

Indian Medical Tourism Facilities Attract Patients with Low Prices

Medical tourism is a well known term referring to patients travelling across the globe combining holidays with their medical needs for treatment of acute illnesses, elective surgeries such as cardiology, hip replacement, knee replacement, etc. Today India as many other countries offers world class medical facilities, comparable with any of the western countries. India has state of the art hospitals and the best qualified doctors. With good infrastructure and the best possible medical facilities, accompanied with the most competitive prices, you can get the treatment done in India at the lowest charges.



The Indian government is taking serious initiatives with this regard and plans to start overseas marketing of India as a medical tourism destination. The government is of the opinion that by marketing India as a global medical tourism destination, it could capitalize on the low-cost, high-quality medical care available in the country. India, touted as one of the favorite destinations for information technology majors, is currently emerging as the destination of choice for medical or health tourism. The government, state tourism boards, travel agents, tour operators, hotel companies and private sector hospitals are exploring the medical tourism industry for tremendous opportunities. They are seeking to capitalize on the opportunities by combining the country's popular leisure tourism with medical tourism.

Industry projections? Statistics estimate that the medical tourism industry in India is currently worth \$333 million (Rs 1,500 crore) while a study by CII-McKinsey estimates that the country could well earn Rs 5,000-10,000 crore (\$1,110 – 2,220 million) by the year 2012. The Indian medical tourism industry, growing at an annual rate of 30 percent, caters to patients chiefly from the US, Europe and Africa. Although in its nascent stage, the industry is outpacing similar industries of other countries such as Greece, South Africa, Jordan, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore. In the year 2004, approx. 150,000 medical tourists have visited India.

What makes it so attractive? Primary, it is the cost factor. The medical costs in India are a fraction of the costs in the US/Europe. For instance, a heart surgery costs \$6,000 in India as against \$30,000 in the US. Similarly, a bone marrow transplant costs \$26,000 in India as compared to \$250,000 in the US. Foreign patients throng Indian hospitals to pass up the long waiting lists and queues in their native countries. The NHS patients in UK have to wait for months for Hip/Knee replacements surgery. Indian hospitals provide

immediate attention to patients rather than asking them to wait for several months like in most western countries.



India's top notch private hospitals like Apollo, Narayana, Fortis, Wockhardt, Max HealthCare have gained international recognition for their state-of-the-art facilities and diagnostic centers besides unsurpassed technical skills. Their technology and procedures are state of the art and on par with hospitals in developed nations. Foreign patients can get attractive package deals including flights, transfers, hotels, treatment and post-operative vacation for their medical visits to India. India has some world class SPAs and Ayurvedic facilities which help recuperation and healing. With time more and more visitors will flock to this part of the globe for their treatment and relaxation needs.

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