

# Exploring the Nexus of Medical Tourism: Impact on Healthcare Professionals, Facilitators, and Patients – A Case Study of Kolkata

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## Introduction :

Medical tourism as an economic activity has become increasingly popular in recent years, allowing patients to travel beyond their residential place in seek of medical treatment. The convenience, accessibility, and quality of care have made the industry an attractive option for many people across the globe.

However, despite the numerous benefits of medical tourism, there are still lies many unsought ethical considerations faced by the consumers on a regular basis. This presents a significant opportunity for medical institutions as well as ancillary industries to tackle these issues in order to increase their customer base and improve brand value.

To effectively promote increased infusion of medical tourists, it is important to understand the factors that influence patient behaviour in this area. This includes identifying the hurdles faced by them, as well as the possible mitigations to those hurdles.

The rationale is to determine the forces that influence consumers to practice medical tourism, to find out the expectations of overseas patients in respect to health and other services and to study the emergence of ancillary services around this industry. Further, to highlight the probable ethical hiccups with medical tourism in Kolkata along with possible mitigations and what the future beholds for medical tourism in Kolkata. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the academic literature on medical tourism, thus, providing a deeper understanding of the stakeholder perspective. This can inform future research and help to advance our knowledge and understanding of the industry.

Overall, this study has significant practical and theoretical implications, providing valuable insights into both the demand and supply side of the medical tourism industry and informing

the development of more effective strategies for promoting the advancement of the industry.

## Literature Review

**Gupta, (2015)** identifies the elements that make India a desirable location for medical tourism, investigates the expectations of international patients for healthcare and other services, identifies potential problems that may arise from medical tourism in India, and examines the potential for future growth in medical tourism in India with the help of in-depth questionnaires filled out by patients and healthcare executives.

**Reddy (2012)** focus on the main problems and chances that the Indian medical sector has to overcome obstacles both domestically and internationally in order to improve its

medical services. It is necessary to develop mechanisms that will allow foreign tourists travelling for medical purposes to receive visas more quickly. Patients can contact the immigration department at any point of entrance to expedite the process.

**Shetty (2010)** highlight the unequal access to healthcare for the local population and the substantial brain drain as moral problems with the medical tourism sector that have been investigated through the use of both randomised and nonrandomized controlled trials and the body of current literature.

## Objectives of the Study

- To determine the forces that influence consumers to practice medical tourism.
- To find out the expectations of overseas patients in respect to health and other services and also to examine the emergence of ancillary services around this industry.
- To find out the probable ethical hiccups with medical tourism in Kolkata along with possible mitigations.
- To study the future scope of medical tourism in Kolkata.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

The research design is qualitative. This research paper employs a mixed-methods approach. Primary data is collected with the help of interviews with healthcare professionals including support staff, patients and ancillary service providers. Secondary data will include review of existing literature on medical tourism ethics with case studies on medical tourism companies in Kolkata.

### Sample

Data will be collected from existing patients and Executive of the Hospitality industry encompassing the medical and ancillary institutions. The sample size in the present scenario cumulatively is 70 divided as follows:

- Healthcare Executives: 20
- Patients: 35
- Other Service Providers: 15
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### Data Collection

Primary data is collected through in-depth interviews with the aid of structured questionnaire and observation made from the afore mentioned participants.

Examining the content of qualitative data to identify recurring themes, ideas, or opinions. Identifying and analysing themes or patterns within the data to gain insights into underlying meanings and relationships and examining the structure and content of narratives (e.g., stories, experiences) to understand how individuals construct and interpret their experiences.

#### 1.5. Background of Medical Tourism

Several documents about health tourism practices show that, occasionally, authentic and unique cultural resources within a region, in addition to physical attractions, can operate as a stimulant for health tourism. Thousands of years of historical healing systems, including Ayurveda, Chinese traditional medicine, the Mediaeval Islamic Unani medical care system, and modern western treatments, have been used to treat countless patients, regardless of their nation of origin. As a result, the phrase "health tourism" refers to a

wider range of activities, including travel for prayer, meditation, and healing as well as hospital stays and surgeries.

Medical tourism is a subset of health tourism that involves diagnosis, hospitalisation, and surgical procedures to enhance or restore health. As the severity of the condition increases, leisure time and the physical appeal of the destination become less significant.

