

FERTILITY TOURISM – A GROWING MARKET IN CHINA



In 2016, the Chinese government ended its famous one-child policy that was implemented more than thirty years ago in a bid to control the overpopulation crisis. In the end, the problem was not solved, but it does not seem to worry Asia's largest country anymore.

Moreover, China now aims to encourage large families. Why the sudden change of mind? The government has realized that the country needs bigger workforce.

In light of this situation, there is a special market that predictably will be the winner: fertility tourism. Chinese women want to have children, and many of them turn to specialized companies to undergo fertility treatments. According to the National Health and Family Planning Commission, in 2016, China had more than 40 million patients with fertility problems. That represents more than 40 million potential customers for a market that expects to significantly grow in the following years. Two years ago, the Chinese domestic market for fertility services reached 670 million dollars. By 2022, the figure is expected to increase to 1.5 billion USD, more than double.

Currently, not only China's domestic market benefits from this situation. For now, companies located abroad benefit greatly. In 2016, Chinese patients spent 7.400 billion Chinese yuan (about 1.1 billion dollars) on fertility tourism treatments outside the country. A figure relatively close to what financial forecasts had announced for the Chinese domestic market in 2022.

On one hand, because the world's most populated country still suffers from a shortage of fertility centers and embryologists. On the other, because of the restrictions, only married heterosexual couples or women with ovarian cancer are eligible for these services. **Single women, unmarried couples, and gay couples are forced to look for an alternative outside the country.**

Fertility tourism, a segment that is already a reality, will be strengthened by China's decision to lift limitations on family size. Older women, with one or two children, could go now for a third one.

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