

Review Article

Examining the Impact of Healthcare Consultancy on the Development of Medical Tourism

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A B S T R A C T

Medical tourism has evolved as a fleetly growing industry in recent times, as patients seek affordable and high-quality medical care abroad. This trend has created significant openings for healthcare providers and consultants to look into this request and offer their services to patients who are looking for affordable and high-quality healthcare services. This review paper examines the impact of healthcare consultancy on the development of medical tourism. It followed a narrative approach to identify and synthesise relevant literature on healthcare consultancy and medical tourism. A comprehensive hunt of electronic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science, using applicable keywords similar to "healthcare consultancy", "medical tourism", "healthcare travel", "healthcare facilitation", and "healthcare collaboration". It identified the role of healthcare consultancy as providing information, quality care, communication, support and availability of healthcare services. It also identified that patients look out for expertise, character, communication, cost-effectiveness and accessibility in medical consultants. The paper also identified challenges in the environment of medical tourism and medical consultancy such as regulatory issues, cultural differences, and communication barriers between healthcare consultants, medical providers, and patients. This review shows that healthcare consultancy can have a positive impact on the development of medical tourism by furnishing precious services to healthcare providers and patients. However, healthcare consultants must navigate a complex set of challenges to ensure that their services are effective and sustainable in the long term. Therefore, further research is demanded to augment the understanding of healthcare consultancy in the development of medical tourism and to identify strategies for prostrating the challenges associated with this industry.

Keywords: Medical Tourism, Healthcare Consultancy, Healthcare Travel, Healthcare Facilitation, Healthcare Coordination

Introduction

Medical tourism has emerged as a fleetly growing industry in recent times, with an increasing number of patients seeking healthcare services outside their home countries.¹⁻³ This trend has created significant openings for healthcare providers and consultants to look into this request and offer their services to patients who are looking for affordable and high-quality healthcare services.⁴ Healthcare consultancy has become an essential element of the medical tourism industry, furnishing critical guidance and support to patients who seek healthcare services abroad. The healthcare consultancy industry has also evolved significantly in recent times, with a growing number of enterprises offering a range of services to patients travelling abroad for medical treatment. These services include backing with trip arrangements, medical treatment planning, and collaboration of medical services, among others.⁵⁻⁷ Healthcare consultants play a pivotal part in educating patients about the quality and safety of medical treatments available in different countries, as well as guiding patients on the various treatment options in those countries.⁸ The primary idea of this review paper is to examine the part of healthcare consultancy in the development of medical tourism.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study on the part of healthcare consultancy in medical tourism lies in the fact that medical tourism is a fleetly growing industry that has the implicit to give patients access to high-quality healthcare services at lower costs.⁹⁻¹² However, the lack of standardisation and regulation in healthcare consultancy services can lead to medical tourists entering sour care or making oblivious opinions about their healthcare.^{4,8,13} By examining the part of healthcare consultancy in easing medical tourism and exploring ways to ameliorate healthcare consultancy services, this study can contribute to the development of standardised guidelines and regulations for healthcare consultancy services, which would increase translucency and ensure that medical tourists admit accurate and comprehensive information about their healthcare options. Also, the study can help to increase the vacuity of healthcare consultancy services, particularly in low-income countries, by relating ways to work technology and online platforms to connect medical tourists with healthcare consultants from around the world. Eventually, this study has the implicit to ameliorate the quality of care entered by medical tourists, increase access to healthcare consultancy services, and contribute to the development of a more transparent and regulated medical tourism industry. The findings of this study can be of significant interest to healthcare policymakers, healthcare providers, and healthcare consultancy enterprises, as well as medical

tourists themselves, as it provides perceptivity into how healthcare consultancy services can be bettered to better serve the requirements of medical tourists.