Patients are now travelling across borders in search of better care than what they can receive in their home country, a phenomenon known as medical tourism. It might have

the following characteristics:

### Emergence of Medical Tourism as an Industry

The forces of globalisation have "de-territorized" the local healthcare delivery activities. Globalisation has enabled many third-world countries to offer healthcare professionals, facilities, and technology that are competitive with the best in the world, thanks to rising healthcare spending. Foreign investment from rich countries is rising in the developing world's healthcare sectors. For instance, Harvard Medicine has collaborated on more than 50 projects in thirty different countries. The United States-based John Hopkins Hospital has teamed up with Apollo Healthcare to boost the expansion of the healthcare sector and broaden the pool of American patients eligible to get care in India.

The healthcare sector underwent a dramatic transformation as a result, offering investors large profits and providing customers with the guarantee that they were getting the best care available. Thanks to expanding investment opportunities, even many low-income countries have increased the standard of care in the fields of medical professionals as well as infrastructure and facilities.

### Stakeholders in the Industry

Numerous parties are involved in the medical tourism sector, and each one is essential to the process of delivering healthcare services to individuals who travel abroad for medical care. The primary players and their specific duties are listed below:

#### Patients:

*Medical tourism mainly focuses on patients as the first stakeholders. Individuals venture abroad in search of medical treatment that is either cheaper, much more accessible or of superior quality compared to what is available in the home country. Researching the best treatment available, selecting competent medical practitioners, learn the advantages and disadvantages of their treatment, making travel and lodging reservations, and obeying aftercare guidelines falls upon patients.*



### Providers of Healthcare:

*Hospitals, clinics and medical workers treating medical tourists are called healthcare providers. Their roles include being able to provide the best healthcare to patients, to provide various treatments and procedures, complying with international accreditations and standards, enabling the efficient exchange of information with patients, and liaising with other interested parties, to keep the patient safe, and keep a patient to confidentiality.*

### Government and Regulation authorities:

*Governments and other regulatory agencies are essential in upholding the ethical standards, controlling the medical tourism business, and offering protection to patients. They also license and accredit medical institutions, certify the quality of care given to the medical tourists, implement law with regards to patient rights, standards of care and health, practices of medical tourism, transparency, and assistance and guidance to pertinent individuals and parties.*

### Insurance Providers:

*Insurance firms help in fueling the aspect of medical tourism in that they insure patients wishing to travel to other countries in search of medical care. They provide international health insurance plans, help patients get remunerated on the medical expenses sustained overseas, negotiate on reduced prices among the medical providers, validate the quality and certification of a foreign facility, and educate the patients about benefits and coverage, among other things.*

### Sector Tourism and Hospitality:

*The travel and hospitality sector is tackling the subject of medical tourism by offering hotel and transportation, travel planning and other auxiliary services to the medical tourists and their associates. Besides coming up with travel packages to suit the demands of the medical tourists, they also support and assist them in their travel arrangements, by providing them with comfortable and safe accommodation, and by promoting tourism among the patient as the patient recovers.*

### Agencies/Facilitators of Medical Tourism:

*The companies that coordinate medical tourism and address the patients and healthcare providers as the middleman are referred to as the medical tourism facilitators. They can help the patients to identify competent medical providers, make the appointments, help in easy access of medically visas and other relevant documents, provide travel arrangements, according to the concierge services, providing information and assisting a throughout the process, and communication between the patients and the medical personnel.*

### Professional Groups and Advocacy Groups:

*These professional associations and advocacy groups represent the interest of the patients, healthcare professionals and other stakeholders in the medical tourism business. Besides educating and train the healthcare professionals, they also conduct research studies on the trends in the industry, data analysis, coordination, collaboration with the governmental agencies and regulatory bodies, promotion of the ethics and best practices, protecting the rights and safety of the patients, and education of the population about the benefits and weakness of the medical services during the medical tourism process.*

### **Ethical issues in Medical Tourism**

All such situations when any of the moral principles that should be regarded as socially acceptable and maintained, may be violated, at least partly, as defined by Swisher et al (2005) are called ethical issue. Patient autonomy, equity, and quality of care happen to be

the three key ethical principles that find a lot of coverage in terms of medical tourism.

