

# MEDICAL TOURISM DEVELOPING FAST



Medical tourism industry is no longer a minor business. Nowadays it is a well-established multibillion-dollar industry. Gone are the times when the only treatments conducted abroad were dental care or plastic surgeries.

These days, plenty patients travel to foreign destinations like Thailand, Hong Kong and India to have a complex treatment done. For example in India, which is a key player in the medical tourism business, they offer advanced medical procedures, such as hip resurfacing, knee replacement, heart surgery, kidney transplant or abdominoplasty.

India has in fact earned an excellent reputation with medical tourists, due to its state-of-the-art medical facilities and highly qualified medical personnel. The main reason why to travel abroad to have a surgery done, is the price. Even though the US boasts it has excellent medical services, these are often too expensive. On top of it nearly 45 million Americans are uninsured.

A June 2007 report of the American Medical Association's Organized Medical Staff Section noted an estimated 500,000 Americans journeyed overseas for medical care in 2005. "Medical tourism is now a worldwide, multibillion-dollar phenomenon that is expected to surge in the coming years along with the ranks of cost-conscious uninsured Americans and financially strained U.S. employers," the report states.

In other countries the reasons for medical tourism could be different. In Canada, for example, public health insurance pays for most medical care but the waiting times are often unacceptably long. As mentioned above, the industry thus generates high amounts of money. The hospitals, however, are not the only one earning.

There are also companies that offer medical tourism services, meaning that they arrange everything for a tourist. They deal with transport; they book a hotel and choose a concrete hospital. Medical tourism is also often connected with holiday making. A patient has a surgery done and than relaxes in an exotic resort. Perfect holiday.

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