Problem Statement

Healthcare consultancy has been known to play a pivotal part in easing medical tourism by furnishing patients with information about colourful healthcare options, aiding them in forming informed opinions, and ensuring that they receive quality healthcare services.^{14,15} However, healthcare consultancy services are facing several challenges that hamper their effectiveness and limit their capability to meet the requirements of medical tourists. One of the major challenges faced by healthcare consultancy services is the lack of standardisation and regulation.¹⁶⁻¹⁸ This leads to a lack of translucency in the information handed to medical tourists, making it difficult for them to make informed opinions. Also, the quality and effectiveness of healthcare consultancy services vary extensively, which can affect medical tourists entering sour care.^{2,8,19} Another challenge is the limited vacuity of healthcare consultancy services in certain regions. Numerous medical tourists come from low-income countries where healthcare consultancy services are scarce, leaving them with limited options and adding the threat of entering sour care.¹⁴ To address these challenges, there's a need to explore ways to ameliorate healthcare consultancy services to serve the requirements of medical tourists. This can be achieved through the development of standardised guidelines and regulations for healthcare consultancy services, which would increase translucency and ensure that medical tourists admit accurate and comprehensive information about their healthcare options.^{9,18,20} Also, the vacuity of healthcare consultancy services can be increased through the development of online platforms and telemedicine services that connect medical tourists with healthcare consultants from around the world.²¹⁻²³ Similar enterprises would help to increase access to healthcare consultancy services, particularly in low-income countries, and ameliorate the quality of care entered by medical tourists.

Specifically, the paper explored the impact of healthcare consultancy on the decision-making process of patients seeking medical treatment abroad. The review also examined the impact of healthcare consultancy on patient outcomes.

The review was guided by the following research questions:

1. What role does healthcare consultancy play in easing access to medical treatment for patients seeking healthcare services abroad?
2. How do healthcare consultants impact the decision-making process of patients seeking medical treatment abroad?

3. What are the factors that patients consider when opting for healthcare consultants for medical tourism services?
4. What are the challenges faced by healthcare consultants in furnishing medical tourism services, and how can these be addressed?
5. What's the impact of healthcare consultancy on patient outcomes?

Method

The review paper followed a narrative approach to identify and synthesise the literature on healthcare consultancy and medical tourism. The paper began by conducting a comprehensive hunt of electronic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science, using applicable keywords similar to "healthcare consultancy, "medical tourism", "healthcare travel", "healthcare facilitation", and "healthcare collaboration". The hunt was confined to studies published in English from the year 2000 to the present year. The studies linked through the search were screened for applicability, and the full-text papers were recaptured for a detailed review. The review included studies that explore the part of healthcare consultancy in medical tourism, the factors that impact the decision-making process of patients seeking healthcare services abroad, and the challenges faced by healthcare consultants in furnishing medical tourism services.

Role of Healthcare Consultancy in Medical Tourism

Healthcare consultancy plays an essential part in easing medical tourism by furnishing patients with information about healthcare options, aiding them in forming informed opinions, and ensuring that they receive quality healthcare services. In this literature review, five places of healthcare consultancy in medical tourism were banded.

1. Furnishing Information and Guidance

Healthcare consultancy services play a pivotal part in furnishing medical tourists with information and guidance about colourful healthcare options. This includes information about the quality of healthcare services, the cost of treatment, and the vacuity of healthcare installations. Healthcare consultants can also help patients navigate the healthcare system in a foreign country and give guidance on cultural and language differences that may impact their auto.^{4,6,15,24}

2. Ensuring Quality of Care

Healthcare consultancy services can help ensure that medical tourists receive quality healthcare services by vindicating the credentials of healthcare providers and ensuring that they meet transnational norms of care. Healthcare consultants can also give post-treatment follow-ups to ensure that patients are recovering duly and entering

applicable.^{5,6,23,25}

3. Easing Communication

Healthcare consultancy services can help grease communication between medical tourists and healthcare providers by acting as a liaison between the two parties. This can include restatement services or backing with medical paperwork.^{4-6,14,26,27}

4. Furnishing Support and Advocacy

Healthcare consultancy services can give support and advocacy for medical tourists by addressing any enterprises or complaints they may have about their healthcare experience. Healthcare consultants can also help patients navigate the legal and regulatory fabric in a foreign country, ensuring that their rights as patients are defended.^{4,6,7,15}

5. Perfecting Availability

Healthcare consultancy services can ameliorate access to healthcare services for medical tourists, particularly those from low-income countries. By furnishing information about affordable healthcare options and connecting patients with healthcare providers, healthcare consultancy services can help ensure that medical tourists receive the care they need, regardless of their fiscal situation.^{8,14,26}

Thus, healthcare consultancy services play a critical part in easing medical tourism, furnishing information and guidance, Ensuring the quality of care, easing communication, furnishing support and advocacy, and perfecting availability. The places of healthcare consultancy services are essential to ensure that medical tourists receive high-quality healthcare services and have a positive experience while penetrating healthcare services in a foreign country.