### **Patient Autonomy:**

Patient autonomy is rightly based on the consent of patients to competently determine their medical treatment including the form of adapted care, the staff used and the place of treatment. Medical tourists are often forced to select treatment and practitioners in unfamiliar settings.

### **Equity:**

Healthcare equity is equal and egalitarian access to medical care that is not affected by the citizenship, geography or socioeconomic status. The result of medical tourism can be due to differences in access to health services. Individuals in economically advanced nations can do so at greater means to be able to seek therapy, contrary to the situations where patients in less well-off places cannot do the same thing. This brings insidious concerns of equity and the enlarging healthcare disparities.

### **Quality of Care:**

The concept of quality of care includes such elements of healthcare services as effectiveness, safety, patient-centeredness, timeliness, efficiency and equity. Health tourism becomes an obstacle to quality and control of medical care. Patients can have problems with after care when they receive back home, language barrier or different medical standards. Quality assurance methods as well as accrediting of the institution and open lines of communication regarding the expected outcomes and risks are all that would need to be applied in ensuring the measure of treatment in medical tourism.

## **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

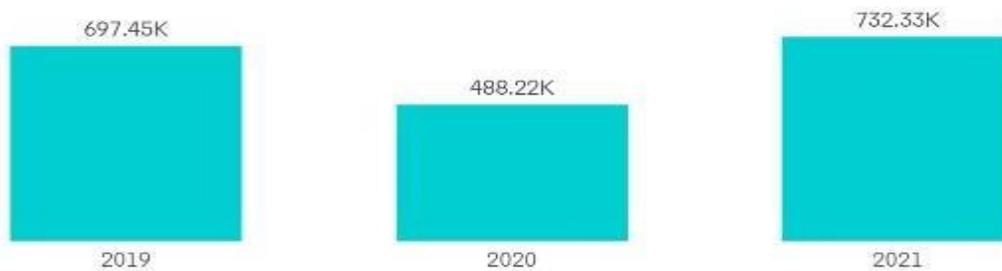
India medical tourism market is expected to reach USD 7.69 billion in the year 2024 and is estimated to rise at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13.23 per cent to arrive at the level of USD 14.31 billion in the year 2029.

Similar to the rest of the world, the Covid-19 pandemic caused devastating effects on the India medical tourism market as well. Due to the extensive restrictions of travelling with the pandemic, as well as lockdowns, medical tourism decreased to a great extent since patients could no longer travel to receive medical procedures. The preference of patients to avoid

travelling made them demand less of non-essential aspects of medical treatment, which affected India medical tourism market. Additionally, many hospitals were converted to treat Covid-19 patients, which reduced the number of medical services available to people from other countries.

India gained popularity as a medical tourism destination because of its state-of-the-art medical facilities, highly qualified medical staff, and more affordable medical treatment than in wealthy nations. Numerous medical treatments, such as organ transplantation, cosmetic surgery, dental care, cardiac surgery, and traditional medicine, are provided by the India Medical Tourism Market. To encourage medical tourism, the Indian government launched several programmes and regulations, including the creation of designated medical tourism zones and expedited visa application procedures. Furthermore, a sizable number of physicians and nurses in India know English, which facilitates communication between patients from English speaking nations and their healthcare providers.

Medical Tourism Numbers, In India, 2019-2021



*Figure showing the number of foreign medical tourists in India for the years 2019, 2020, 2021 (Source: Medical Tourism industry report by Mordorintelligence)*

Number of Healthcare Facilities, In India, 2019-2027

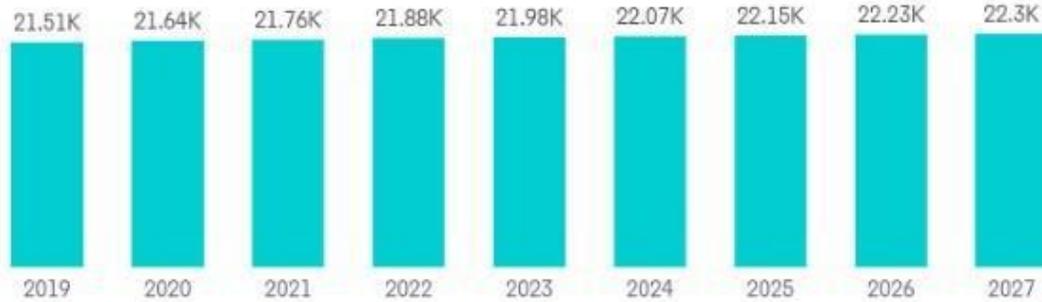


Figure showing the number of healthcare facilities from the years 2019-2027

(Source: Medical Tourism industry report by Mordorintelligence)

