

Status And Growth Of Medical Tourism In India

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Abstract

Background: Medical tourism, a burgeoning global industry, spans a spectrum of healthcare services that entice individuals to traverse international borders in pursuit of medical interventions.

Method: This research study aimed to assess various aspects related to medical tourism in India. The study employed a quantitative survey approach using Likert scale questions to collect responses from participants.

Findings: The findings revealed a diverse range of views among participants. While some respondents believed that India is a leading destination for medical tourism and reported frequent visits for medical care, others expressed scepticism and reported administrative challenges during their medical treatment.

Keywords: Tourism, Medical, global industry, medical tourism.

Introduction

In a world where borders blur and health know no boundaries, a new phenomenon has emerged - the global voyage of healing, aptly named "Medical Tourism." This extraordinary journey transcends borders and takes individuals on a quest for cost-effective and cutting-edge medical care, uniting nations in the pursuit of wellness. The medical tourism industry, now a thriving multibillion-dollar global enterprise, has turned the globe into a mosaic of health destinations, with over 130 countries vying for a slice of this lucrative pie. From the vibrant streets of India to the pristine landscapes of Brunei, the revolutionary healthcare facilities of Cuba to the bustling metropolises of the United

States, patients embark on these medical odysseys in search of top-notch healthcare services (Singh, L. 2019).

Delhi, a city steeped in history and culture, has earned its place as one of the world's top medical tourism destinations. Renowned as the "health capital" of India, Delhi stands shoulder to shoulder with global giants in the field of healthcare. The region boasts a plethora of world-class private hospitals, each offering state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge treatments, and a cadre of highly qualified medical professionals. Remarkably, these services come at an affordable cost, making Delhi an irresistible choice for medical travellers.

Medical tourism, a burgeoning global industry, spans a spectrum of healthcare services that entice individuals to traverse international borders in pursuit of medical interventions. The industry, however, exhibits a complex landscape marked by strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, demanding regulatory attention and concerted efforts for sustainable growth (Chaudhary, M., & Agrawal, A. 2014). This paper investigates deep into the heart of Delhi NCR's healthcare landscape, unravelling the strengths that have catapulted it into the global limelight.

Objectives

The objectives of the study can be condensed into two main goals-

1. To assess the status and growth of medical tourism in India.
2. To examine the service quality, frequency of medical tourists, and challenges faced by patients in selected hospitals in India.

Literature Review

In their study, (Gupta et al. 2015) concentrated on examining both the advantages and obstacles within the medical tourism sector within the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR). The team gathered data using a well-organized questionnaire that was given to 100 international patients from 22 distinct countries. These patients had come to seek medical treatments at 16 prominent hospitals situated in Delhi. The strengths identified in this study encompassed various aspects, including cost-effectiveness, the presence of reputable brand hospitals, highly qualified medical professionals, a comprehensive range of medical treatments, advanced technological procedures, the availability of online consultations, minimal waiting times

for treatment, robust infrastructure, and a commitment to hygiene and cleanliness. The study also revealed challenges faced by medical tourists in Delhi, including difficulties in finding competent interpreters or translators, obtaining visas, securing insurance coverage, etc.

(Malhotra, N., & Dave, K. 2022) delve into the core driving forces that underpin India's medical tourism sector and to illuminate the critical issues that require attention from Indian stakeholders in order to formulate a successful strategy. Applying an abduction logic approach, the study meticulously analysed the collected data using the constant comparison method. The study's findings offer an insightful assessment of the state of India's medical tourism industry, shedding light on the scope of opportunities available to Indian stakeholders in this evolving landscape.

(Chandra, A. 2019) explores the rapidly growing sector of medical tourism, emphasizing India and more specifically, Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR). The research provides an in-depth account of diverse governmental efforts directed at fostering medical tourism in India. These initiatives encompass the National Health Policy of 2002, the formation of the Department of Ayush dedicated to complementary and alternative medicines, strategic marketing schemes to enhance medical tourism through efficient promotional activities, and the promotion of collaborations between the public and private sectors.