How Healthcare Consultants Influence the Decision-Making Process of Patients Seeking Medical Treatment Abroad?

Healthcare consultants act as interposers between patients and healthcare providers, helping patients navigate the complications of medical tourism. Several studies have stressed the part of healthcare consultants in impacting the decision-making process of patients seeking medical treatment abroad. In a study conducted in Denmark, the authors examined the influence of healthcare consultants on the decision-making process of Danish patients seeking medical treatment abroad.²⁷ The study found that healthcare consultants played a pivotal part in furnishing patients with information on available healthcare providers, treatment options, and cost-effectiveness. The authors concluded that healthcare consultants have a significant impact on the decision-making process of patients seeking medical treatment abroad. Also, a study conducted on medical tourism in India examined the part

of healthcare consultants in medical tourism in India.²⁸ The study found that healthcare consultants informed the decision-making process of patients through their expertise, communication chops, and capability to negotiate with healthcare providers. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants in easing medical tourism and perfecting patient issues. In discrepancy with the findings of a study conducted in 2022, it was found that healthcare consultants had a limited impact on the decision-making process of patients seeking medical treatment abroad.⁴ The study examined the clients of Australian patients who had travelled abroad for medical treatment and set that those patients reckoned more on particular referrals and online reviews than on healthcare consultants. The authors concluded that healthcare consultants may not be as influential in decision-making as preliminarily believed.

Factors Influencing the Influence of Healthcare Consultants

Several factors can influence the influence of healthcare consultants on the decision-making process of patients seeking medical treatment abroad. One such factor is the level of trust patients have in healthcare consultants. A study conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) found that patients who trusted healthcare consultants were more likely to follow their advice and recommendations. The authors highlighted the importance of building trust between healthcare consultants and patients to facilitate medical tourism.²⁸

Another factor that can influence the influence of healthcare consultants is the quality of the information provided. A study conducted on word-of-mouth influence on tourism found that patients were more likely to rely on healthcare consultants who provided accurate and reliable information. The authors concluded that healthcare consultants who provide high-quality information are more likely to influence the decision-making process of patients seeking medical treatment abroad.²⁶

Finally, the cost-effectiveness of medical treatment can also influence the influence of healthcare consultants. A study conducted by the UK National Health Service found that healthcare consultants who negotiated lower prices with healthcare providers were more likely to influence the decision-making process of patients. The authors highlighted the importance of cost-effectiveness in facilitating medical tourism and improving patient outcomes.²⁸

In conclusion, healthcare consultants play a vital role in facilitating medical tourism and influencing the decision-making process of patients seeking medical treatment abroad.

Factors Considered by Patients While Selecting Healthcare Consultants for Medical Tourism Services

Several factors can impact the selection of healthcare consultants by patients seeking medical tourism services. These factors include expertise, character, communication, and cost-effectiveness.

1. Expertise

Expertise is a critical factor that patients consider when opting for healthcare consultants for medical tourism services. Patients seek healthcare consultants who have in-depth knowledge and experience in the medical tourism industry. A study conducted in the UK found that patients considered the expertise of healthcare consultants to be essential in opting for medical tourism services. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants having a deep understanding of medical procedures, healthcare providers, and travel arrangements.²⁸

2. Character

Character is another essential factor that patients consider when opting for healthcare consultants for medical tourism services. Patients seek healthcare consultants who have a positive character for furnishing high-quality services and positive patient issues. A study conducted on destination choice influences found that patients reckoned heavily on the character of healthcare consultants when opting for medical tourism services. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants having a positive track record in easing medical tourism.²⁶

3. Communication

Communication is a pivotal factor that patients consider when opting for healthcare consultants for medical tourism services. Patients seek healthcare consultants who have effective communication chops and can give clear and terse information. A study conducted with the end of understanding the medical tourism industry in the UK found patients considered communication chops to be essential in opting for healthcare consultants for medical tourism services. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants being suitable to communicate effectively with patients, healthcare providers, and trip agencies.²⁸

