

## EDITORIAL



**Dr. Dursun AYDIN**

### After The Congress

Although our country has a great potential concerning health tourism, it becomes obvious that the sector representatives have been anxious due to insufficient use of this potential. Up to now our hospitals, thermals and tourism sector has made great efforts to consider what to do for health tourism and how to get our share from the annual turnover of 100 billion USD in the world. They attended to a lot of activities and made considerable expenses. However, they haven't gone further and the whole parties haven't been brought together.

2-3 of the past fair, symposium, etc events were announced but they were cancelled in advance. Foreigners and authorities couldn't be brought to the fairs held and the issue couldn't be explained to them clearly. But still the sector supported them and spent a great deal of money.

Despite all these negativeness 1st International Health Tourism Congress began with the opening speech of our Health Minister Prof. Dr. Recep AKDAĞ was completed with great success. The potential of our country was clearly shown to foreign attendants sighting some private and public hospitals, cultural and historical places in Antalya.

There were around 400 attendance to our congress. 53 foreign attendant, sector representatives and authorities from 25 separate countries enlivened our congress. Thus, our congress qualified to be international at its first turn. Medical tourism, thermal tourism, current status of elderly tourism, promotion, marketing and services were discussed in details at the congress. There were Information exchange and business deals. The thing setting its seal on the congress was that of our country saying "We are also available in the world health tourism and here it is our potential". Another matter was the appearance of a new hope and motivation over the sector representatives of health tourism. The foreign attendance from 25 separate countries such as India, USA, Germany, Hungary, Jordan, Uzbekistan, Moldova and Albania was considerably significant and meaningful at this successful and really international congress.

As the Association of Improving Health Tourism we have said that "14 March 2008 will be a milestone in health tourism" and now feel happy to succeed. We again thank you all who has worked for the congress and extend our gratitude accordingly.

I extend my best regards hoping that our country achieves its deserving place in health tourism and to meet at 2nd International Health Tourism Congress.

## 1<sup>st</sup> International Health Tourism Congress Created Great Reactions In Both Turkey And The World



1<sup>st</sup> International Health Tourism Congress organized by the Association of Improving Health Tourism in Antalya on 14-17 March 2008 by the supports of the Health and the Culture and Tourism Ministries was completed successfully with the attendance of a great number of foreign and domestic attendants.

Health tourism that is a growing trend in the world began taking due respect.

In the 1st International Health Tourism Congress there were 53 foreign attendants (comprised of deputy ministers, dignitaries, investors and sector representatives) from 25 different countries (Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, NCTR, Syria, Sweden, UK, USA and Uzbekistan) and 300 domestic attendants. The Health Minister Prof. Dr. Recep AKDAĞ, the Undersecretary of Culture and Tourism Ministry İsmet YILMAZ, the Deputy Undersecretary of the Health Ministry Prof. Dr. Nihat TOSUN, the Head of Health and Social Affairs

Commission of Turkish Grand National Assembly Prof. Dr. Cevdet ERDÖL, the Head of Public Works, Reconstruction, Transportation and Tourism Commission of Turkish Grand National Assembly Mustafa DEMİR, Istanbul PM charged with AK Party Foreign Affairs Egemen Bağış, Antalya PM Abdurrahman ARICI, the Governor of Antalya Alaattin YÜKSEL, the Head of TURSAB Başaran ULUSOY and a lot of high level officials and sector representatives were also available.



Many companies that opened stands in  
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### Future Tourism Staff Grows Up



The panel about "Thermal Tourism" organized by the Faculty of Commerce and Tourism Education of Gazi University within the activities of Traditional Tourism Week was held in the confrence hall of Gazi University Gölbaşı Campus. The president of the Association of Improving Health Tourism, Dr. Dursun Aydın, the Mayor of Kızılcıhamam Municipality, Adem Özbekler, the Board Chairman of Çağ Healthcare Group, Prof. Dr. Kadirhan

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### Undersecretary Of Health Ministry Received Information About The Works Of Our Association And Symposium



At the 2nd Healthcare Council the undersecretary of health ministry, Spec. Dr. Orhan Gümrükçüoğlu visited our stand and received information about the works of our association and symposium held on 21 June 2008. He attracted attention to doctor shortage in Turkey and the urgency of employing foreign doctors. After GHI becomes law our 70 milli-

on citizen will have limited health insurance and private and public healthcare institutions will give service to all of our citizens.

