



Advantages and constraints for health tourism

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Health



As a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (WHO, 1948.)

„Health is a dynamic condition that is identifiable by a physical and mental state that allows a person to pursue his or her goals, given a set of accepted circumstances (WHO 1984.)

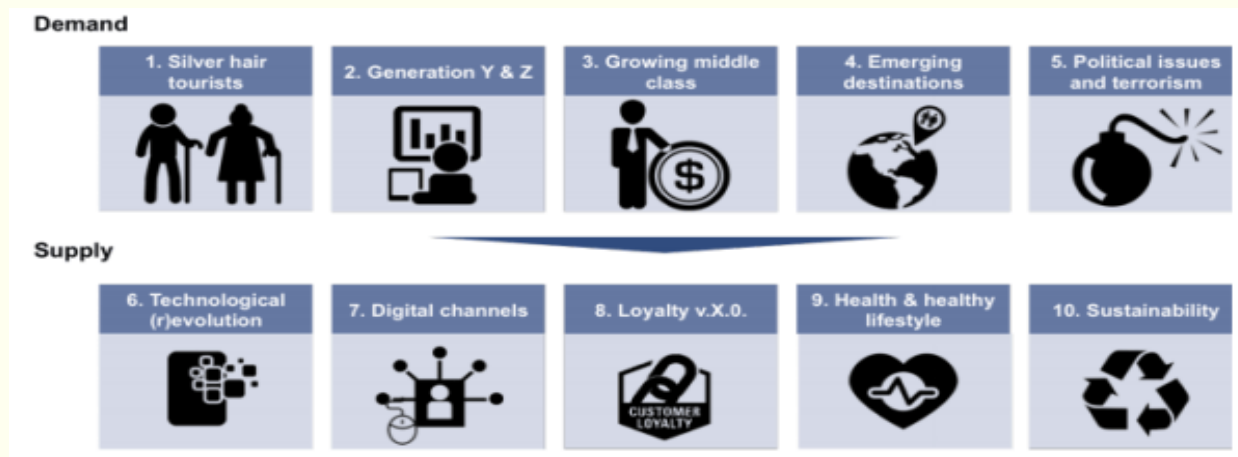


Tourism is defined as the activities of persons identified as visitors. A visitor is someone who is making a visit to a main destination outside his/her usual environment for less than a year for any main purpose [including] holidays, leisure and recreation, business, health, education or other purposes....This scope is much wider than the traditional perception of tourists, which included only those travelling for leisure. [UNWTO statistics Guidelines: 2010]

Travelling ... is either an escape or a discovery (Rosie Thomas)



10 Mega trends in Tourism



The first five trends will have a major influence on demand in the tourism sector but will also impact the second set of trends, which concerns changing supply. Together, they represent forces which will shape the future of tourism.

Health tourism



The age-old tendency of people to the longer stay healthy, young and beautiful growing with prosperity of residents. Therefore, especially in developed countries, there are different facilities of tourist offer that seek to respond appropriately to all profiled market demands.

Health / wellness tourism is considered one of the fastest growing segments of tourism demand. It is a type of tourism that we know under various names (health, medical, healthcare, spa, wellness tourism).

Wellness and health tourism

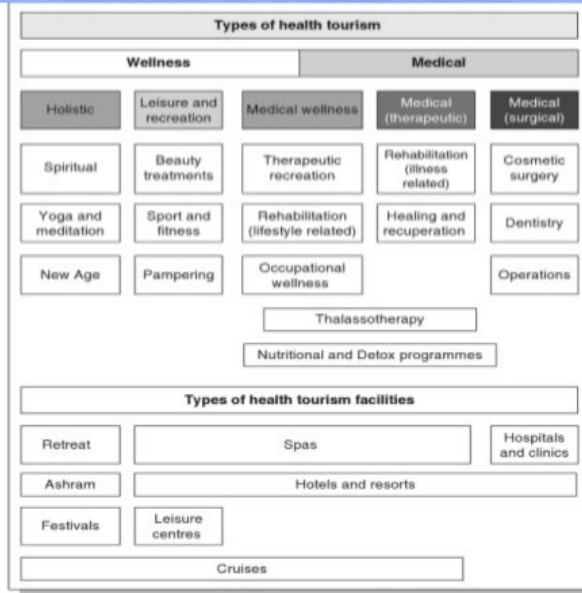


Figure 1.2
Spectrum of Health
Tourism. *Source:* Smith
and Puczkó.

