

Investigating the relationship between satisfaction of foreign patients with dimensions of health tourism in hospitals affiliated to Iran University of Medical Sciences

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Abstract

Health tourism provides significant economic, political and social benefits to the active countries, which should be considered in a competitive market. This study aimed to evaluate the satisfaction of patients with other dimensions of health tourism services. This is a descriptive-correlational study based on the method of research. A questionnaire was designed. The first part of the questionnaire contained the demographic characteristics of the participants and the second part included 30 questions about the components that affect the receipt of medical services by foreign nationals. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.98), which indicates very strong reliability. Expert judgment was used to assess the validity of the questionnaire. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire. The data were entered in SPSS statistical software and analyzed using version 25 of this software. To determine the correlation coefficient, first, the items in the questionnaire based on the analysis of the exploratory factor and the opinion of experts were categorized into 5 dimensions. There is a significant relationship between satisfaction of foreign patients with the dimension of health tourism with other dimensions (such as financial, treatment quality, treatment facilities, tourism facilities) in hospitals. This study demonstrates the importance of the mentioned factors in the health tourism services for foreign patients, which should be emphasized by managers in the field of health tourism for short-term and long-term planning to boost and develop it.

Keywords: Health Tourism; Medical Tourism; Services; Iran

Introduction

Tourism is one of the biggest competitive industries in the world. Nowadays, medical tourism is quickly developing as a part of tourism for health and wellness care. Many factors are influencing the development of medical tourism in developing countries(1). Tourism is one of the few areas that have developed the right context for profit for all the countries of the world, and has therefore been interpreted from tourism to industry. Medical tourism is a relatively new concept where patients travel to a foreign destination to obtain quality medical treatments which much better or comparable and also available at a significantly lower cost(2). The relationship between health and tourism can be checked in many ways, maintaining the health of the tourist is the most important relationship between the two concepts. For the first time Bushel presented a conceptual framework in which the interaction of health and tourism from the viewpoint of health tourism, by examining health and disease, Promotion of health and prevention of disease. According to Alain, health and tourism are linked to three species: the health of tourists, the health of the host and guest communities, travel with health goals(3). Health tourism

includes medical tourism, and preventive tourism(4). Health tourism is an opportunity to exploit the combination of tourism with medical services, which has now become an important industry(5). Although the nature of the marketing of tourism services is different from the marketing of other services, such as banking or transportation, all of the P10 items of the McCarthy (1975) include: product, price, location/distribution and promotion, individuals, physical evidence and processes, participation, personalization, can be extended to the health tourism industry(6). Patient education, privacy, and medical sensitivities and patient culture, have also been added to the above-mentioned cases due to the nature of medical tourism(7). In total, the above P14 can be considered as a mix of marketing for medical tourism(8).

Globalization across all sectors has brought complex cultural needs in an already culturally diverse world. Understanding culture and behaviour was important in healthcare to provide comprehensive care with a delightful experience but it has certainly become essential in Medical tourism as patients arrive with different cultural beliefs and from different geographies. Understanding of Culture in Medical tourism is a two-way process as the patient needs to understand the destinations cultural beliefs as much as providers need to know and understand the patients' cultural beliefs(9). Behavioural intention is more positively influenced by subjective well-being than by authentic experience. The moderating role of technology readiness between subjective well-being and behavioural intention is stronger in individuals with high optimism and innovativeness than their counterparts with low optimism and innovativeness(10). Examining the capacity of health tourism in Iran in the process of globalization of sustainable tourism development indicates that tourism is one of the largest industries in the world in the era of globalization, depends on the world economy. Iran's geographical location and diversity, the existence of vast natural resources and mineral springs, and the history of brilliant and ancient medical sciences in Iran in various fields and the diversity of medical services and their quality, have attracted attention(11). Findings of this study it can generate revenue in increasing the number of non-Iranian patients entering and applying for care and treatment services and the creation of a mental image and positive memories of our country should be exploited by doctors, staff, managers and politicians of the health system, so this study aimed to investigate the effective components of receiving medical services by patients and their companions in hospitals covered by Iran University of Medical Sciences(IUMS).

Materials & methods

The present study is quantitative in terms of the descriptive purpose of the correlation among factors and in terms of the data type. The statistical population of the study includes all foreign nationals have referred to the educational and medical centres of Iran University of Medical Sciences, and 300 of them were randomly selected. To identify the components affecting the receipt of medical services by foreign nationals, after studying domestic and foreign books and resources, a questionnaire was prepared in Arabic and English. The first part of the questionnaire contained the demographic characteristics of the participants and the second part included 30 questions about

the components that affect the receipt of medical services by foreign nationals. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire items based on a five-part Likert scale, including fully agree, agree, no idea, disagree, and fully disagree. Expert judgment was used to assess the validity of the questionnaire and Cronbach's alpha was used to determine its reliability. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.98), which indicates very strong reliability. The data were entered in SPSS statistical software and analyzed using version 25 of this software. To analyze the data, correlation coefficient test and descriptive statistics were used. To perform this test, all the desired factors were examined due to the normal distribution of the factors with the test. To determine the correlation coefficient, first, the items in the questionnaire based on the analysis of the exploratory factor and the opinion of experts were categorized into 5 dimensions (financial, treatment quality, facilities and equipment, tourism facilities, satisfaction). Then, using the correlation coefficient, the relationship between patient satisfaction and levels of health tourism was obtained.

To analyze the data, correlation coefficient test and descriptive statistics were used. To perform this test, all the factors in question were examined in terms of the normality of the distribution of factors with the test, which is attached to the results. All factors studied in the hypotheses have a normal distribution. In the following, descriptive statistics and correlation coefficient of the factors related to this research are presented.