Together with GHI the questions will arise about how foreign and domestic health insurance will be practiced at public and private healthcare institutions, what kind of changes, misinterpretations and opportunities will

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#### Foreign Doctors Employment in Turkey Becoming Law

The most important trouble of our country in healthcare is doctor shortage and around 100.000 doctors serve to our 70.000 population. Our country is in WHO Europe region and there are 53 countries here. Our country is ranked 52nd as per doctor/population ratio! The government has launched works for both doctor distribution balance and providing productivity.

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#### 1<sup>st</sup> International Health Tourism Congress Conveyed to the Grand Assembly By A Parliamentary Question

CHP Uşak MP, Osman COŞKUNOĞLU conveyed 1<sup>st</sup> International Health Tourism Congress to the Grand Assembly by a parliamentary question. Mr. Coşkunoğlu had incorrect information about our congress without investigating deeply though the real reason for the question was unknown. Perhaps he couldn't get his head round the great success.

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#### The Congress of Public Private Partnership Will be Held

The law related with the practices of a new financing method, 3P (Public-Private-Partnership) in health has come into force in the official gazette. In the framework of this legislation the works regarding the building healthcare cities have still kept going.

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## Reimbursement Procedures in Health Tourism and "Interoperability"

Guest Writer



Dr. S. Haluk ÖZSARI\*

The first step of the reimbursement procedures in health tourism starts whether consumer has health insurance or not. If consumer has a health insurance policy the insurance company will pay all the health expenditures. If consumer has not a health insurance policy consumer will pay all the health expenditures by "out of pocket payments"

The second step of the reimbursement procedures in health tourism is whether public or private insurance. If consumer has a public health insurance policy the insurance company will pay all the health expenditures by the concept of "equal services" by international agreements and then it completes "out of pocket payments". If not public health insurance consumer will pay all the health expenditures by "out of pocket payments". If consumer has a private health insurance policy the insurance company will pay all the health expenditures by the policy coverage and then it completes "out of pocket payments". On the other hand, If consumer has a travel health insurance policy the insurance company will pay only acute cases and then it completes "out of pocket payments".

The evaluation criteria of insurance companies are policy coverage, deductible policy, service delivery network, quality, customer satisfaction and reimbursement terms. There are some parameters on this reimbursement issue; like that reliability, coding system (DRGs), terms of payment, timetable of payment, malpractice concerns, co-payment, fraud rate.

Critical points on behalf of consumers are waiting list, treatment, service quality, "out-of-pocket payments", service cost, reliability, social benefits. There are some critical points for insurance companies; policy coverage, service delivery network, reimbursement terms, service cost, fraud rate.

Lastly, "interoperability" must be focus on health tourism; and also the main part of this focus should be public sector, private sector, academic area, media and NGOs.

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## Undersecretary of Health Ministry Received Information About the Works of Our Association and Symposium

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come out. Her here for that reason we organize a training symposium where GSI concerned topics and particularly GSI practices at public hospitals will be discussed.

As it is known 5 million Turkish expatriates living in Europe visit and leave our country during the entire year, primarily at summer season. Meanwhile since our country is a tourism paradise over 20 million tourists per year visit our country. Over 10 million vehicles flow on the roads and unfortunately many accidents happen every day. Although treatment expenses of casualties have to be paid by compulsory traffic insurance or motor insurance it is generally paid by social security organizations (Bağ-Kur, Sigorta, Emekli Sandığı vs). 1% of the society has individual private health insurance. Though they mostly go to the private hospitals they can also go to the public hospitals.

In short the below topics will be discussed at the symposium:

- Turkish expatriates in Europe,
- Our citizens with individual private health insurance,
- The position of casualties at traffic accidents,
- Tourists visiting our country,
- Healthcare services given to long term foreign inhabitants of our country.

This group will be able to receive healthcare services at the public and private healthcare institutions because of their individual private insurance coverage.

The managers from the public and private healthcare institutions, insurers, tourism related people and the related ministry officials will participate in the symposium where the practices concerned the above will be discussed.

