



The role and importance of Turkey in the context of health tourism

Guest Writer



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Health tourism is a combination of health and tourism; to the general public it means the act of travel and business. Briefly it can be defined as the act of visiting another location for medical purposes and whilst at this location taking the advantage to explore the various tourism opportunities in that particular location.

What are the reasons making people live their native area, city, country or continent to seek their health needs?

There are many factors contributing to these, some of them include:

1. The lack of sufficient health institutions in their native area.
2. Health services in their native area are very expensive.
3. The medical equipments used by the physicians in their native location is not appealing.
4. Individuals wanting to conceal their medical and surgery procedures due to one or the other reasons.
5. Recommendations by friends and relatives concerning their treatment and patient satisfaction.

There are many other reasons together with the above that affect patient movement. In a sense it also means providing medical services together with extra medical services to the individual and relatives at the same time.

During the past few years there is a boost in the health tourism sector and the entire world is searching for better ways to improve and better the health tourism so as to be recognized among the leading health tourism players. Turkey is one of the lucky countries that have all these advantages. Turkey with its natural beauties, historical and cultural richness and the advanced medical facilities makes it one of the leading countries in the world.

The only thing Turkey needs to do is to express and promote these potentials. The best way to do these promotion is to participate in the health tourism activities been organized around the world and host such organizations to these respect Turkey as well, hence putting across our ideas and self confidence in the health tourism sector.

My best regards to all the parties putting their effort into this area and also to those who helped with the journal you are reading.

Public private partnership Symposium ended

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private partnership. The minister Akdağ stated that starting from 2008 they are going to start implementing a new financing model, public-private partnership for the constructions of health institutions. The health campus built by the private sector would be medically managed by the ministry of health. The health minister Prof. Recep Akdağ stated, "With this system the financial and dynamic aspect of the private sector and rendering of health service to the public is covered".

The health minister stated that the Public-private-partnership -3P is been implemented in many European countries and USA, the main role of the public is maintained with this system. He also stated "the private sector can render some part of this service, but the majority of the institutions as it is today would still be owned by the public".

The chairman of the Symposium Dr. Erkan Topal public private partnership program advisor, ministry of health stated that campus hospitals with all specialists branches is still in the project phase, and that the bid for general hospitals would start at the end of February. Dr. Topal stated, the ministry of health is analyzing the models been implemented in UK, Italy, Australia, Spain, and that their system is similar to the system used in UK because the medical services is rendered by the public.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Metin Doğan, the chairman of SAYED said "they are going to organize a congress in April to discuss comprehensively the health regulations and new procedures in health. 2000 or so participants are expected to attend the health 2008 congress in April in Antalya".

The 1st International Health Congress Would Be Held On March 2008 In Belek, Antalya.

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health and culture and tourism is almost complete with the preparations of the congress to be held on 14-17 March 2008 in Belek, Ankara.

In respect to this topic, Dr. Dursun Aydın the Chairman of the Association of Improving Health Tourism had this to say: "Today, the entire world is in search for new alternative ways of reducing their health service expenses. International patient movements for economical and better quality of health services have increased over recent years. Economic reasons, technological differences and tourism opportunities influence international patient movements. Furthermore, the advanced countries in the tourism sector are in search of alternative ways of expanding their tourism activities over a 12 month period.

Over the past years, the health institutions

and spa resorts in our country has advanced and increased in number. Most of our institutions are of international standards and quality. In this sense good investment in this area would benefit both our investors as well as our country.

However; despite all these tourism potentials in our country, promotion and marketing abroad has not been done thoroughly. Wide scale organizations to bring all the health tourism players together were never organized.

The 1st International Health Tourism Congress to be held on 14-17 March 2008 shall bring national and international participants together and constitute a basis for comprehensive discussions pertaining to the current situation and future of health tourism. In this regard, the Congress will be a significant start in rectifying the deficiency in this area".

2008 world Health tourism congresses and exhibitions

Baş tarafı 1. sayfada

like UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and countries like Syria, Jordan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and many countries in the middle east which are health tourism potentials are always involved in these organizations. This year health tourist congresses is been organized in Turkey,

Germany, Spain and Malta. Health tourism promotion has recently gained much importance in the world. Serious investments are been made in this sector with the main aim of "reducing the health service expenses without reducing the quality".