Health tourism refers to travel for any kind of medical treatment.

Terminological ambiguity often accompanied by uncertainties related to demand characteristics.

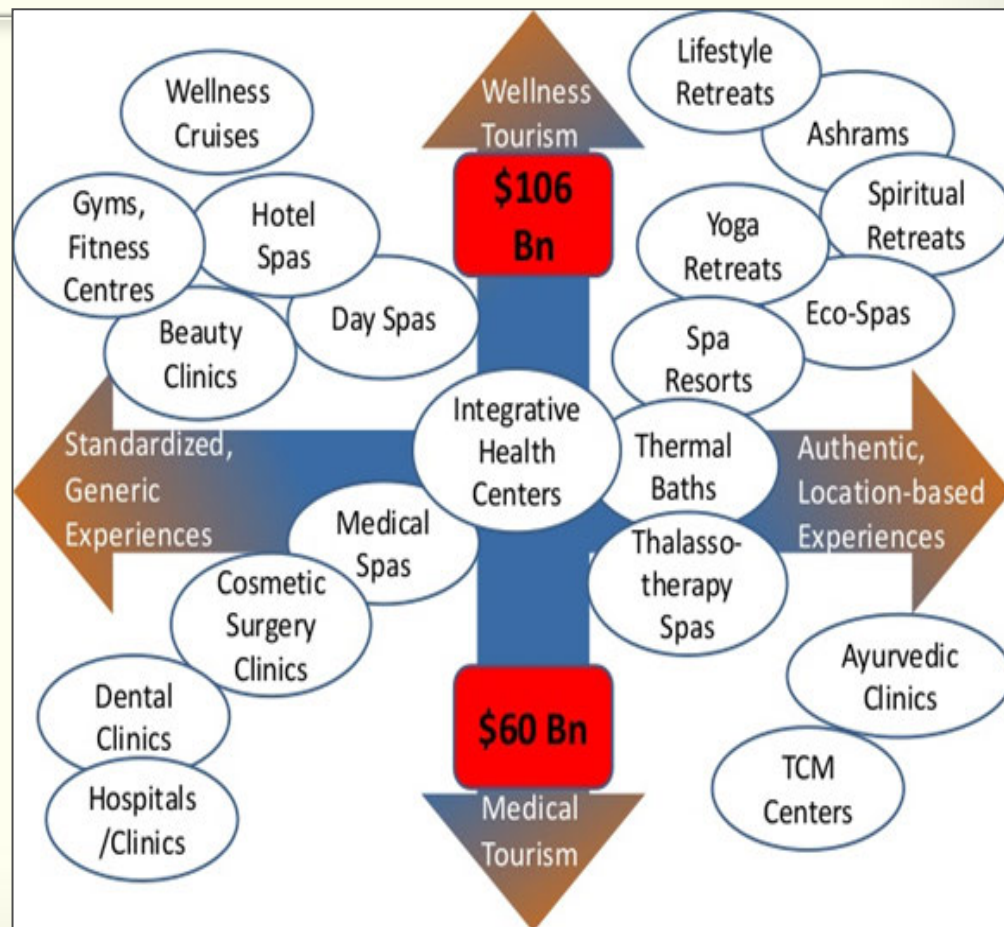
Regarding this, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the demand for this type of tourism can be broken down into numerous sub-segments of the market.



Health tourism in the world, recorded a huge growth in the last decade and is one of the manifestations of globalization. His market in global terms, is growing at an annual rate of 19-25% and predicted its further growth in the coming years (WTO).

Health tourism is a successful combination of medical treatment, hospitals, hotels and other services in the tourist destination.

Today it is a lucrative bisnis which develops rapid increase in many countries of the world.



There are a number of significant drivers of health tourism. One of these drivers is cost. The ability to receive comparable treatments at lower costs motivates some people to travel. Another key driver is that it is sometimes necessary to travel in order to obtain state-of-the-art medical treatments.

“The best healthcare solution to a particular problem is often not found in the local medical center or health system and it suspect that challenge will probably get worse before it gets better.”