## 1<sup>st</sup> International Health Tourism Congress Conveyed to the Grand Assembly By a Parliamentary Question

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Contrarily we expected an attitude of being a representative of the public that supports the efforts of the promotion of health tourism, which it should be made by the state and it couldn't be afforded by the private sector. He obtained incorrect and groundless information such that there wasn't any foreign attendance, the congress didn't have any international eligibility and the public funds were released for meeting attendant fees.

Through question it was mentioned that false statement was declared since there were no foreign attendance available. Actually there were 53 foreign attendants available including primarily Deputy Health Ministers of Bulgaria, Macedonia and the Undersecretary of Albania Health Ministry, many other dignitaries, foreign investors and sector representatives. A real international congress was held by the attendance of 25 separate countries. For the congress even 1 YTL financial support from the Health Ministry wasn't received. However since the health ministry was

aware of the importance of health tourism it supported the event and embraced it for the future of the country by showing up at ministerial level. Also the Culture and Tourism Ministry gave support to the future of the country by taking sides with us. Those are more important issues than financial supports. The entire finance of the congress was met by the sponsor firms, attendance fees and the association.

Everybody in health and tourism sector, even governmental executives can be a member of our association and chosen to governing boards. Our members can also be a member of other associations. Consequently it is a significant leap by which health tourism has come to the agenda of the country, press and Turkish Grand National Assembly.

The only sad issue is to put forth such displeased approaches instead of supporting the promotion of health tourism altogether both by financially and morally.

## Future Tourism Staff Grows Up

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Sungurlu and Asst. Prof. of the Faculty of Commerce and Tourism Education of Gazi University, Ahmet Tayfun became the lecturers of the panel.

At the panel thermal tourism in our country and the world were compared. After the panel where the importance of thermal tourism for our country, the related problems and resolution advisories were discussed Tourism Practice Laboratories established by the support of European Union Resources were inaugurated by the Undersecretary of the Culture and Tou-

rism Ministry, İsmet Yılmaz, the Vice Chancellor of Gazi University, Prof. Dr. Süleyman Pampal and the Faculty Dean, Prof. Dr. Sa-nem Alkibay who all also attended to the panel. The laboratories with practicing rooms, restaurant, kitchen, laundry and PC rooms that grow up future tourism staff fully equipped received appreciation by the guests.

The students grown up by those capabilities told that in the future they would also contribute to health tourism as in other branches of tourism.

## Foreign Doctors Employment In Turkey Becoming Law

Baş tarafı 1. sayfada

By the legal regulations put into effect on 15 February 2008 the current available distribution of both private sector and healthcare staff have been tried to be balanced. Now, the law draft for full day work of doctors proposing either to work for private sector or the public is at its last stage to be sent to the Grand Assembly.

All these are carried out to reduce doctor shortage a tiny bit. For solving the actual problem it was met by HEA (YÖK) and agreed with them to increase quotas of medical faculties.

Additionally it has to be paved the ways for foreign doctors employment in order to increase available doctor numbers and improve health tourism. There are around 3000 medical faculty graduates educated in Turkey with foreign origin. Meanwhile the employment of the doctors whose equivalence

determined by HEA (YÖK) educated abroad will be provided in our country.

The government has been intent on the law. Previously the law was passed through the Grand Assembly but it was vetoed by the president of republic of the time. While the law is sent to the Grand Assembly again it is looked certain that it will become law this time.

In case the employment of foreign doctors in our country becomes law health tourism investors abroad will come together with finance and doctors and invest accordingly. Then it will be a great progress for the improvement of health tourism in our country. Thus the solutions will be provided without causing doctor shortage to block health tourism improvements achieving a lot of income for the country.

## 1<sup>st</sup> International Health Tourism Congress Created Great Reactions In Both Turkey and the World

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the congress initialized business contacts with the companies abroad. Business deals with Syria and Jordan with regards to hospital automation and software field were done. It was well understood by the sector that where and why the patients in USA and EU went abroad in medical tourism. Business meetings were held and business deals were carried out related with bringing patients from USA and UK. The information about medical tourism practices in the world was obtained. With the worldwide known medical tourism authorities it was planned to organize training seminars and workshops in Turkey within the year.

