

## Article

**A Study on Medical Tourism in Chennai City – An Empirical View**

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### Abstract

*The Medical tourism refers to the tourists who are the patients travelling for the purpose of medical requirements, treatments and surgeries. This is because of the unavailability, un approachability of the medical procedures and treatments in their home country and also due to the various countries offering higher quality of health care treatments. It is one of the fast-growing industries all around the globe. The medical tourism has become more popular in the recent years due to availability of more tourism packages including health and wellness care by different countries. The medical tourism does not relate to the recreational activity and is purely for the purpose of healthcare.*

Key words: Medical tourism, Treatments, Recommendation of Medical tourism.

### INTRODUCTION

People have started travelling all around the globe for the purpose of cardiac treatments, muscular surgeries and for treatments like dental, cosmetic and fertility cure. This is defined as Medical tourism. It is distinct from the recreational tourism where travel is the main focus. Health tourism is a wider term which includes treatments and health care services. Wellness tourism is a related field. The medical tourism is driven by the main reasons of high cost of treatments, long wait time for certain procedures, ease and affordability of international travel, improvements in both technological standards and medical care in various other countries. When it comes to India, it holds the second position in medical tourism destination after Thailand.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The term Medical tourism is defined as the situation where the consumer referring to the medical tourist opts to Medical tourism is defined as when the consumer – i.e., the medical tourist – opts to seek medical care through alternatives from around the world (Puczko& Smith, 2009). Medical tourism was earlier considered as a distinct unit detached from the wellness tourism (Hume & DeMicco, 2007). Now that the term has evolved, expanded and includes wellness services as travelling for health reasons and medical needs have become more common (Shapiro, 2011). Also, now medical and wellness often go hand-in-hand (Hudson & Li, 2012).

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Medical tourism has become more popular, the main reasons being the medical treatments have become more unavailable, unaffordable and not easily reachable in their home country (Crooks et al., 2010).

Gill and Singh (2011) claim that “More travellers than ever before are now traveling abroad to get high quality medical treatments for less cost, which includes treatments such as general surgery, transplant surgery, cancer treatment, stem cell therapies, dental implant, facial implant, and liposuction, just to name a few” (p. 315). The phenomenon of travelling from residence country to others parts of the world for the sake of obtaining medical, dental, surgical and health care is defined as “medical tourism”, “health tourism”, or “wellness tourism” and the purpose of these kinds of travelling are different from what is called recreational (Gatrell, 2011). Just because their main focus is not travelling and exploring but to seek medical attention (Singh, 2013).

On the whole the medical tourism can be divided into three main categories – cosmetic, dental and general. Cosmetic surgeries are more popular in countries like Brazil, India, Thailand, South Korea, Poland, Switzerland and Hungary (Hung 2014). Mexico, Turkey, Czech Republic, Spain, Dubai and Philippines are more associated towards Dental surgeries (Lanier 2012). General surgeries are almost offered in every country as every country has some distinct medical treatments and quality of its own when it comes to healthcare.

Once considered as the final option for the patients to travel abroad for medical treatments, now is being more accepted – more specifically in the United States (Carroll et al., 2013). The medical and wellness tourism market is seeing a rapid growth with special reference to services and also consumers (Mair, 2005). Hancock (2006) states that, “medical tourism is one of the fastest growing businesses on earth” (p. vii).

There is an increase in the activities relating to life of the people generally in the society. The increasing needs related to health and wellness and those in need of medical treatments that are of high quality and assured cure has amplified. This leads to the institutions to offer varied, high quality treatments. The existence of differences in the natural, historical, cultural and socio – economic qualities relating to different countries. But these choices get affected by the consumers personal values, therapeutic and medical tourism and also leads to the creation of wellness, therapeutic and medical tourism (Zharova 2012.) The main factor that drives the medical tourists to pursue treatments in a country apart from the quality of health service is the finance. The Western and other developed countries also provide high quality treatments (Heung, et al. 2010). More than five million patients in a year travel abroad for the purpose of medical requirements, treatments and basically for healthcare because it is either delayed, expensive or even forbidden sometimes in their home country (Patients Beyond Borders, 2011; Woodman, 2007).

This has led to the situation where nearly fifty countries providing tourism packages combining health care and recreation (Gahlinger, 2008). Gill and Singh (2011) states that the medical tourism has brought in new reforms in the health care industry. The medical tourism has also led to the developed and developing countries to focus on their infrastructure to top the heavy competition and to arrest the outflow of patients to other foreign countries. There is a boost in the health and tourism sectors in terms of economics (Connell, 2011).

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the demographic Profiles of the Medical tourists coming for the treatment to Chennai city.
2. To study the associations between Recommendations of Medical tourism and other demographic variables.
3. To analyse the Satisfaction level of medical tourists regarding the Health care services provided by the hospital.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The intention of this study is to examine the Satisfaction level of the medical tourists' respondents on their medical tourism. 150 responses have been used for the purpose of analysis. Demographic profile of the respondents was measured through nominal and ordinal scales. Chi-square test has been adopted to know the Association between Recommendation of medical tourism with other variables like Continent, Age, Gender and Diseases. Regression analysis has been done to examine the influence of these variables on satisfaction level.