The optimal goal should not be to access the best high tech care but rather to never experience a serious medical problem like a heart attack or cancer.

T o d a y t h i s i s d o n e b y
creating a plan that combines your
personal risk with ongoing active
prevention to mitigate that risk.



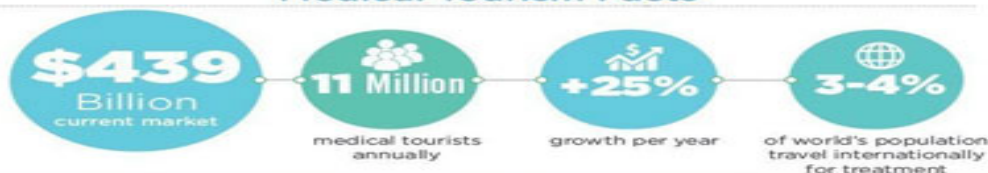
2017 Monitoring Medical Tourism Trends



176 Countries Covered

By examining cross-border spending for medical services in more than **176 countries**, the United States was found to be the single largest hub for medical tourism. Thailand, Singapore, Germany, Korea, and Spain are quickly catching up, increasingly attracting visitors from around the world, according to an analysis of financial transaction data.

Medical Tourism Facts¹



Medical Tourism Influences



Global 2016 Medical Tourism Index



Main Dimensions

- Destination Environment
- Medical Tourism Industry
- Quality of Facilities & Services

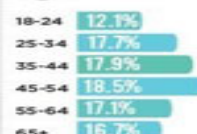
34 CRITERIA
41 DESTINATIONS
4,348 RESPONDENTS

Respondents Profile

Gender



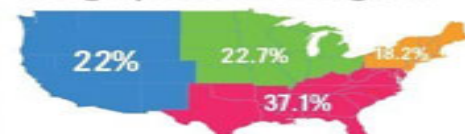
Age



Ethnicity



Geographical U.S. Regions



Marital Status



Highest Education Level



Top 5 Destinations

Overall Rank

1. Canada	76.62
2. UK	74.87
3. Israel	73.91
4. Singapore	73.56
5. India	72.10

Destination Environment

1. Canada	78.69	
2. UK	77.29	
3. Singapore	73.26	
4. Israel	66.56	
5. Germany	67.50	

Medical Tourism Industry

1. India	75.94	
2. Colombia	74.96	
3. Mexico	74.17	
4. Canada	74.13	
5. Dominican Republic	73.85	

Quality of Facilities & Services

1. Israel	81.60	
2. Germany	77.88	
3. India	77.10	
4. Canada	77.02	
5. UK	76.94	

2016 MTI Overall Ranking

1. Canada	76.62	15. Dominican Republic	67.58	29. Mexico	60.70
2. UK	74.87	16. Dubai	67.54	30. Qatar	60.07
3. Israel	73.91	17. Jamaica	67.17	31. Morocco	59.77
4. Singapore	73.56	18. Thailand	66.60	32. Turkey	59.49
5. India	72.10	19. Philippines	66.40	33. Jordan	57.02
6. Germany	71.90	20. Taiwan	66.28	34. Russia	57.01
7. France	71.22	21. Argentina	65.37	35. Oman	56.90
8. South Korea	70.16	22. Brazil	65.22	36. Tunisia	56.78
9. Italy	69.50	23. China	64.78	37. Kuwait	52.69
10. Colombia	69.48	24. Poland	63.79	38. Saudi Arabia	52.43
11. Spain	68.29	25. Abu Dhabi	63.65	39. Bahrain	51.99
12. Japan	68.00	26. Malta	62.97	40. Lebanon	49.92
13. Panama	67.93	27. South Africa	62.20	41. Iran	36.00
14. Costa Rica	67.67	28. Egypt	60.92		

Americas
Europe
Asia
Middle East / Africa

¹ Mapping the Future of Global Travel and Tourism, 2016 Visa in Partnership with Oxford Economics

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During the XIXth and the first half of XXth centuries, the thermal tourism had a remarkable development and became accessible to the well-to-do social classes. In the second half of XXth s, this tourism of health develops and allows the middle classes to reach it. At the same time, the other forms of tourism related with the health appear, as the "anti-aging" medicine, the "Medical Spa" and the Medical Tourism (MT) allowing the access to new treatments, fruits of the remarkable scientific and technological development in the medical domain.



