

# THAILAND HOLDING 40% OF ASIAN MEDICAL TOURISM MARKET



There are many people who are crossing borders for cost-effective and specialized medical treatments. One of the places that many patients visit is Thailand.

The country has become one of the top medical tourism centers of the world. It is the leader of medical travel in Asia since it holds more than 40 percent market share of the Asian medical tourism industry.

The number of people visiting Thailand for treatment has been increasing rapidly since 2000 because the country not only offers low-cost medical services but also has an excellent tourism infrastructure. The country is thus popular especially among travelers from North America and Europe for whom Thailand is easily accessible. Several airlines in UK for instance offer flights to Thailand from London at low prices making the medical trip all the more cost effective.

Another reason why people visit Thailand for treatment is because there are hundreds of hospitals in Thailand that offer high quality services to patients. Today, there are more than 15 hospitals in Thailand that are accredited by JCI. Most medical tourists prefer local private hospitals because they have experienced and trained doctors and surgeons. Some of the most respected private hospitals in Thailand include Bumrungrad International Hospital, Bangkok Hospital Group (BHG) and Samitivej Hospitals.

Even though the private facilities in Thailand are expensive when compared to public hospitals, the price charged by them is much lower than the prices in hospitals in Western countries. The total cost of a bypass surgery for instance in a good private hospital in Thailand is about \$12,000. However, if the same surgery is done in United States the cost is more than \$130,000. Since there is a big price difference, many people who cannot afford treatment in their country prefer visiting Thailand.

Most hospitals in Thailand strive to create comfortable atmosphere for foreign patients. Both private and public hospitals thus have translators who can speak several foreign languages. Many doctors and surgeons receive their education and training in USA and Europe. Many of the medical centers also offer private transportation from hotel to the hospital, regular checks on patients who are recuperating from surgery and emergency medical assistance upon arrival and departure.

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