Some of the 2008 world health tourism activities

CONGRESS/EXHIBITION	COUNTRY	DATE	WEB
GAIA- INTERNATIONAL EVENT - MEDICAL TRAVEL BUSINESS CONGRESS 2008	MALTA	25-27 JANUARY 2008	www.gaiaint.com
ARAB HEALTH EXHIBITION & CONGRESS	UAE	27-31 JANUARY 2008	www.arabhealthonline.com
MEDICAL TRAVEL WORLD CONGRESS 2008	MALAYSIA	25-28 FEBRUARY 2008	www.magenta-global.com.sg/healthcare/
1. ULUSLARARASI SAĞLIK TURİZMİ KONGRESİ	TURKEY	14-17 MARCH 2008	www.saglikturizmi2008.org
MEDICAL TOURISM ASIA 2008	SINGAPORE	25-28 MARCH 2008	www.medicaltourism-asia.com
3RD ANNUAL WORLD HEALTH TOURISM CONGRESS	SPAIN	4-6 APRIL 2008	www.healthtourismcongress.com
ECHT 2008 EUROPEAN CONGRESS HEALTH TOURISM	GERMANY	9-11 APRIL 2008	www.congress-echt.com
MIDDLE EAST HEALTHCARE EXPANSION BUSINESS CLUB MEETING SERIES	UAE	12-13 MAY 2008	www.healthcarebcm.com

Turkey is now going to have a health tourism guide

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For easy reference and reading the health tourism related Institutions and firms would be categorized in the health tourism guidebook as follows:

- Health Institutions
- Thermal, spa, wellness centers
- VIP Hotels
- Tourism Agencies
- Others

Thanks to the Association of Improving Health Tourism this guidebook the health tourism related institutions and organizations, and profitable health tourism institutions would be much easier to access internationally. With the support from the Ministry of Health and The Ministry of Culture and Tourism the association is on its course with this and other international works which would make a breakthrough for our country. The association is also organizing the 1st international health tourism congress on March 2008 in Belek Antalya. All these intense program and work of the association shows how determined the association plans to promote the health tourism of our country.

Samsun model in the context of health tourism

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the governorship and a common Samsun stand is rented with all the partners displaying their various promotional materials together hence accomplished to reduce the huge burden of such organizations.

An increment in this type of partnership in our country would strengthen the bond between the public and private stakeholders and help the limit the expenses of the private sectors at the same time promoting their cities at a goal... this approach developed by in Samsun to promote their health tourism is a project worth imitating by the other provinces.

Healthex exhibition: lack of participation

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was a general lack of interest from the participant firms, foreign participants and visitors. Many leading hospitals and medical firms were at the exhibition, but the stand of Sağlık Kent (Health City) Samsun had more attention. Participants noted "we are aware our country has great health tourism potential. But the promotion abroad is very weak. Promotion has to be resolved".

Mineral waters and spa treatment in Turkey



Prof. Dr. Zeki KARAGÜLLE

Spa; history and natural riches

The use of thermal and mineral water for health purposes has been in existence since human history. Turkey has scores of mineral and spa resources which are regarded as national heritage. In Turkish language hot water and the places they are found is referred to as "ılıca". The construction of resorts and bath for these purposes is known as "kapalı ılıca" in Turkish which was later transformed to the word "kaplıca" which means thermal/spa in Turkish. When the Turks arrived in Anatolia they modified their "Çerge" (steam bath) tradition with the Roman bath tradition into the "Turkish Hamam". The areas that had thermal water were transformed into water pools for "Turkish spa bathes". Hence using their spa resources for treatment and cleaning purposes. Thanks to the rich thermal water resources of our country, spa is still been used today and plays a major role in socioeconomic status our country. Within the past 10 years modern use of spa for wellness, treatment and rehabilitation has advanced and gained importance in the Turkey and the world, especially in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America due to the academic studies that support its use.

Medical spa treatment (spa cure)

In our country, majority of the public

use the traditional spa in their own way, the application needs to be done in a scientific way. Factors like the healing water, mud, climate, application method, patient age and condition has to be taken into consideration before using Spa for treatment as they affect the treatment.

The appropriate water for bathing is generally between 36-38°C. At this temperature the bath should be 20 minutes and once in a day. The bath should continue for 10-15-21 days, once a day or sometimes twice a day.

The patient should be able to move freely in the bath towel (thermal towel). Thermal water has the effect of increasing the work load of the heart and hence sudden movements, diving into the water and swimming should be avoided. Half bath might be helpful especially for the elderly and patients with mild heart dysfunction. Spa treatment is contraindicated in patients with severe heart dysfunction.

Scientifically proven effects of spa cure

The proven effects of spa cure is to relieve/stop pain, this has been proven by various studies in the world including turkey. The obvious part of spa treatment is that the effect continues even a year after the treatment and patients sometimes reduce the pain killers they use. The pain free effect of spa cure is important especially in rheumatologic diseases; this effect is also

true for general muscle and fatigue pains as well.