#### Kolkata: A Medical Tourism Destination in Eastern India

Price-conscious patients from lower-and middle-income nations, like as Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan, Pakistan, and Nigeria, have made Kolkata a major medical tourism destination. These nations account for a sizable portion of the demand for medical tourism in India. Despite having a rich history in medical research, the political unrest of the 1970s caused Kolkata's medical infrastructure to lose its lustre. However, the city's healthcare landscape has lately evolved because of significant expenditures and the opening of large corporate hospitals. Currently, Kolkata can offer reasonably priced, conveniently accessible medical care, which draws a large number of both domestic and international patients from neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal, etc.

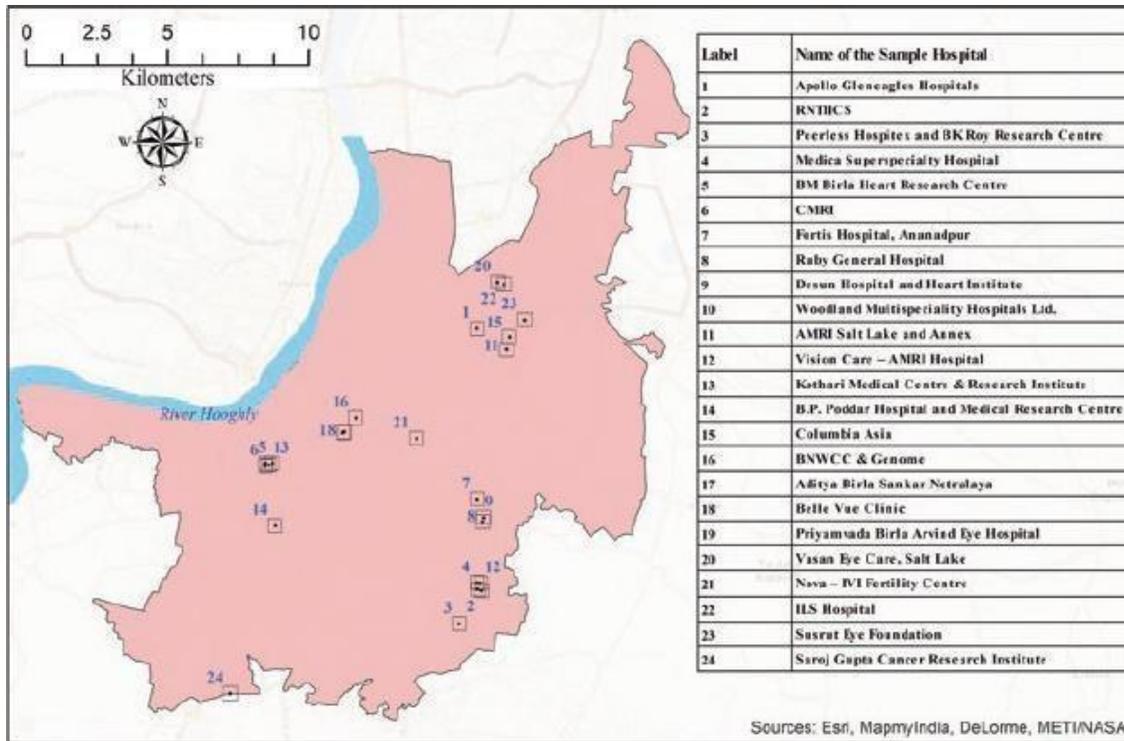


Fig: Major medical tourism sites in and around Kolkata (Source: MapmyIndia)