Table 1 – Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profiles	Groups	Frequency with %
Gender	Male	88 (58.7%)
	Female	62 (41.3%)
Age	0-15 years	12 (8.0%)
	15-30 years	32(21.3%)
	30-45 years	35(23.3%)
	45-60 years	54(36.0%)
	60 and above	17(11.3%)
Continent	Africa	58(38.7%)
	Middle East	22(14.7%)
	Asian	28(18.7%)
	European	16(10.7%)
	America	26(17.3%)
Education	Graduate	83(55.3%)
	PG	33(22%)
	Professional	12(8.0%)
	Non - professional	22(14.7%)
Employment	Government	34(22.7%)
	Private	86(57.3%)
	Self employed	27(18.0%)
	Others	3(2.0%)
Sources of Medical Insurance	Government	68(45.3%)
	Private	82(54.7%)
First visit	Yes	48(32.0%)
	No	102(68.0%)

Sources of Medical Tourism	Media	58(38.7%)
	Relatives	22(14.7%)
	Friends	46(30.7%)
	Others	24(16.0%)
Disorders treated	Heart	70(46.7%)
	Cosmetics	16(10.7%)
	Dental	10(6.7%)
	Muscular	17(11.3%)
	Others	37(24.7%)
Awareness about Medical Tourism	Yes	91(60.7%)
	No	59(39.3%)
Recommend for Medical Tourism	Yes	130(86.7%)
	No	20(13.3%)
Medical availability in Home country	Yes	86(57.3%)
	No	64(42.7%)
Satisfaction level of Hospital Services provided	Satisfied	64(42.7%)
	Highly Satisfied	86(57.3%)

Table 1 show that majority of the medical tourists' respondents are males about 58.7% and sizeable portions of about 36.0% of them are around 45 – 60 years. About 38.7% of the medical tourists' respondents belong to Africa. A majority of the medical tourists about 55.3% are Graduates and about 57.3% of them are employed in a Private Company. The sources of medical insurance are Private companies which are about 54.7%. For about 68.0% it is not their first visit for the purpose of medical treatment. The source of medical tourism is media for a sizeable portion of the respondents about 38.7% and about 46.7% are travelling with heart disorders. A majority of about 60.7% has awareness about the medical tourism and about 86.7% of the respondents are up for recommending the medical tourism to others. The respondents home country has availability of the medical treatments for about 57.3%. And around 57.3% of the respondents are Highly Satisfied with the medical treatments provided in the other countries.

Table 2 - Association between Continents and Recommend for Medical Tourism

Continents	Recommend for Medical Tourism		
	Yes	No	Total
Africa	51	7	58
Middle East	22	0	22
Asian	28	0	28
European	10	6	16
America	19	7	26
Total	130	20	150

	Value	Df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	6.599	1	.010

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	20.014	4	.000
N of Valid Cases	150		

Table 2 shows that there is a significant association between Continents and Recommendation of Medical tourism. i.e., majority of the respondents belonging to different continents are of the intention to recommend medical tourism to India.

Table 3 - Association between Age and Recommend for Medical Tourism

Age	Recommend for Medical Tourism		
	Yes	No	Total
0-15 years	12	0	12
15-30 years	28	4	32
30-45 years	35	0	35
45-60 years	45	9	54
60 and above	10	7	17
Total	130	20	150

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	19.174	4	.001
N of Valid Cases	150		

Table 3 shows that there is a significant association between Age and Recommendation of Medical tourism to India.

Table 4 - Association between Gender and Recommend for Medical Tourism

Gender	Recommend for Medical Tourism		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	71	17	88
Female	59	3	62
Total	130	20	150

N of Valid Cases	150		
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Table 4 shows that there is a significant association between Gender and Recommendation of Medical tourism to India.

Table 5 - Association between Diseases and Recommend for Medical Tourism

Diseases	Recommend for Medical Tourism		
	Yes	No	Total
Heart	64	6	70
Cosmetics	12	4	16
Dental	7	3	10
Muscular	10	7	17
Others	37	0	37
Total	130	20	150

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	P value
Pearson Chi-Square	22.759	4	.000
N of Valid Cases	150		

Table 5 shows that there is a significant association between Diseases and Recommendation of Medical tourism to India.

Multiple regression analysis has been performed to examine the influence of independent variables on satisfaction levels of medical tourists regarding the Health care services provided by the hospital.

Table 6- Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.773	0.597	0.574	0.324

Table 7-ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	21.906	8	2.738	26.109	0.000
Residual	14.788	141	.105		
Total	36.693	149			

Table 8 – Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.464	.206		21.658	.000
Gender	.096	.057	.095	1.671	.097
Age	.011	.025	.024	.424	.672
Continent	-.020	.020	-.061	-.999	.319
Edu. Qfn.	.063	.026	.139	2.448	.016
Employment	-.232	.041	-.328	-5.730	.000
Disorders treated	-.149	.017	-.512	-8.738	.000
Awareness about MT	.478	.056	.472	8.462	.000
Recommend MT	.048	.084	.033	.572	.568

Table 6 to 8 show that Educational qualification, Employment, Disorders treated and Awareness about Medical tourism have positive influence on the satisfaction level of medical tourists regarding the Health care services provided by the hospital. The variance explained is about 59.7% indicating that these independent variables influence satisfaction level of medical tourists regarding health care services provided by the hospital to this extent.

#### FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Continents has a significant association with recommendation of medical tourism. This may be due to unavailability or higher costs of treatment in their home country.
2. Age, Gender and Diseases have significant association with Recommendation of medical tourism to India. This may be due to the higher quality of health care services provided by India is better than the services provided by other countries.
3. The Educational qualification, Employment has an influence over medical tourism. This may be because of the more awareness towards medical tourism.

#### CONCLUSION

This study show that the medical tourism has become much needed and there is substantial competition among the countries to provide high quality medical treatment with affordable costs. The medical tourists require ease of travel and affordability factors. More tourism packages at affordable prices should be introduced to many countries to attract more medical tourists to become number one destination in the field of medical tourism.

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