Meetings were held for thermal investments in Turkey. Particularly it was focused on building elderly care resorts and the necessity for training qualified staff for elderly and handicapped care. Also the necessity for passing an immediate law to employ foreign doctors in order to improve health tourism and provide hospital investments abroad was emphasized.

It was stressed that our country was a country of opportunities for the investors of Arab and Gulf Countries in thermal field. It was also realised that Middle Asia was an untouched region in terms of health tourism.

The Association of Improving Health Tourism has achieved great success from the point of our country health tourism sector. The requests that asked annual and more extensive repeats of the congress by the participants and lecturers were conveyed to the association authorities.

Our country target should be got %10 of USD 100 billion world turnover in health tourism field. Employment for our unemployed youth who worked for 4 months and were jobless for the rest, 8 months and 12 months full business of the tourism establishments that were inactive for the most of the year are quite important aspects. For that reason the state should give support and subsidy to tourism sector.

In summary one of the most important ways of increasing tourism income is to attach great importance to health tourism issue, to support it and to bring it to a national policy.

## The Congress Of Public Private Partnership Will Be Held

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It has been planned to build big health facilities in 16 separate parts of our country by the 3P. The projects of those in Bilkent and Etilik districts of Ankara have come to their last stages. When those projects are put into practice Ankara will become a candidate to be one of the leading health centers of our country and the world.

In order to promote similar projects the preparatory works for Health City Projects in many cities has been performed. In Health City Project huge campuses involving big hospitals with 500-1000 beds, recreational facilities and all kind of infrastructure are planned to build. Companies will manage the establishments out of the medical services at the facilities that they have built by built operate transfer model up to 49 years and transfer them to the state later.

A rather comprehensive congress regarding the issue will be held in Istanbul Wow Hotels & Convention Center on 04-06 June 2008. It looks that there is great interest in the congress that will be attended by the investors and representatives of the leading finance sector of the world. (For information: www.kamuozeletakligi.org www.saglikentleri.org)

# What do patients seek while going overseas for medical services. Key Evaluation criteria for selection of a medical centre, overseas.



**Anil K. Maini**  
President-Corporate Development,  
Apollo Hospitals Group, India

Medical travel has been defined where healthcare and travel converges to provide a wonderful experience to the people who seek healthcare service beyond the territory of their own country.

- Concept ancient with locations linked to specific cures
- Your USP has to be a combination of treatment of acute illness, focus on wellness, rejuvenation & health coupled with a holiday to provide a holistic experience
- Success driven by seamless integration of two seemingly unrelated industries- Healthcare, Tourism & Hospitality
- Now an integral part of the tourism portfolio of several countries
- Per capita expenditure of medical tourist considerably higher than other tourism product purchases
- The global medical travel market is estimated at US \$40 billion and is likely to grow annually at 20%.

#### Current Global Scenario:

- Thailand has emerged as the largest destination for medical tourism, for patients mainly from Middle East, US and UK.
- Jordan mainly attracts patients from Middle East primarily for organ transplant, fertility treatment and cardiac care.
- Turkey mainly attracts patients from the European Union and now also from North America.

#### What prompts these Medical travelers to seek treatment overseas:

- Aging overseas population.
- High cost of healthcare in developed countries.

- Long waiting periods for tertiary care.
- Lack of medical infrastructure in home country.
- Large un-insured & under insured healthcare market.

**Service to the patients starts from the moment they contact the Hospital till the time they land in your country and leave back for their home country. Some of these support services include:**

- Airport pick-up & drop
- Travel/Visa arrangements
- Translators & Interpreters
- Coordinating appointments
- Accommodation for companions
- Locker facilities
- Internet Access & Mobile Phones
- Cuisine to suit patients palate

**For travel overseas for healthcare, the following criteria is paramount to the medical traveler especially from the USA and developed countries:**

- JCI Accreditation
- Hospital reputation
- Doctors training & reputation
- English speaking Nurses & Staff
- Cost
- Post-operative care
- Proximity
- Convenience
- Visa availability
- Cultural similarities
- Family and friends' recommendation
- Choice of city with best connectivity – direct flights.

#### Other Criteria:

- The “gold standard” perceived by patients is not confined to the quality of medical treatment alone, and often includes other services offered to the patients and their families.
- Patients seeking overseas treatment typically travel with their family members. Hence, non-medical services such as logistics arrangements and hospitality services are viewed to be key services offered by hospitals/destinations.
- One-stop-shop arrangements offered by medical providers for the patient's medical requirements, as well as accom-

modations and travel needs for the patient's family are an additional bonus for medical travelers.