Apollo Gleneagles Hospital, AMRI Hospitals Ltd., Belle Vue Clinic, Bhagirathi Neotia Woman and Child Care Centre, BP Poddar Hospital and Medical Research Centre, CMRI, Sri Aurovindo Seva Kendra (EEDF), Fortis Hospital Ltd., Mercy Hospital, Medica Super specialty Hospital, Peerless Hospital & B.K. Roy Research Centre, Ruby General Hospital, West Bank Hospital, and Woodland Multispecialty Hospitals are the sixteen private hospitals that make up the Association of Hospitals of Eastern India (AHEI). This group is regarded as one of Eastern India's main market participants. The globe has become interested in the international quality services that are offered at a fraction of the cost, without any waiting time, and with friendly hospitality. Bangladeshi patients currently make up about 17% of all Outpatient Department (OPD) visits in Kolkata's private hospitals, an unprecedented percentage considering the number had decreased to zero throughout the Covid and post-Covid periods. Patients from Bangladesh make up 98% of the total number of patients, although a small number of patients from the USA and Europe are now being treated in the city at private facilities. These people are often coming for treatment, particularly procedures, which are significantly more expensive back home. According to the Association of Hospitals, the percentage of international patients admitted—mostly from Bangladesh, with a

small number from Nepal and Bhutan—has increased from 7%–8% in the pre-Covid era to 12% at this time. of India's east (AHEI).

After COVID, the number of Bangladeshi patients in hospitals has steadily increased. While the increase in admissions has been more narrowly distributed, it has been higher at the OPDs. Overall notwithstanding, there has been an increase in visitors from the bordering nation. However, there are still not many patients from neighbouring nations like Nepal and Bhutan. The majority of Nepali patients choose Delhi above other cities for their medical care, most likely due to the country's improved connectivity to our capital. Few flights operate between Kolkata and Kathmandu, according to AHEI President Rupak Barua.

Approximately 6,500 patients from Bangladesh are seen each month by AMRI Hospitals, which is now owned by Manipal Hospitals, across its three locations in Dhakuria, Mukundapur, and Salt Lake. The majority of these individuals seek care in OPDs. Approximately one thousand Bangladeshi patients a month, including about eighty indoor patients, are presently admitted to Ruby General Hospital. The number of patients from Bangladesh visiting the RN Tagore International Institute of Cardiac Sciences (RTIICS) has increased as well. Every year, between 30,000 and 36,000 medical tourists visit the RTIICS and other group hospital's outpatient department. Between October 23 and March 24, patients from Bangladesh were consistently seen at Disha Eye Hospitals' various offices. Even hospitals outside of the Bypass, who get very few patients from the bordering nation, have noticed a little increase in the number of Bangla patients they see.

It has been noted that Bangladesh, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Pakistan, and Europe are the main regions that produce medical tourism, according to Apollo Gleneagles Hospital, the forerunner of medical tourism in Kolkata. The most sought-after medical tourism offerings are organ transplants (kidney, liver, and bone marrow), onco care and surgery, orthopedics (including knee and joint replacement), cardiac care, neurology, and thorough health screening. However, there is also documentation of an increase in foreign patients receiving care for general surgery, diabetes, and urology.

#### **Facilities for Medical Tourists by Hospitals in Kolkata**

Numerous studies demonstrate how hospital design and spaces have been purposefully

altered by medical tourism ; similarly, like hotels, the majority of hospitals in Kolkata provide guests and family with adjoining rooms. These hospitals are tastefully decorated, contemporary, and comfortable—just like an opulent hotel. The patient rooms are tastefully decorated, featuring a sofa bed, table, chairs, high-speed internet, a TV with cable, and an attached balcony. To imitate a hotel, consideration is given to the presumptive preferences of patients and went with guests. Patients can choose special diet options in addition to continental, halal, Chinese, and local delicacies. To meet the needs of patients from abroad, hospitals have also built cafeterias, gyms, bookstalls, and patient desks. Super specialty hospitals have created unique wards and desks specifically for serving international patients, such as international patients' desks or help desks for foreign patients.