The other important effect of spa cure is improving the living standards of patients, that is improving the patient's quality of life at work, socially and in the home. This effect is among the proven long effect (6-9 months) of spa cure.

The general effect of spa cure on the individual is a general relieve and wellness, in other words a healthy body both physically and physiologically is achieved after a two weeks visit to the spa.

Modern working environments and lives together with the stress and lack of physical activities that it carries play a major role in of the chronic diseases of today. If the importance of spa cure as mentioned is well understood and the desire to maintain a healthy life increases, more modern people would patronizing these natural healing opportunities.

Spa and health tourism

The wish and desire to prevent sickness and better healthy life whilst still healthy is now the "new" characteristic of

man. It is that this very point that health tourism comes to play, which is sometimes frequently referred to as "health holiday" or "health on holiday". It is now that we realize the effect of spa environment, free from the stress, fatigue and tensions of our daily lives is ideal for modern man not only physically and mentally, but also creates an ideal atmosphere as well. Together with the unique applications of spa like Hot water baths, drinks, inhalations and steam baths, and the exercise, massage, diet and feeding and many more natural and traditional methods applied in most spa resorts makes it an ideal environment for "health holiday". Meanwhile there is improvement in other cure areas like wellness, fitness, and anti-stress, anti-aging meaning stress and aging prevention. Wellness the "magic" word is derived from the words wellbeing and fitness, which is used to mean choosing spa cure for a holiday-relaxation to improve a healthy life and turning to spa.



Year: 1 Issue: 1 January-February 2008

ISSBN: 1308-0563

www.saglikturizmibulteni.com

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Print Type: Local Periodic Publication
Print Date: 00.01.2008

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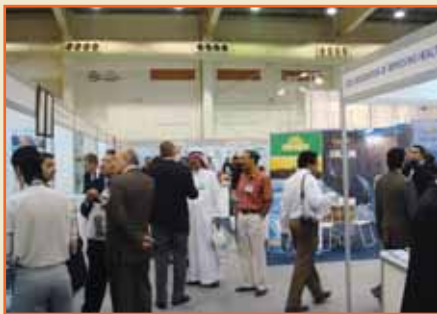


Turkey represented at The Health Tourism Exhibition in Bahrain

With the support of The Ministry of Health of Turkey and The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, 5 of us attend The Exhibition and there was lot of interest especially about Aesthetic Surgery and Spa Tourism

Our association has started various projects aimed at promoting our health tourism potentials to the world and improving the health tourism sector in Turkey.

One of the major decisions taken to achieve these goals is to attend all the health tourism exhibitions and congress in the world. The first of them was accomplished when we attended the Health Tourism Exhibition in Bahrain. We participated with a strong team because of



the support of the ministries of health and culture and tourism. Our stand was very colorful, because we had promotional documents not only of the association but also of promotional materials about Turkey. The General Director of Tourism Promotion of the Ministry Of Culture and Tourism Mr. Özgür ÖZASLAN said to us since you are going to Bahrain to promote our country you can take as many of the promotional brochures and CD with you and we actually took a lot of them with us to the exhibition.

Our stand had many visitors

Our stand had promotional materials of Turkish Airlines, flag of the Ministry of Health, Turkish flag and many promotional materials of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Our stand was one of the most visited and colorful.

We would not be exaggerating if we say Turkey was displayed at the exhibit-



on. FBM Aesthetic Center a private health clinic in Samsung was at the exhibit-



on as well. Also at the exhibition were exhibitors from the Far East and Middle Eastern countries like Iran, India, Thai-

land, Malaysia, UAE, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Jordan.

During the entire period of the exhibition we made good contacts. In fact, we realized the potential demand for health tourism general and especially towards spa tourism in the Middle East and Gulf countries. Our country with its potentials in this sector needs to take advantage of these demands. During the exhibition we realized the need to have a health tourism guidebook. We are happy we have already started such work to satisfy the demand concerning the guide.

We promoted the congress to be organized in Antalya on 14-17 March 2008.

We visited our ambassador and the minister of health of the kingdom of Bahrain.

We invited our ambassador and the deputy minister of health of the kingdom of Bahrain to our congress.

One of our major deficits was the lack of a general catalogue with all the health tourism related institutions, there was



great demand. We stated we have started the preparations to publish one and



when it is ready we would immediately send a copy.

After the 4 day exhibition, we returned knowing the richness of our neighboring



regions and the demand for health tourism especially spa tourism and most important of all we promoted our nation.

We have plans to attend the 10 or so world health tourism congress and exhibitions been organized. Our second visit is in January 2008 to the Dubai for the Arab health congress and exhibition. We are willing to voluntary promote the health tourism rich potentials of our country.

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