WHERE TO TRAVEL IN 2017 FOR MEDICAL HEALTH
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Introduction

The Globe is spinning every second, and this spin is introducing latest trends which are escalating every day. With commodities surfing through the streets and awareness plunging its claws, people are advancing their conventional approaches in almost everything.
This creates a very stimulating hype in the International market, and one of the products of this stimulation is tourism. Now the niche is not only confined to leisure and luxury. In fact, it is now being used in an array of perspectives and caters to plenty of requirements.

Among the dense forest of International tourism, medical tourism has started nurturing at the sharpest gradient ever.

In this book, we will understand the term ‘Medical Tourism’ in a much broader perspective and view a lot of different angles related to it. Not only that, but we would also discuss some medical conditions and the respective countries where best possible treatment could be availed.
Medical Tourism

As the name suggests, Medical tourism is the practice of moving from one place to another in quest of an enhanced medical facility. On a broader perspective, this very form of tourism is practiced on an International scale, and that is exactly what we are going to go about.

Although the primary reason for moving abroad as a medical tourist is to avail a better quality treatment, the reasons are not so contained. In fact, there could be a lot of rational reasons forcing an individual to move out of his country and seek a particular treatment elsewhere and the reasons include:

- Economic feasibility
- Cultural similarity
- Expertise
- Travel opportunity

Since the decision of traveling abroad for the medical care varies from individual to individual, the above-mentioned factors play a pivotal role in the final decision. For instance, if an individual living in the US requires a particular treatment where he does not find any coherence between his culture and
the culture of US, he might want to visit his country of origin. It does not only end here and a lot of people prefer to travel for medical purposes even if their country of stay offers exquisite facilities and that is because they just want to travel and have found an excuse now...

If we just take the United States as an example, hundreds and thousands of people travel across the Globe from the US to avail several different treatments.

Although this tremendous boon has added a lot of monetary value on the board, it comes at a cost.

Because when people move from one country to another, so frequently, as practiced by the US citizens, the chances of spreading various diseases to other countries become very high.

When you avail a medical treatment elsewhere, it must be noted that the related costs are not usually covered by the insurance policy and nor is the organization comfortable in paying for your
expenditures. This is totally opposite to the laws within the US. However, when you decide to go beyond the premises, your weight bearers come up with a rational stance and apologize from covering the related expenditures, and it is understandable.

Even though the choice of availing a particular medical treatment depends solely on the individual, a few sensitive people tend to book their appointments as soon as they feel the very first glitch.

There are a few particular areas of health conditions that often require a treatment elsewhere. It includes the fertility treatment, dental treatment, heart transplant and cosmetic surgery.

It does not only help the patient or the related hospital but if view the whole scenario on a broader canvas, the medical tourism is of immense importance to the country where you avail the treatment. Over a prolonged period, the general public benefits a lot. This is because the tourism adds a lot of stuff to the economy of a country and it ultimately benefits the general public out there.

Realizing the monetary potential in medical tourism, various governments have started giving incentives to attract a huge number of patients. If we specifically talk about Korea, Thailand, and India, these developing countries have not hesitated to introduce multiple incentives directly concerned with the relaxation of traveling terms and conditions. For instance, relaxed visa conditions.
In 2016, the Medical Tourism Index indicated that the maximum influx of medical tourism is experienced by Canada and the UK where the index hiked up to approximately 75. In both of these countries, the influx of patients is mostly from the US and Europe, respectively.
The countries do not tend to market their medical facilities internationally to seek rational eyeballs.

But within this cluster, there are some countries which never hesitate to publicize their hardcore skills on an International canvas, let it be their medical advancement or any other casual one.

The Joint Commission International now certifies and accredits the hospitals that are often availed by the tourists from foreign countries. As of now, there are 28 countries in Asia, Europe, South and North America collectively that never hesitate to boast their medical advancements, just for the sake of attracting patients.

This competition is very constructive as the countries are now sweating to compete with each other in almost all possible fields. Particularly, when this competition comes to the very niche of medicine, the ultimate benefit is availed by the laymen.
The Champion of Medical Tourism Industry

Surveys have revealed that the United State holds its glory in the eyes of medical tourists. There was a general feeling that the US is truly an expensive country and the health care facilities it provides, are also very expensive so as a result, the people would not be very interested in going there. But the assumption has been proven false in an array of surveys where a significant number of people chose to get their dental care done in the US, followed by choice of UK and then scattered choices for Germany, Singapore and a lot of other on the list.