We need to distinguish Thermal/curative and wellness tourism which takes care of the "well-being" (thermal baths, thalassotherapy and balneotherapy), of the Medical Tourism (MT) where the "medical tourist" (Mt) plans alone or with his regular doctor, the medical or surgical protocol the most adapted to make abroad. Therefore, the MT concerns more health than tourism.

Health tourism



Health tourism (HT) has served as a gateway for patients to receive affordable and quality medical care by crossing borders. Savings from medical tourism can be 15 to 85 percent in some cases



People are crossing borders to seek healthcare services in another country and this international phenomenon is termed as health tourism. It is attaining popularity among urban and sub-urban residents to developed countries. Every new thing is questioned or doubted and it is happening with health tourism. It is also being analyzed and criticized.



Medical tourism (MT) involves international travel with the intent of addressing medical care needs of the traveler that occurs outside of arranged cross-border care. Such medical care is usually paid for out-of-pocket.

The practice of medical tourism raises important questions for the safety of patients, creates uncertainties about impacts on patients' home countries and destination countries, and creates ethical issues both for people who have and have not participated in medical tourism.



We shall approach now the advantages and the disadvantages of the MT, at first for the medical tourists (Mt), then for the country supplier of these Mt and finally, for the receiving country of Mt (*Canadian Center of Science and Education*).

Advantages of the MT for the Mt

- The cost proposed by the offer of the care abroad, plus those of the trip and the stay, is lower than the cost of only the care realized in the country of origin, taking into account the possible refunds of the health insurance.
- When the required treatment is not available, or not taken care, or is not partially covered by the health insurance of the country of origin, it is better to be treated abroad.
- The quality/price ratio is more favourable abroad: many foreign hospitals and foreign private clinics employ doctors trained and qualified in the western countries.
- The possibility of associating "body care" and "tourism" but also "to join the useful and unpleasant, with the pleasant" and allowing "to swallow the pill" more easily, because of the foreign exoticism which will allow the Mt to integrate the unpleasant memories with the pleasant ones.
- A change of scenery (change of place and maybe country, change of climate and culture) and the leisure activities associated with tourism, or a convalescence in a luxury hotel, would allow him to surmount more easily its sufferings before and after the application of the care, by compensating a thing with other one.
- Be able to "mask" an intervention, for example of plastic surgery, under a tourist journey, because the treatment concerns the domain of the intimacy; it thus allows to keep the "secret" of that intervention.

According to the nationality of the medical tourist or the type of envisaged medical treatment, other additional benefits are possible:



- to reach quickly the care and not be forced to stay on a waiting list during some months in the country of origin,
- to be looked by the most famous doctors,
- to be able to follow the fashion of canons of beauty: plastic surgery (bosoms, face, belly, buttocks, etc.),
- to have the opportunity to reach these cares,
- to be proud to have managed to be looked abroad,
- to have the possibility to choose freely the most convenient moment to leave home to be treated abroad because it is not forced by a precise period of the year such as that of the holidays, related to the calendars of every country.

Reasons of medical tourism:

- ▶ High savings
- ▶ No wait-lists
- ▶ High quality treatment
- ▶ World class facilities
- ▶ Access to latest technology
- ▶ Best surgeons
- ▶ Customer care
- ▶ Travel opportunities



EU



If the journey takes place inside the Schengen area, there is a European legal frame that allows to benefit from quality care in another European country (free circulation of European citizens), by choosing freely the clinic and the doctors to be looked. It specifies the rights of the patients and the duties (responsibilities) of the suppliers of health care, in a general frame of medical ethics. The European legislation established the equality of access, of treatment and care, of safety and appeal of the national and foreign patients having undergone damages.

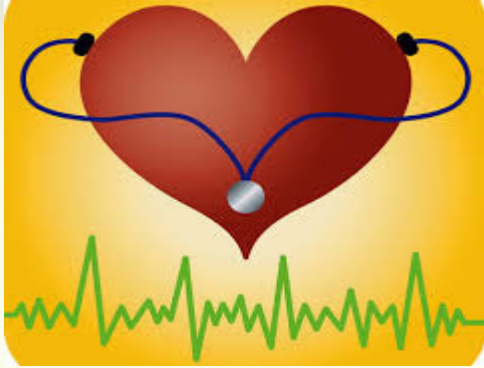
This legislation completes the national one of every country of the EU and suggests a greater surveillance of all the public and private actors in health fields.

