suggestions to all the stakeholders of the medical tourism, in the right direction to be implemented.

1. Medical sector is a very responsible one [medical tourism is undoubtedly an integral part of the tourism industry]. The investment and the decision making that goes into setting up of the corporate hospitals or a medical tourism promoting hospital is very huge in magnitude. The privatized health sector has also to concentrate on the needy poor patients who can ill afford the high costs.
2. Brand Bangalore is susceptible to attract patients across the globe. The time is here for the city of Bangalore to sustain its image in the medical sector to continue to be medical hub as is in other sector like IT, BT& Silk.
3. The state of Karnataka has a long history of the historical places and culture. Local population of Bangalore has unique demography consisting of the people from across various parts of the country and the world. The cosmopolitan culture is in fact a blessing for the people leading to one of the largest English speaking population.
4. The medical tourism is made possible by the integrated efforts of various factors like medical tourism initiation medical tourism operators, agents etc. the hospitals have a separate official in the cadre of medical tourism officer to negotiate between the f.p and hospitals.
5. The department of tourism has identified medical tourism as a principal segment in attracting foreign patients & boosting the industry. It has been agreed upon and are working in improving the overall facilities to facilitate medical tourism.
6. The entry of corporate hospitals into the medical sector has provided a facelift to the medical industry undoubtedly raising the job of the patients in seeing a reason to come out of their native place which could be a hard decision but for a trust they hold in hospital. The good to do corporate houses have carved a niche for themselves in pulling more and more patients.
7. Medical tourism is constrained by time. Patients would not mind to pay a little higher for a good treatment. So there has to be a good integrated and interconnected network of various agents and agencies converging the patient's requirements and the hospital. This industry should be innovations driven to be perfective itself every day.
8. The government has come out with the new guidelines for the instructions practicing alternate medicine so that there is a stringent regulation of the industry.
9. The very fact that a patient seeks treatment outside his home country requires a tremendous amount of reassurance by the hospital of treatment to make the patient feel cozy and procedure need to be hassle free. Team dedicated effort can make this a possibility compassion & competent personnel is very vital in the medical sector.
10. Medical tourism operating hospitals has grand intentions to tap outside patients. But there are hospitals like Narayana Hrudayala which takes money from those who can afford but to those who illafford are treated at nominal prices. This is definitely a positive charge in

transforming the medical treatment within the reach of poor. The medical services sector will be appreciated when it can reach out and do well at the gross root level where it is very much required by the deprived section of the country. As much medical tourism is exaggerated on the higher end, the sector should be the serious of poor. The big hospitals instead of cutting off from the said section, has to come forward to help the poor section.

19. Conclusion

The Brand Bangalore is already established in other sector. Health tourism is not left far behind. It has the well-established corporate hospitals, state-of-the art medical standards, clinical expertise, English-speaking staff, etc.

Extensive online promotion and online advertising has to be undertaken by the hospitals in creating awareness about the medical procedures, medical tourism functioning etc.

The hospital accreditation has to be adopted by more and more hospitals which will improve the influx of foreign patients.

The hospitals have to coordinate with the foreign insurance companies so that the patients treated will be covered for the treatment costs.

The hospitals have to join hands with the other wellness centers and medical centers with AYUSH so that they can grow together.

Awareness camps, programmes has to be worked out by the hospitals of interest with the other associated players in making medical tourism to grow.

There is lack of professionalism and strategy in the Department of Tourism in promoting the medical tourism in Bangalore. So, there needs to be a separate functional department which has to look into the growth of medical tourism in Bangalore in particular and the entire Karnataka state in general. A thorough research into the practical aspects is the need of the hour.

Medical tourism is a specialized industry wherein the customers are well informed about the diseases and they would have done a thorough research before availing the treatment. So, a special emphasis is required in this direction, to have quality medical staff, physicians, specialists, paramedical staff, etc. Since this brings together medical field and tourism sector, there is a need to start courses to train people especially to handle and manage efficiently and effectively.

There is a need for most stringent and strict regulation of the hospitals on various fronts. The medical visa has to be a hassle-free to the foreign patients.

The various industries like hospitality, Aviation, Medical, Tourism etc., have to follow an holistic approach in bringing constructive results.

FICCI and CII have to join hands with the Tourism department in promoting the medical tourism in Bangalore.

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