- Affluent patients are willing to pay more for world-class treatment and frequently travel to “gold standard” destinations, like Singapore.
- These patients are typically price inelastic and represent a more lucrative revenue stream and a willingness to travel further distances.
- However, reputation of a medical institute & International Accreditation is important to attract these discerning patients.

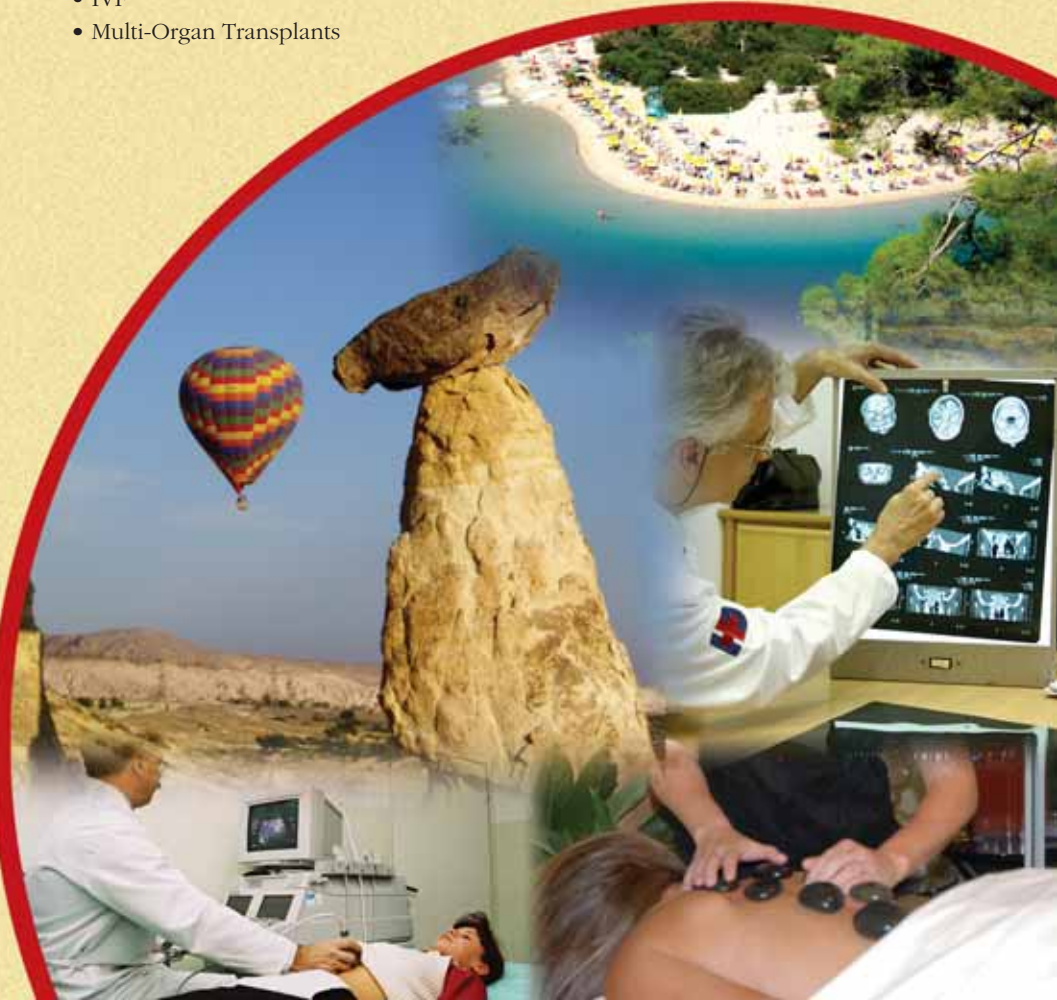
**Mostly patients are coming for the following procedures, especially to India:**

- Joint Replacements
- Cardiology
- Cosmetic Surgery & Dental
- Spine Surgery
- Cochlear Implants
- Bariatric Surgery (Gastric Banding)
- Cancer
- IVF
- Multi-Organ Transplants

#### Other Concerns:

- Post surgery care is a major concern for many overseas patients.
- Patients, who have returned to their home country, have expressed concerns over the ability to obtain prescribed medication or medical care, should there be complications after the surgery.
- There is always a legal liability concern when dealing with the healthcare industry.
- The healthcare industry is a regulated business entwined with liability issues.
- Therefore, countries enact policies that address this concern on an individual basis which suits them.