Results and discussion

The results of research:

In terms of gender frequency, 216 women and 84 men were in this study(72% were women and 28% were men).In terms of education, out of 300 samples, 120 were graduates, 84 were bachelors, 36 were postgraduates, 24 were PhDs, 12 were non-graduates and 24 were technicians. Therefore, most of the participants had a diploma (40%) and a bachelor's degree (28%), respectively. In terms of age, out of 300 samples, 12 people) in the age group 19-10(, 24 people)in the age group 29-20(, 84 people) in the age group 39-30(, 96 people)in the age group 49-40(, 48 people)in the age group 59-50(and 36 people) in the age group of 69-60 (have referred to medical centres. According to statistics, 60% of clients are between 30 and 49 years old. In terms of nationality, the country of origin was 300, 192 from Iraq, 12 from Qatar, 12 from the Republic of Azerbaijan, 72 from Kuwait and 12 from Bahrain. Therefore, the highest number of samples in this study was from Iraq (64%) and Kuwait (24%), respectively.

According to the survey conducted:

-There is a significant relationship between the financial dimension and patient satisfaction. Significance levels below 0.05 indicate that with a 95% confidence interval, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the financial dimension and patient satisfaction. has it. The results are presented in Table1.

Table 1. The relationship between the financial dimension and patient satisfaction

Correlations		Satisfaction	Financial
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.785**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Financial	Pearson Correlation	.785**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 2. The relationship between treatment quality and patient satisfaction

Correlations		Satisfaction	treatment quality
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.914**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
treatment quality	Pearson Correlation	.914**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 3. The relationship between the treatment facility and patient satisfaction

Correlations		Satisfaction	treatment facility
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.799**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
treatment facility	Pearson Correlation	.799**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Table 4. The relationship between the TourismFacility and patient satisfaction

Correlations		Satisfaction	TourismFacility
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.918**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
TourismFacility	Pearson Correlation	.918**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

Comparison of health care system

Health Services Delivery

Our findings indicate that due to the importance of customer satisfaction in the field of health tourism and how to provide care and treatment services to foreign patients in hospitals of Iran University of Medical Sciences, attention to financial dimensions, quality of treatment, medical and equipment facilities, facilities Tourism and satisfaction are important.This research was conducted to evaluate the satisfaction of foreign patients with other dimensions of health tourism services. Overall, the results showed that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction of foreign patients with other dimensions (such as financial, treatment quality, treatment facilities, tourism facilities)in hospitals. The attraction countries are investing in tourism as a tourist destination by combining high-quality medical services and competitive prices with tourist packages. Some countries have a comparative advantage in providing services based on the organizational structure of their health system(12).

Results contribute to the limited empirical research on the consumer dynamics and underpinnings of an industry experiencing rapid growth in an environment of significant change and uncertainty. Findings may also assist medical tourism marketers to serve those already inclined to travel abroad for healthcare services better, and to create more favourable predispositions among those not currently inclined to do so(13). Today, the medical tourism industry has an estimated growth rate of up to 25% year-over-year for the next 10 years and it is estimated that 3–4% of the world's population will travel internationally for healthcare(14). Medical Tourism has been favoured by health care providers in other countries around the world trying to attract and accommodate medical travellers. As a result, there has been a growing concern for the creation of professional standards to protect the quality and safety of patient care and the types of business opportunities that are available in this new industry(15).

Li, Shina and et al find that the development of tourism can

reduce the outputs of overcapacity industries and reallocate surplus labour to tourism-related industries(16). The tourism industry is one of the largest and most productive economic activities in the world that directly and indirectly affects other economic and cultural activities. Overview of the study shows that Iran has good scope for the medical tourism industry but, in general, is faced with main challenges, including lack of technology and technical infrastructures, the existence of different organs of political and decision-making and also its cultural and political conditions. Therefore if Iran intends to use the strategy of developing medical tourism, as one of the strengths of the resilient economy, it should weigh strengths and challenges(17).

Medical tourism is a very attractive industry for main health role players in Iran. It seems that a comprehensive plan is needed to coordinate all main stockholders including governmental organizations, healthcare providers and tourism organization. High quality of care with reasonable costs and appropriate tourism facilities are very important factors which were addressed(18). Some studies have focused on identifying the factors affecting the selection of medical tourism destinations concerning different types of treatment. They conclude by recommending research directions for future research by health, medical, and managing scientists(19). As research constraints, the relative collaboration of some respondents in completing the questionnaire was a time constraint for presence to explain how the questionnaire was completed, which was resolved by following several occasions to receive the opinion. Considering that a limited number of studies have been conducted on health tourism in Iran University of Medical Sciences, the present study was conducted for hospitals operating in the field of health tourism in Iran University. Researchers suggest that research be conducted on the awareness and skills of health care workers, managers, and health policymakers in providing health tourism services.

conclusion

the present study explains that There is a significant relationship between satisfaction of foreign patients with the dimension of health tourism with other dimensions (such as financial, treatment quality, treatment facilities, tourism facilities)in hospitals.This study demonstrates the importance of the mentioned factors in the health tourism services for foreign patients, which should be emphasized by managers in the field of health tourism for short-term and long-term planning to boost and develop it.Given the efforts made in this area, there are still challenges to improve the status of Iran as a provider of poles health tourism services despite the tourist attractions, potential sources such as efficient manpower, advanced medical equipment, etc., there should be serious attention in this regard.

Acknowledgements

The present study is about the dimensions of medical tourism services in foreign patients and the relationship between their satisfaction and other dimensions of health tourism in hospitals affiliated to Iran University of Medical Sciences, and thanks to all the professors, the experts who have contributed to the development of this research.

Authors' contributions

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interests include the impact of biostatistical research on healthcare management practices in medical tourism.

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