Following are extracts from the Hospital Website specifically focusing on facilities for international patients. It is astonishing to note that 100% of the surveyed hospital exhibit separate facilities for international patients-

Sl No.	Hospital Surveyed	Facilities Listed on their Website
1.	B.M Birla Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Travel, Visa Assistance and Airport Assistance</li><li>• Hotels and Lodging Arrangements</li><li>• Special Services for dining &amp; Entertainment</li><li>• Choice of International Cuisine</li><li>• Language Interpretation services</li><li>• Same day appointments &amp; express check-ins</li></ul>



2.	ILS Hospitals, Howrah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical Tourism Assistance</li><li>• Customized Treatment Packages</li><li>• Language Assistance</li><li>• Accommodation and Travel Support</li><li>• Special Assistance for Bangladeshi Nationals</li><li>• Patient service centres at Cumilla, Akhaura, Brahman Baria and Bhairab</li><li>• Separate rooms for offering prayer and breastfeeding infants</li><li>• Tie-up with local hotels for staying</li><li>• Forex services for travelling purposes</li><li>• Special facility for commuting from the immigration centre to the hospital</li></ul>
3.	Narayana Super speciality Hospital, Howrah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concierge Services</li><li>• Language Interpretation Services</li><li>• Medical opinion &amp; Visa invitation</li><li>• Narayana Health Virtual Tour</li><li>• International Cuisine</li><li>• Prayer Room</li></ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International Television</li><li>• Travel &amp; Tour Assistance</li><li>• Medical/Legal Assistance</li><li>• Patient Rooms</li><li>• Post Travel Medical Care</li></ul>
4.	Sankara Netralaya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fixing of appointment with specialist ophthalmologist</li><li>• Accommodation for the duration of stay</li><li>• Ticket reservations</li></ul> <p>A Detailed Appointment, Transport, Stay &amp; Accommodation is provided for the Tourists of Oman &amp; Mauritius</p>

5.	Desun Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Needs</li> <li>• Lodging/ Boarding Arrangements</li> <li>• Travel Arrangements</li> <li>• Financial Assistance</li> <li>• NRI and International Patient Help Desk</li> </ul>
6.	Ruby General Hospitals	(Detailed provided only on request)
7.	AMRI, Mukundapur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visa Invitation Letter &amp; Extension Support</li> <li>• Guest house &amp; Hotel Booking Assistance</li> <li>• Priority Appointment Services</li> <li>• Pick Up &amp; Drop Facility</li> <li>• Online Consultation Facility</li> <li>• Exclusive International Patient Service Desk</li> </ul>
8.	Nova IVF Fertility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel Booking</li> <li>• Accommodation</li> <li>• Patient Follow-Up</li> </ul>

Source: Primary Survey, 2025

### Case Study with an Example.....

One of the most well-known medical tourism businesses in India is called India treatments, and it is situated in Kolkata. an MSME (Government of India) recognised organisation that has obtained ISO 9001:2015 certification. India Treatments is one of the most sought-after medical tourism firms in India and overseas because it was formed by top healthcare professionals with extensive national and international experience in the healthcare industry. The justification for their basis is that it is very impossible for any patient to choose the appropriate physician for their current medical condition and even to obtain all relevant information about the full course of therapy, including the associated costs. Here is where Indiatreatments come into play, helping patients not only find the best online doctor appointment within their budget but also giving them access to the best physicians and hospitals in India, all in the name of providing a Happy Medical Journey.

- Hospitals (more than ten leading healthcare providers in Kolkata) are among their partners.
- Diagnostic services (Eastern Diagnostics, Suraksha Diagnostics, and Apollo Diagnostics)

- Accommodations (Oyo, Fab Hotels, etc.)
- Travel Companions (My Vacationers)

The following are the services they offer:

#### Development of Treatment Packages and Consultation Services

1. Curriculum Vitae for Physicians
2. A Second Opinion
3. Economical Treatment Strategies
4. Assistance with Medical Visas
5. Rehabilitation Plan
6. Individualized case coordinator
7. Communication & Interpretation
8. Assistance with arrival and departure at airports

The respondents had mostly praises for the organisation except they mentioned that the prices charged were considerably steep but given the urgency faced, they had to anyways opt for that criteria.