These rights are framed by procedures (UE/EU, 2008, 2011) where are involved the Social Securities of both countries; the European patient has to respect them if he will claim to benefit from reimbursements of medical expenses as if he had stayed in his country of origin.

Disadvantages of the MT for the Mt



- Main disadvantage of medical tourism is that the patient and their family members are not sure about the qualifications of the doctors.
- Any medical intervention is risked: the possible post-operative complications can increase the invoice if it is necessary to remain abroad to treat them. Complications can appear at the time of return to the home country, due to, among others, a traumatism or a secondary infection during the journey. Therefore, the care abroad can then turn out less profitable than a care made in the home country.
- Often accompanying medical services (clinical analysis laboratories, centres of radiology, medical imaging and interpretation) are of lower quality than in the home country.



FDA
evaluates
benefits/risks
for the population



Provider
evaluates
benefits/risks
for a patient



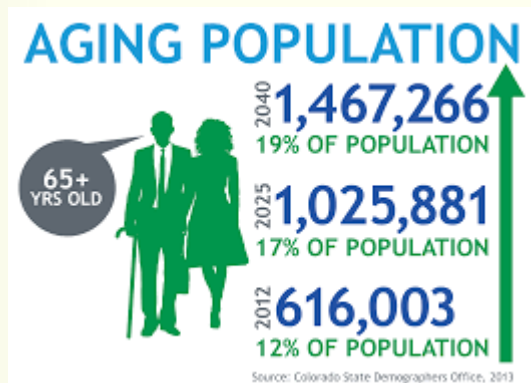
Patient
evaluates
benefits/risks
in terms of
personal values



- The medical follow-up cannot be maintained abroad by the medical team, which practiced the interventions, unless coming again.
- The medical follow-up after the intervention has to continue in the country of origin, at his expenses or in a public institution that agrees to take care of him.
- It is not certain that the foreign doctor makes a commitment to repair the damages of his surgical act. Thus, the MT is interested in taking out an additional insurances, even though that will increase the final invoice, to make sure of the good progress during his hospital and touristic stay.
- There is a possibility of contracting a hospital-borne disease due to the lack of asepsis or of hygiene in foreing hospitals, or of contracting an endemic or seasonal disease (chikungunya, malaria, SRAS) in the foreign country and absent in the country of origin.

Advantages for the Country Supplier of Mt

- The development of the MT allowed the medical industry of developed countries to export their products and their know-how (installations, organization and pharmaceutical industry) towards the emergent countries that hope to develop MT, so contributing to the exports and to improve their balance of payments.



- The inter-European MT is going to grow and poles of speciality (dental, aesthetic or cardiac surgeries, cancer research, etc.) are being developed in some countries.
- The MT allows the health organizations to dispose of financial sources besides the public financing.
- The western countries and in particular the EU will be confronted with the financial consequences of the ageing of the population. Perhaps, older patients will be faced either to accept a reduction of the medical services or to decide be looked abroad (out of the EU), to reduce their expenses and to relieve at the same time the national budget of the health.

- But it is as well possible that they lead to a development policy of the services of Geriatrics to satisfy, not only the needs of health of European patients but also of foreign seniors which in this way, can bring a complement to financing the health sector.
- In addition, the new technologies applied to the medical care, in particular those centred on telemedicine, can constitute an important factor in the growth of MT, because they allow European doctors to follow remotely an already looked Mt, and they contribute to the good realization of surgeries abroad by doctors who will can, in case of emergency or complications, appeal the best specialists of the developed countries.

These new methods of work will be possible thanks to:

- the use of remote automated and remote-controlled medical equipments,
- the consultations and the surgical operations by videoconferencing,
- the remotely interpretation of medical analyses or radiological examinations (e.g. scanners),
- the TV-monitoring (permanent remote control of the health of the patient stayed at home).



