

# Medical Tourism in Africa Grows



Health tourism is evolving in Africa. The leading country in this industry is South Africa which offers good hotels and resorts as well as wonderful landscapes. There are kilometers of unspoiled beaches here. A visitor can spend time watching animals, encountering rare and unusual plants, or playing a round or two of golf. Health care is of a high standard in this country, including, for example, cardiology, dentistry, dermatology, endoscopic surgery, general surgery, treatment of HIV/AIDS, obstetrics and gynaecology and spinal surgery. There is a medical tourism company based in Sandton, Gauteng (the economic hub of South Africa) that attends to the health treatments of foreign patients in the best facilities to be found in Africa.

Another important centre of the medical tourism industry is Kenya. The 102 bed Karen hospital is well-known. Another facility is the Kenyatta National hospital that has the newest equipment and also highly-qualified personnel. Nowadays, heart transplant or kidney replacements are being done in Kenya. In East Africa, herbal medicine is widely practiced. It is often used when modern medical methods fail. The Kenyan government is supporting such practices by registering and licensing herbalists, to allow them to practise in both government and private hospitals.

In Uganda, Mulago hospital is a referral hospital. It has specialized doctors and state-of-the-art equipment. Actually, Kenyans living around Lake Victoria prefer to go to Mulago hospital for specialized treatment due to the distance from western Kenya to Nairobi for treatment at the Kenyatta National hospital.

When speaking of Africa and health one cannot omit the problem of HIV and Aids. In Kenya, for example, the disease has had a devastating effect on the coasts of Lake Victoria. It is problem of poverty and insufficient public education. 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Professor Wangari Maathai, said "We must be frank about how the HIV virus spreads, through unprotected sex or intravenous drug use, and how poverty and inequality between women and men are the major driving forces of the pandemic in Africa."

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