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Briefing

HEALTH CARE, AVIATION, AUTOMOTIVE, READY-TO-WEAR, CHEMICALS, SHIPBUILDING, INVESTMENT...

HEALTH CARE

MEDICAL TOURISM OFFERS HIGH QUALITY AND LOW COSTS

As patients are drawn to the low cost and high quality available via medical tourism, Turkey, a leading player, is sure to see sustained growth in the area.

GÜZİN GÜZEY 



The basic elements of health are considered universal. Therefore, the diagnostic procedures and treatments used to eliminate an ailment and restore one's health must be offered in a way that transcends borders. For these reasons, there is an upward trend in medical tourism. One of the several kinds of alternative tourism, medical tourism is defined as relocating from one country to another in order to receive treatment and take advantage of health care services. This industry is of critical importance in that a country's medical situation and investments in health care are indicators of the social and economic status of that country.

WHY ARE OTHER COUNTRIES PREFERRED FOR TREATMENT?

Several factors play a role in the rising popularity of medical tourism. Perhaps the most important of these is lack of access to high-tech medical services and professional human resources in one's own country. Other leading factors include treatment costs, the availability of better care in tandem with reasonable prices, and the possibility of a recreational vacation in

addition to the treatment. Some medical tourists favor the increased privacy available in cases such as plastic surgery or infertility, while others may feel a need to go to and receive treatment elsewhere in connection to advanced age. All these reasons show that the industry is growing quickly and that interest in medical tourism is likely to rise in the future.

WITH THE HIGH QUALITY OF ITS SERVICE, TURKEY IS A TOP-CHOICE COUNTRY

Meri İstiroti is General Manager of Liv Hospital, which occupies a building in Ulus, Istanbul with some 30,000 square meters of indoor space. The hospital very recently celebrated its first anniversary. According to İstiroti, the institution has provided services to 3,250 medical tourists within the past year, providing planned care in 48 different branches. In its first year, Liv Hospital took in patients from 121 countries, with the majority coming from 35 countries, says İstiroti. She continues, "We didn't just change the preferences of expats living in Istanbul; we also welcomed numerous patients from



MERI İSTIROTI

General Manager, Liv Hospital

Inspired by the initials of the principle, "Leading International Vision" in its naming, Liv Hospital aims to be an institution that guides Turkey's health care vision in the international arena. It engages this aim by sharing scientific data, focusing on difficult cases, and with the investments in its doctors and technology. Originally, medical tourism was the practice of going to another country to receive treatment unavailable in one's own country. But as centers offering quality treatment with better service started to appear, it gained a different dimension. With the quality of the medical services it offers, Liv Hospital will continue to make a difference in the sector and keep up with innovations. In its new locations, too, Liv Hospital will continue its journey practicing the principles and innovative approach to service it established in its Ulus location, furthering its international potential in its numerous locations.

countries in Europe, the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Middle East, especially from the nearby territory." Dr. Neslihan Karaman, Corporate Agreements Director for Medical Park CCO, says 50,000–55,000 foreign patients on average are treated at Medical Park's facilities annually. She adds that when these patients are grouped by country, the countries of the Middle East, North Africa, the Turkic nations of Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, Africa, the Balkans, and Europe are in the lead. Selin Yıldırım, a member of the executive board of the Dünya Göz Hospitals Group—a leading name in ophthalmological health—and USA-Europe President of the Medical Tourism Association, says they finished 2013 having welcomed 38,000 foreign patients in all. "Eighty percent of our inbound patients are from Europe. This differs significantly from the statistics of other hospitals. Europe is one of the hardest regions to reach and win over. In spite of that, because the standard and quality we have reached are above European standards, Europe accounts for the largest number of foreign patients visiting Dünya Göz. Central Europeans, Northern Europeans, and Scandinavians are our top patients. This majority is followed by countries that speak Russian and Arabic."