Research Methodology

To achieve objective, a structured survey questionnaire was administered to medical tourists visiting the selected hospitals. The questionnaire assessed various service quality dimensions, and patient perception/satisfaction. The sample consist of 100 participants, including patients, doctors, researchers, and employees of selected Hospitals in India. Convenient and purposive sampling methods were employed, chosen for their suitability for the research objectives.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency Distribution and Statistical Analysis of Survey responses

Sr. No	Questions	Frequency	Statistical Analysis
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		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Std. Dev	Mean
1	To what extent do you agree that India is currently a leading destination for medical tourism?	19	11	20	30	20	3.21	3.003331
2	How would you rate the growth of medical tourism in India, as observed in hospitals, over the past five years?	18	12	22	18	30	3.3	3.114482
3	Please rate your satisfaction with the waiting times for medical services at the selected hospitals.	21	19	20	12	28	3.07	2.939388
4	How frequently do you or your acquaintances visit for medical at selected hospitals?	22	8	18	22	30	3.3	3.143247
5	To what extent did you encounter administrative hurdles during your medical treatment at the selected hospital?	22	20	18	24	16	2.92	2.749545



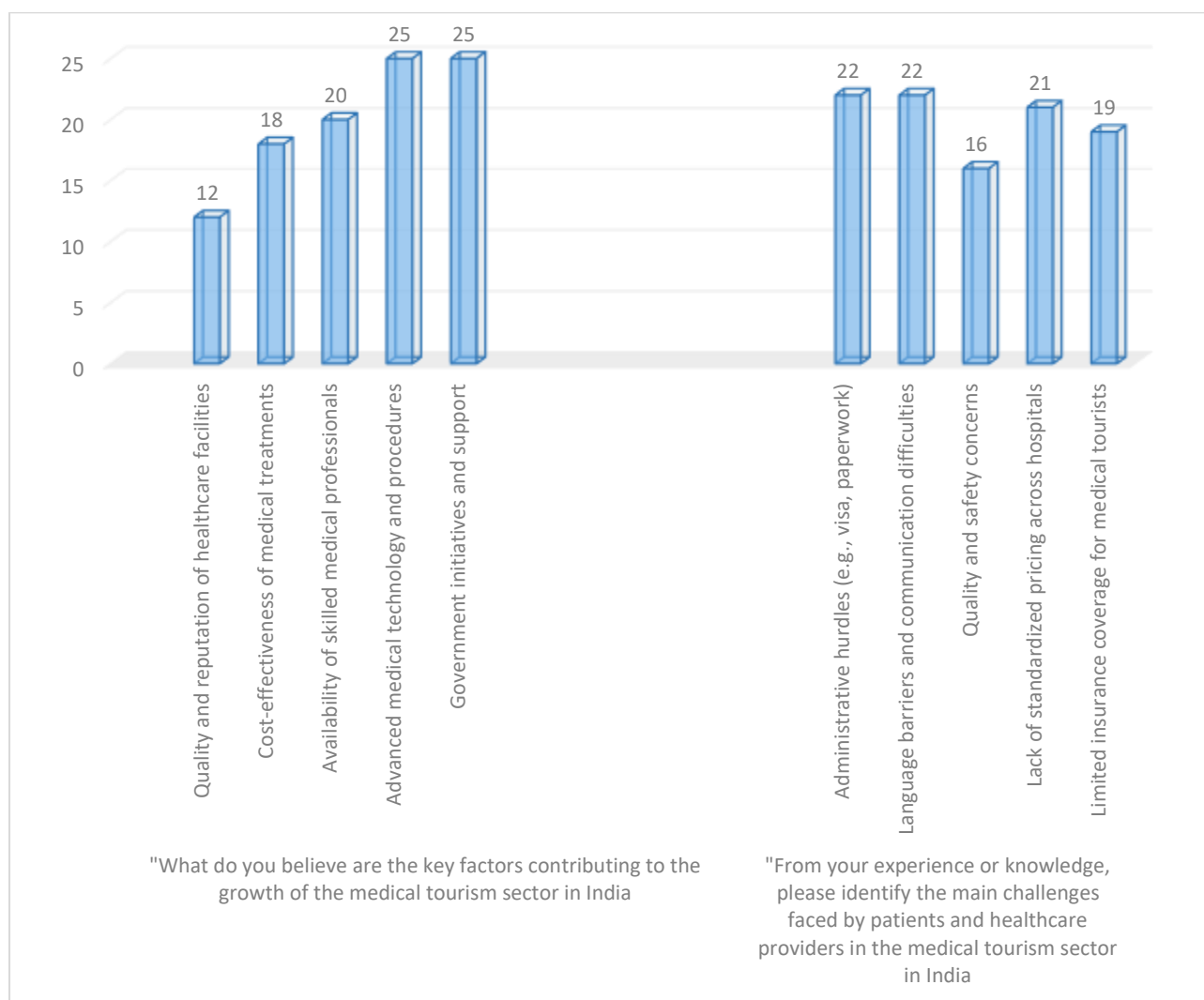
Fig 1. Summary of Survey Results

- India's Recognition as a Premier Destination for Medical Tourism:** The responses to this question suggest that there is a balanced perception of India's position as a leading destination for medical tourism. While 30 respondents agree and 20 strongly agree, indicating a positive perception, 19 respondents strongly disagree, and 11 disagree, reflecting a negative or skeptical viewpoint.
- Evaluating the Expansion of Medical Tourism in India:** Feedback on this matter indicates a varied outlook regarding the growth of medical tourism in India within the last five years. While 30 respondents strongly agree

and 22 are neutral, indicating positive or neutral views, 18 strongly disagree and 12 disagree, suggesting a negative perception or scepticism.

- **Satisfaction with Waiting Times at selected Hospitals:** The responses highlight varying levels of satisfaction with waiting times for medical services at hospitals. A significant number of respondents (49) either strongly disagree or disagree, suggesting dissatisfaction. On the other hand, 28 respondents strongly agree, indicating a high level of satisfaction.