#### Risks and Opportunities

- Patients can browse websites since Internet facilities are available to them. Patients and patient parties can connect directly or view the website blog and conversations about the department, doctor, and hospital infrastructure based on the information provided there. They can also double-check with their local communities. As a result, hospital authorities have a chance and must spend money marketing their facilities abroad. The hospital with the highest level of transparency will do better.
- Patients would only return the following time if they received satisfactory care for their ailments, and happy patients would recommend the hospital to others. In this case, if the patient's condition quickly deteriorates, the attending physician and medical superintendent are required to speak with the patient party in a respectful and rational manner, without withholding anything from them. Issues that arise are mostly related to family members' living arrangements, bills, and other matters.
- Lack of access to physicians, doctors who switch from treating to referring patients, and equipment malfunction, allergic responses, and patient complaints could endanger the facility. At that point, in order to prevent any misunderstandings, both sides need to communicate in person. Another risk that has been identified is that, thanks to the Internet, patients these days are much more informed. Before visiting a hospital in another country, they typically conduct preliminary research by contacting other hospitals directly or by visiting the information centres of other hospitals that are in their own nation. According to the Supporting Staff survey, hospitals should send their doctors and organise promotional activities through an international marketing team. These activities should include community outreach, CME (Continuous Medical Education), advertisements, and

partnerships with nearby hospitals. Setting up an overseas information centre is not enough, according to the Supporting Staff survey.

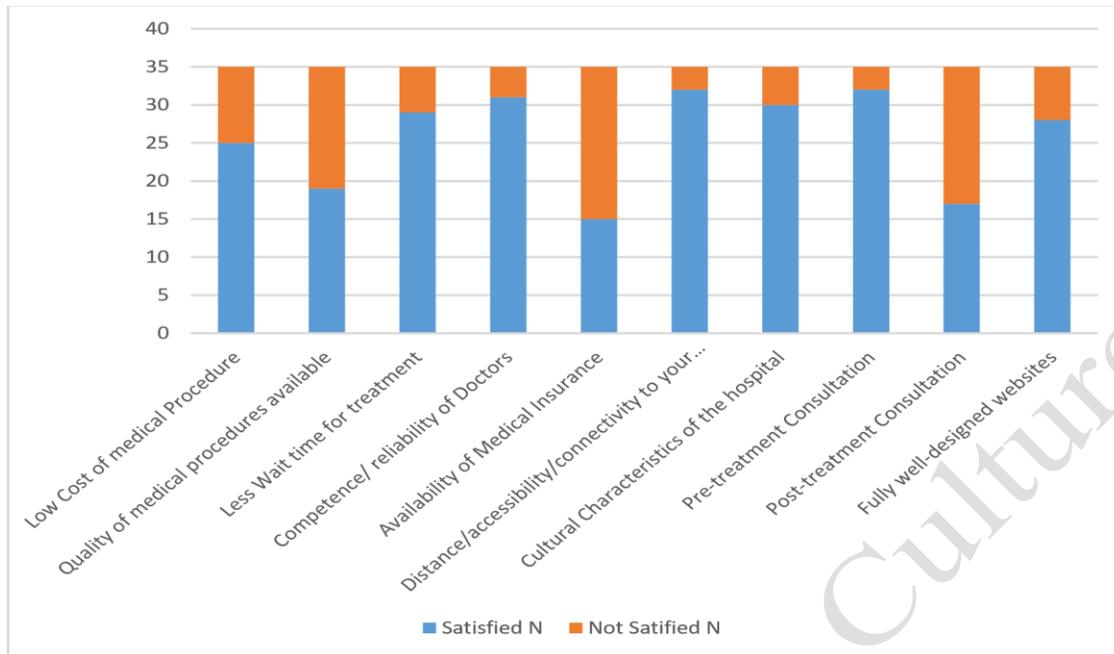
**B. Patients**

An astonishing percentage of people ~77.14% also engage in sightseeing along with their medical treatment. This has the following benefits-

- Improved Well-Being.
- Spending Quality Time with Family.
- Cultural Experience and Exploration.
- Diversion from Medical Procedures.
- Physical Activity and Mobility.
- Social Interaction; and
- Investigating Alternative Healing Methods

The following table and graphical representation lists the factors influencing decision of medical tourism and whether the respondents surveyed were satisfied with the same in their medical travel to Kolkata:

Factors	Satisfied		Not Satisfied		Mean Response
	N	%	N	%	
Low Cost of medical Procedure	25	71.43%	10	28.57%	Satisfied
Quality of medical procedures available	19	54.29%	16	45.71%	Satisfied
Less Wait time for treatment	29	82.86%	6	17.14%	Satisfied
Competence/ reliability of Doctors	31	88.57%	4	11.43%	Satisfied
Availability of Medical Insurance	15	42.86%	20	57.14%	Not Satisfied
Distance/accessibility/connectivity to your place	32	91.43%	3	8.57%	Satisfied
Cultural Characteristics of the hospital	30	85.71%	5	14.29%	Satisfied
Pre-treatment Consultation	32	91.43%	3	8.57%	Satisfied
Post-treatment Consultation	17	48.57%	18	51.43%	Not Satisfied
Fully well-designed websites	28	80.00%	7	20.00%	Satisfied