THE INDUSTRY'S FUTURE

The nations of the world now recognize Turkey as a new partner in health and a rising hub in medical tourism. The technology used by the hospitals and the high-quality service they offer to medical tourists are a major factor in this. For instance, the orthopedics department at Liv Hospital is organized into





individual divisions for knee surgery, podiatric surgery, spinal surgery, shoulder surgery, hand surgery, and elbow surgery. In general surgery, colorectal cancer and digestive ailment treatments, and thyroid, breast, obesity, vascular, hepatic, and pancreatic surgeries are practiced by separate specialists. Surgeons are able to use robotics in oncological surgeries (in stomach, esophageal, digestive system, rectal, uterine, ovarian, and prostate cancers). Dünya Göz, meanwhile, provides constant support to medical tourists that make an appointment with the hospital for each minute they will spend in the

country, assisting not only with accommodation and guidance but also with such matters as reissuing passports in cases of lost passports. At Medical Park, the organ transplant, joint transplant, and neurosurgery branches, among others, are reference-level departments offering not only world-class care but also translation and interpretation services for each patient in his or her native language. All of this goes to show that Turkey is advancing the industry one step forward as it presents a fusion of its historical tradition in hospitality with its service approach in medical tourism.

THERE ARE 42 JCI-ACCREDITED MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN TURKEY

Foreign Patient Intake Divide
in 2010

92%

PRIVATE HOSPITALS

8%

PUBLIC HOSPITALS



The Ministry of Health's Revenue Targets
for Medical Tourism

\$7 BILLION

2013 TARGET

\$20 BILLION

2023 TARGET



SELIN YILDIRIM

Executive Committee Member,
Dünya Göz Hospitals Group; USA-
Europe President, Medical Tourism
Association

Our institution was the one to launch medical tourism in Turkey. The 38,000-person figure we have reached is one that only four operators bringing tourists to Turkey could match. Therefore, it is clear that we are the market leader here. The system we have established, our international departments, and our marketing activities are today discussed and debated as a success story in many countries around the world and have come to where they are taught at the universities I am part of as a lecturer. Dünya Göz thus possesses such a system that we will carry on with our previous efforts to run this network and, of course, to advance what's in place to the very top. We don't need to carry out a very radical sort of effort. We share our work so that others can use it. Beyond its contribution to the country's economy, medical tourism contributes to the country's future, the prosperity of future generations, and the country's image. Every person treated here speaks as an advocate on behalf of our country upon returning to his or her home country. No one who regains health here could say anything negative about Turkey back home. If they're considering a holiday, they'll come here with their neighbors in tow, and if they're considering investment they'll come with capital. They could entrust everything to the country to which they entrust their health. This is so important that I hope Turkey and Ankara will be able to position medical tourism better in the projection for 2023.



DR. NESLIHAN KAHRAMAN

International Patient Center &
Corporate Agreements Director,
Medical Park CCO

Turkey has made rapid progress in medical tourism in the past five years, and this shall continue at the same rate in 2014, too. The Turkish Ministry of Health's target for 2013 was \$7 billion; for 2023, it has set a target of \$20 billion. On that account, we could speak of a growth of at least 15-20% for 014. The Turkish Ministry of Economy's incentives for medical tourism, Turkey's increasing recognition as a brand in medical tourism, the continually rising standards of the Turkish health care sector, the experience gained by personnel in international patient care in the field of medical tourism, and the rising number of JCI-accredited hospitals are among the foremost reasons for this. Medical Park Hospitals Group sets its strategies by thoroughly analyzing world changes in international medical tourism. I think 2014, too, will unfold according to our targets, as was the case in previous years. We are chosen by foreign patients because we offer care that can compete internationally in several specialty fields from bone marrow transplants to Parkinson's surgery and cosmetic surgery to orthopedics. We serve patients in our adult and pediatric bone marrow transplant divisions at our oncology centers with world-class technical equipment and infrastructure, and our academic team. I predict that patients will continue to arrive especially for bone marrow transplants, organ transplants, oncology, and neurosurgery.