Medical institutions seeking to attract foreign patients should consider working with local hospitals for referrals and offering complete care for the patient after they have returned to their home country. Telemedicine is one such opportunity which can be utilised effectively for this purpose.



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# Final Declaration Of The 1<sup>st</sup> International Health Tourism Congress Was Released

In the 1<sup>st</sup> International Health Tourism Congress (14-17 March 2008 Belek/Antalya) there were 53 foreign attendants from 25 different countries (Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Macedonia, Malta, Moldavia, NCTR, Syria, Sweden, UK, USA and Uzbekistan) and 300 domestic attendants. The Health Minister Prof. Dr. Recep AKDAĞ, the Undersecretary of Culture and Tourism Ministry İsmet YILMAZ, the Deputy Undersecretary of the Health Ministry Prof. Dr. Nihat TOSUN, the Head of Health and Social Affairs Commission of Turkish Grand National Assembly Prof. Dr. Cevdet ERDÖL, the Head of Public Works, Reconstruction, Transportation and Tourism Commission of Turkish Grand National Assembly Mustafa DEMİR, Istanbul PM charged with AK Party Foreign Affairs Egemen Bağış, Antalya PM Abdurrahman ARICI, the Governor of Antalya Alaattin YÜKSEL, the Head of TURSAB Başaran ULUSOY and a lot of high level officials and sector representatives were also available.



1- By this congress Turkey has come to a serious turning point in 2008 from the point of health tourism.

2- It should be paved the ways for employing foreign medical doctors required by the sector to overcome the medical doctors' shortage.

3- In the last legislative arrangement of the Health Ministry it should be bestowed favor on planning of the hospitals used for health tourism.

4- The facilities providing health tourism services must be accredited and have educated staff with foreign languages and should be inspected.

5- In addition to the Health and the Culture and Tourism Ministries participation the attendance of the heads of the related commissions to the congress make the intentions and efforts of supports to the sector obvious.

6- The importance of health tourism for our country has been displayed by the at-

tendance of the representatives of the government, CSA and sector.

7- As a consequence of speeches during the congress it has been deduced that health tourism is needed to be under three main headings and evaluated as MEDICAL TOURISM, THERMAL TOURISM and ELDERLY TOURISM.

8- The progress of health tourism in the world should be traced and the related knowledge should be shared. The public, CSA and private sector partnership and the related education conferences should be continued. Our association will play a leading role on this issue.

9- It has been understood that health tourism is one of the most significant alternative tourism types to expand tourism activities to 12 months.

10- Our country has outstanding potentials for health tourism owing to its climate, natural beauties, cultural heritage, geopolitical position, thermal resources

and current progress in health in recent years.

11- Establishing elderly care resorts and districts and putting them into health tourism service carry great importance. (Our plateaus rather fit in this purpose).

12- The world population is growing old everyday. The elderly population rate in the world approaches to the 20% of the total world population. The young population of our country is an important source that will continue for long years. We can give the best elderly care services to the elderly coming from abroad by our hospitable culture, traditions and customs.

13- The turnover of the world health tourism is around USD 100 billion. For our country 10% of this turnover, USD 10 billion/per year revenue has been targeted within upcoming 3-4 years.

14- New departments at vocational high schools and vocational school of higher education should be opened to educa-

te the staff serving to elderly and handicapped tourism.

15- In order to attract health tourism investment to our country publicity and subsidy should be made more attractive.

16- From now on our association has decided to organize the Health Tourism Congress in Spring months of each year with the attendance of the government and the sector representatives.

17- In parallel to the recommendations and requests from the most of the congress' attendants the need for holding symposiums, panels and consultation meetings in specific regions with specific topics has been come up by the congress in 2009. (For instance, the coverage of international agreements and our expatriates in Europe, the place of Cappadocia in health tourism, the place and challenges of thermals in health tourism etc).