- **Encountering administrative challenges during medical treatment:** The survey question about encountering administrative challenges during medical treatment at the selected hospital generated responses that varied among participants. While some respondents did not face significant challenges (strongly disagree and disagree), others encountered moderate to significant administrative hurdles (agree and strongly agree).

Fig 2. Growth and Challenges of Medical Tourism



Survey participants pointed out various critical elements propelling the expansion of the medical tourism industry in India. These encompass the caliber and renown of healthcare institutions, affordability of medical procedures, access to highly skilled medical practitioners, utilization of state-of-the-art medical advancements, and governmental encouragement and backing.

The challenges faced by patients and healthcare providers in the medical tourism sector were also recognized. These challenges encompass administrative hurdles like visa and paperwork, language barriers and communication difficulties, quality and safety concerns, the lack of standardized pricing across hospitals, and limited insurance coverage for medical tourists.

5.0 Conclusion

The research on medical tourism in the India has shed light on various aspects related to this thriving industry. The study aimed to assess perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced by individuals seeking medical care in this

region. The findings suggest that perceptions of India as a leading medical tourism destination are mixed, with both positive and skeptical viewpoints. While some respondents believed in India's prominence and growth in medical tourism, others expressed doubts and concerns. The study revealed a diverse range of experiences related to medical treatment frequency in India, with some respondents indicating frequent visits for healthcare services while others reported infrequent or no visits.

The research highlighted the significance of administrative challenges during medical treatments, which include visa and paperwork issues. These challenges can influence the overall experience of medical tourists. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding the multifaceted nature of medical tourism in India. The insights gathered here can aid policymakers, healthcare providers, and stakeholders in addressing challenges and enhancing the quality of services to further bolster the region's position as a prominent medical tourism destination. These findings underscore the strengths and areas for improvement in India's medical tourism industry. Addressing challenges while building on the industry's strengths can contribute to its continued growth and competitiveness.

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