

Dimensions of Health Tourism in Turkey

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Abstract

Recently, many people in various countries have preferred private healthcare organizations in Turkey for treatment. The most important reason for this situation is that medical operations performed with modern techniques in source countries are also performed in Turkey and at affordable prices. Because of the low cost, high quality, and technology standards, foreign patients prefer Turkish health institutions in almost every field such as plastic and aesthetic surgery, hair transplantation, eye surgery, in vitro fertilization, open-heart surgery, dermatological diseases, checkups, cancer treatments, otorhinolaryngology, dialysis, cardiovascular surgery, gynecology, neurosurgery, orthopedics, dentistry, spa, physiotherapy, and rehabilitation. The 2013 report of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) states that the number of international patients in Turkey has increased in recent years but is still behind the numbers of patients traveling for treatment purposes around the world. Important achievements, particularly in the fields of transplantation, genetic testing, eye surgery, cardiology, orthopedics, plastic surgery, and dentistry, bring Turkey to the forefront of health tourism. This study emphasizes the economic dimensions of health tourism by discussing the improvement of health tourism in Turkey. Advantages, disadvantages, and future opportunities for health tourism in Turkey are examined in terms of diversification of the country's tourism, economic dimensions, and alternative tourism opportunities. In this context, the study mentions the notion of health tourism, boosting health tourism around the world and in Turkey, and the place and economic dimension of Turkey within world health tourism.

Keywords: Health tourism; thermal tourism; ministry of health; insurance companies; Turkey