The US has also realized the potential in this industry and has now established dedicated International medical centers within a lot of their facilities to accommodate the influx of tourists from across the Globe. These front desks face most of their clients from Caribbean, Central America, and Europe.
It is quite rational to understand that a single country cannot host the entire planet, due to economic and feasibility constraints. Therefore, there is a specific set of medical conditions that are treated most efficiently by a particular country or several of them. Let us now have a look at an array of medical facilities provided by the most efficient countries.

**Cardiac Surgery**

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death in the World. A few decades back, only a few people, within a very restricted age bracket, were affected by this deadly condition but now the times and conditions have changed. Although there are certain factors that aggravate your chances of getting a CVD and that too, is more likely to occur in the people above forty years of age, a lot of youngsters are also being affected.
A survey conducted in 2012 revealed that stroke and the coronary heart disease were the most significant causes of people dying due to CVDs. Collectively, the cardiovascular disease ‘hunted’ 17.5 million people across the Globe.

If we view it from the perspective of treatment, the two most popular cardiac treatments include angioplasty and atherectomy. Both of these treatments are quite expensive, and only the ‘elite' could afford it comfortably, particularly when one has to travel abroad for the treatment.

Almost all major medical travel destinations cater to the needs of a cardiac patient. If we typically talk about Mexicans, they had to move abroad (to US or Canada) to avail a standardized and reliable treatment. Since now they have multiple hospitals accredited by JCI, Mexico treats a significant number of patients from US and Canada because of its cost effective treatments.

It does not only end in this part of the World and India, Poland, Israel, Thailand and Jordan also offer a luxurious cardiac treatment. However, in the recent times, India has seen a lot of influx of medical travelers. That is mainly because of their extremely low costs, as compared with the rest of the World. For instance, if we compare the price of a bypass in the US, it is reduced by at least ten times when the patient goes to India.
Previously, there was a misconception that the Indian physicians are not very well qualified for the sacred lives, but it has totally revolved now as the success rate has climbed to almost 98%.

**Dentistry**

In any given country, dental treatment is one of the most expensive ones for the natives. However, if you come from a rich country, then the treatment might not be that hefty. Often, it has been observed that the people traveling for dental treatment, do not have a mono-reason. In fact, they make their trip more cherishable by adding more value. Well, let us talk about the business...
Once again, the US tops the niche regarding freaking high prices. Therefore the natives tend to move abroad (mainly to Mexico and Canada for cheaper treatment). The choice of destination varies, but generally, people seem to prefer Hungary, Mexico, and Costa Rica because of their sheer health standards and incredible low costs. However, the least expensive country (on average) is India.

A great number of countries who want to aggravate the influx of medical treatments, seem to be using ‘dentistry’ as a tool. This is so because the tourists tend to go after this very niche of treatment and if a country maintains an utmost health and hygienic standard in dentistry, then the people build up a very positive and generalized concept about the quality of other treatments as well.

Although the cost factor is most influential in medical tourism if someone could avail a similar culture elsewhere, with a relatively lower cost, why would he give up? Here, Turkey comes into the game for Westerners and the reasons are pretty understandable.

**Fertility Treatment**

In the previous times, infertility particularly affected the people more than forty years of age and even above that age bracket, men were more widely affected than the women. The gender biased trend still holds now, but unfortunately, the age bracket has diminished due to a lot of reasons. But whatever be
the reason, women face the social burden of this incapability, even if it lies on the other side of the court.

More than 185 million people suffer from infertility, and their density is signified in the countries with least Assisted Reproductive Techniques.

Individuals or couples have their reasons for traveling for infertility treatment, but their decision is most likely to be affected by the type of treatment they would like to avail and the liberal regulations of a particular country.

Considering the above statement, US is the most enchanting destination for the European travelers seeking fertility treatment because of the liberalism, success rates and extreme proficiency of the doctors. Even though, Israel leads the niche and is probably the most favored destination for IVF treatment.

Turkey and India are two of the many countries specializing in IVF and ART. However, they are most widely chosen for infertility treatments because of their significantly low costs, even if the traveling is combined! However, a lot of exotic countries have played a pivotal trick by elevating their standards of infertility treatment, hence attracting a significant number of couples from around the World.
Oncologic Care

Cancer kills a lot of people! It is that simple. The deaths caused by cancer are not confined into thousands. In fact, multiple millions of people die across the Globe!