## 2.2 Other Service Providers

In-person interviews with fifteen proprietors or managers of hotels, small inns, and food plazas erected near hospitals reveal their conversations with both local and foreign patients, as well as the family members of those patients who had travelled to Kolkata for medical care. A brief summary of their answers addressing their perspectives on the industry's threats and potential are as follows:

- **Safety and Comfort First:** The majority of owners and managers place a high priority on making sure that patients and their family are in a secure and pleasant environment.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** A lot of people stress how crucial it is to be mindful of others' cultures when interacting. By providing individualised services that are tailored to each guest's unique wants and tastes, they try to comprehend and respect the different backgrounds of their patrons.
- **Communication:** Various owners/managers complain about language barriers and alternative ways of communication when dealing with foreign patients. They emphasize that the key to filling such gaps lies in having properly trained staff workers and proper communication means.
- **Training and Development:** Another way of focusing on the ability to communicate is training and development where the owners and managers underline the importance of constant training and education of their employees. This involves cultural awareness trainings, language fluency trainings, as well as honing customer service skills. They

are investing in employees, so as to improve the quality of their interactions and provide the visitors with the individualized experience.

- **Ethical concerns:** Honesty, integrity and transparency of all of their dealings are their main priorities and thus ethical concerns make a crucial part of their strategy. This will involve transparent pricing guidelines and clear descriptions of services and facilities, and ethical marketing which gives priority to the patient rather than commercial gains.
- Finally, but not least, adherence to adaptation and continuous progress has to do with unified effort. It is evident that owners and managers are open to implementing best practices, learning from criticism, and keeping up with industry developments in order to stay flexible and adaptable to the changing needs of medical tourists. The medical tourism sector is said to require this constant improvement mentality in order to succeed over the long run.

### 3. Conclusions and Recommendation

This study on ‘Exploring the Nexus of Medical Tourism: Impact on Healthcare Professionals, Facilitators, and Patients’ has sufficiently answered its research objectives in the following manner and the following recommendation can be derived:

- *To determine the forces that influence consumers to practice medical tourism.*  
Living in close proximity and sharing alike cultural boundaries facilitated in attraction of patients mostly from countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. As revealed by the survey from patients it was deferred that cost and quality were the two main criterions for influencing the demand for medical tourism in Kolkata. Thus, these should be acted upon by the stakeholders for attraction and retention of patients.
- *To find out the expectations of overseas patients in respect to health and other services.*  
Travelling to a different city, state or country involves a lot of stress for the patient as well as their family members, thus they expect utmost cooperation and family like behaviour from the frontline healthcare executives, nursing staff as well as ancillary service providers. Thus, this can be used as a leverage by the various stakeholders at the demand side of the industry considering its rapid growth and expansion.
- *To study the emergence of ancillary services around this industry.*  
With the emergence of medical tourism as a separate industry, in tune with growth of mainstream healthcare centres, there is also revealed emergence of medical tourism

companies like the travel managers, *India treatments* as well as existing companies like *MakeMyTrip* venturing into this area pegging the problem-solution hole. However, as revealed from respondents, most of them are unaware about this grey area and the healthcare institutions have themselves step foot into this industry. Thus, a correct marketing programme as well as knowing what the consumer needs analysis has to be undertaken.

- *To find out the probable ethical hiccups with medical tourism in Kolkata along with possible mitigations.*

Ethical hiccups like patient autonomy, equity & transparency widely prevail in the industry which affects the patients as well as hurts the industry by demand shifting to other regions for seeking medical treatment. Hereby, it is recommended to reduce the hiccups as low as possible by practicing clear communication and due feedback from consumers.

- *To study the future scope of medical tourism in the city of joy.*

As said, “Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards”, closely analysing the needs and wants of patients and adapting to changes with the changing needs can aid in tremendous growth of the healthcare as well as ancillary industry.

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