Disadvantages for the Country Supplier of Mt



- Developed countries have financial losses because of the development of the MT and the HT out of borders. For the European countries, as far as the MT and the HT take place inside the European Union, they contribute to redistribute a certain wealth among the various European partners.
- The MT and the HT towards the rich countries also developed what confirms the global aspect of these flows of Mt. At present, the financial contribution of the foreign patients does not compensate the financial losses of the nationals that leave abroad, because their number is much lower.
- Certainly there will be an increase of the international mobility of the medical and paramedical staff towards places where they can exercise their profession in good conditions (recognition of their abilities and profit of a good salary).

- The MT contributes to pandemics. The movement of persons and goods for commercial or touristic reasons caused in the world an acceleration of the transmission of diseases (SRAS, H1N1) and the hospital-borne infections.

The development of the MT contributes to spread diseases but, the most redoubtable is the emergence of hospital-borne diseases and imported by Mt pursuing a treatment after a stay abroad, as has already noticed in some European hospital centres.

Definition of nosocomial infections (NIs)



Nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infections =
= infections occurring in connection with the
stay in a medical institution (as opposed
to community-acquired infections)

At least 5 % patients !

Exogenous NIs:

source = other patients, environment,
personnel

vector = mostly personnel's unwashed
hands

Endogenous NIs:

source = the patient himself/herself

Advantages for the Receiving Country of Mt



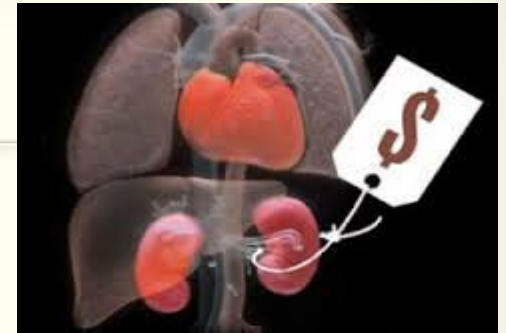
- The recent development of the MT led to that of the medical structures of the emergent countries, not only regarding infrastructures, medical equipments and instrumentation but also professional (setting up of numerous doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and other paramedical jobs); quality of services, better salaries, improvement of the education and the local medical research. This allows to fix the medical staff on their country, by avoiding that doctors emigrate to exercise their job more suitably and, at the same time, to facilitate the return of those who had left abroad. Additionally, MT can help to decrease the "brain drain" at least in the medical domain. This is an additional asset to develop the MT.
- On the other hand, other countries will take advantage to improve and develop their health system with the financial godsend brought by the Mt, what will allow them to increase the number of the beneficiaries of the health care of the country.



- Some countries will develop more specific medical activities to become the best in these domains and, in this way, thwart the competition of the other countries which will then be obliged to specialize in other medical sectors.
- They can benefit from the increase of the international mobility of the medical and paramedical staff towards countries where they can exercise their profession in good conditions (recognition of their skills and profit of a good salary).
- Many emergent countries are betting on MT to boost regional and national tourism to increase the economic fallouts and ameliorate their labour market (hospitality, restaurants, transports, services, infrastructures, etc.).



Disadvantages for the Receiving Country of Mt



- Numerous doctors of developing countries leave the public hospitals to set up themselves privately or join a team of a private clinic, to earn better their living and have a better professional recognition.
Thus, the economic indicator "number of doctors or medical staff per capita" will not have any sense because its increase will not measure any more an improvement of the living conditions in the country, because these doctors will dedicate themselves to a foreign clientele and not to a local one.
- Risk of contribution to the traffic of organs. Poor people in under developed countries are tempted to sell their own organs in exchange of money to ameliorate their life.
- Risk to facilitate the forgery of medicines. The search for the reduction of the expenses of the interventions abroad could facilitate the demand, the production and the distribution of the forgery of medicines. The foreign patients could be tempted to buy them abroad, outside the official circuits to bring them in their country of origin.
- Risk of facilitating the marketing of equipments and lower-quality prostheses or of forgeries. To guarantee a lesser cost for the Mt, some foreign hospital centres could use this type of products.

Challenges

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graph LR; A[Selection of physician] --> D[Critical issues for medical tourists]; B[Communication Issues] --> D; C[Follow-up difficulties and complication risk] --> D; E[Legal resource and malpractice law] --> D;
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Selection of physician

Communication Issues

Follow-up difficulties and
complication risk

Legal resource and
malpractice law

**Critical issues
for medical
tourists**

The lack of reliable data and official statistics does not allow to estimate globally the importance of the MT.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