Over the years, there has been a tremendous development in the field of oncology. As a result, cancer, which was once a deadly incurable disease, has not only become curable but it has transformed itself and merged into the gigantic medical tourism industry.
Even though every single country is taking necessary and capacitive measures to boost up their medical facilities to sabotage the cancerous cells, there are a few countries who have excelled in the niche.

Over the decades, Germany has been leading the World of technology, let it be the gadgets or medicine. As a result, it is one of the pioneers to derive technologically sophisticated treatments for treating cancer. The country is freaking rich so as a result, it has tremendous resources to provide an utmost healthcare facility to all of the international tourists who visit Germany for medical purposes. Not only that but the practitioners are highly qualified and carry extensive experience under their respective belts. All of this makes Germany a primary choice for the people who prefer supreme quality over everything else.

European countries have always competed with each other in all the departments of life, particularly when it comes to attracting tourists from all across the World. This has ultimately come to a point where the lives of masses could be saved by taking advantage of this constructive competition. The United Kingdom offers premium and state of the art medical facilities with absolutely no doubts, whatsoever. However, in the recent years, France has taken over the competition when it comes to oncology, and that is because there is a particular medicine in France that cannot be found in the UK. Furthermore, France has very swift access to the relevant doctors, and the equipment is more abundant, so the least number of people are put on the ‘pending list.'
It is very interesting to notice that while all other countries are busy in aggravating their newly
discovered oncological methods, Spain has accelerated the competition by introducing an alternative
and non-orthodox treatment of cancer. This treatment has far-reaching benefits on the overall health
of an individual as it improves the quality of cells in the body.

**Orthopedic Surgery**

Humans are nothing more than stuff toys if their limbs are not functioning properly. Orthopedic
surgeries are related to the injuries directly affecting bones, ligaments, tissues, and muscles. Hence,
even if a country does not offer reasonable facilities for orthopedic surgeries, it is not necessary that a
person would be able to move abroad as the decision depends greatly on his condition and the
chances of recovery. Not only that, but the orthopedic niche has seen a tremendous hike in prices over
the recent years. This is also a reason for the fewer number of medical tourism cases influenced by
orthopedics.
The most basic and widely offered orthopedic surgeries to the International patients include:

- Shoulder joint replacement
- Total knee replacement
- Partial knee replacement
- Total hip replacement
- Anterior cruciate ligament repair
- Hip resurfacing
Thousands of people travel abroad for availing an array of orthopedic treatments and if we talk about the cost perspective, then if specific treatment costs (let us say) 50000$ in the US, the same treatment would cost five times less in India and about 3-4 times less in Thailand. This is a very significant difference. However, there is a sheer requirement to gauge the experience and credibility of your doctor before he starts playing with your limbs.

The most enchanted destinations for orthopedic surgeries include Costa Rica, Turkey, Belgium, Singapore, and India.
Conclusion

It is quite interesting to notice that the tourism industry is evolving and summing up very valuable practices as its sub-niches. Several years back where there was a rare concept of traveling abroad for medical treatments, the death rates were significantly higher. But now everything has changed. Even if it has not changed entirely, it is heading in the right direction.
The choice of traveling for medical purposes varies from individual to individual, but the basic choices remain the same, for almost everyone. Firstly, the individual must be aware that there exists a treatment to cure his disease. If he does not know that, then anything else would be useless. The very next step is to have a reasonable amount of money. Without a hefty sum of money to afford your life in another country and then come back to your own and start living normally, it would be very lame even to think as such. Now that you have a reasonable amount of money, you have to determine whether your health allows you to go abroad or not.

Apart from all these basic checklist measures, you must ensure that the hospital where you are supposed to be treated, offers a very handsome medical facilities, is certified by International bodies and holds an utmost hygienic level. After going through this primary checklist, you should not just hop into the office of your doctor. Before going on to any next level, you should be decent enough to weigh the caliber and International reputation of your doctor. That would give you a very fair idea about his experience.

Undoubtedly, a lot of people still cannot travel abroad, but a huge number of people are now aware of the fact there exists a treatment that could save their life. With such substantial knowledge, it is only a matter of time for them to go abroad and avail the treatment.
Realizing the growth in medical traveling, several countries have started working to nourish their tourism by adding more and more value to their packages by introducing medical tourism as an accredited tourism niche. It does not end here, and some countries have gone to the extent of providing some realistic medical deals as well. However, whenever you come across such price effective advertisements, do not get convinced by the ‘mere' cost factor. Your health and life are far more important than anything you spend on it or save it from.