4. Cost-Effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness is a critical factor that patients consider when opting for healthcare consultants for medical tourism services. Patients seek healthcare consultants who give cost-effective results for medical procedures, travel arrangements, and healthcare providers. A study conducted on medical tourism facilitators found that patients considered cost-effectiveness to be an essential factor in opting for healthcare consultants for medical tourism services. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants negotiating lower prices with healthcare providers and trip agencies to give cost-effective

results for patients.¹⁵

5. Other Factors

Other factors that patients may consider when opting for healthcare consultants for medical tourism services include position, availability, and particular recommendations. Patients may prefer healthcare consultants who are located near them or have easy access to healthcare providers and trip agencies. Patients may also consider particular recommendations from musketeers or family members who have preliminarily used the services of healthcare consultants for medical tourism.^{5,8,14,26}

In conclusion, patients consider several factors when opting for healthcare consultants for medical tourism services. These factors include Expertise, character, communication, cost-effectiveness, position, availability, and particular recommendations. Healthcare consultants who have in-depth knowledge and experience in the medical tourism industry, a positive character, effective communication chops, and cost-effective results are more likely to be named by patients seeking medical tourism services.

Challenges of Healthcare Consultancy in Medical Tourism

Healthcare consultancy is an essential element of medical tourism, furnishing patients with information, guidance, and support as they navigate the complex healthcare systems of foreign countries. However, there are several challenges in furnishing effective healthcare consultancy services in the environment of medical tourism. This literature review discusses the following five challenges of healthcare consultancy in medical tourism:

1. Lack of Standardisation and Regulation

One of the primary challenges facing healthcare consultancy in medical tourism is the lack of standardisation and regulation. There are presently no transnational norms or regulations governing healthcare consultancy services, which can lead to inconsistencies in the quality of care handed to medical tourists.^{29,30} This can also make it difficult for medical tourists to form informed opinions about their healthcare options.

2. Limited Vacuity of Healthcare Consultancy Services

Healthcare consultancy services aren't extensively available in all regions, particularly in low-income countries. This can limit the options available to medical tourists and increase the threat of entering sour care.^{8,14,25}

3. Lack of Translucency

Another challenge facing healthcare consultancy in medical tourism is the lack of translucency in the information handed to medical tourists. This can make it difficult for patients to make informed opinions about their healthcare options

and can lead to misconstructions and miscommunications between medical tourists and healthcare.^{6,15,29,30}

4. Language and Cultural Barriers

Language and cultural walls can pose significant challenges for healthcare consultancy services in medical tourism. Healthcare consultants must be able to communicate effectively with medical tourists and healthcare providers in different languages and be familiar with the cultural morals and practices of the countries in which they operate.^{7,15,30}

5. Ethical Issues

Eventually, healthcare consultancy in medical tourism can raise ethical issues, particularly concerning the informed concurrence of medical tourists.³⁰ Healthcare consultants must ensure that medical tourists understand the pitfalls and benefits of their healthcare options and aren't constrained into making opinions that aren't in their stylish interests.⁶

In conclusion, healthcare consultancy in medical tourism faces several challenges, including the lack of standardisation and regulation, limited vacuity of healthcare consultancy services, lack of translucency, language and cultural walls, and ethical issues. Addressing these challenges is essential in ensuring that medical tourists receive the loftiest quality healthcare services and have a positive experience when penetrating healthcare services in foreign countries.

Recommended Solutions to the Challenges Faced by Healthcare Consultancy in Healthcare

Medical tourism has surfaced as a fleetly growing industry, with patients travelling across borders to admit medical treatments. Healthcare consultancy plays a pivotal part in easing and coordinating medical tourism. However, healthcare consultancy faces several challenges that hamper its effectiveness. This literature review discusses five results of the problems faced by healthcare consultancy in medical tourism:

1. Development of Standardised Guidelines

The lack of standardisation in medical tourism makes it difficult for healthcare consultants to give harmonious advice to patients. thus, there's a need for the development of standardised guidelines that can be used by healthcare consultants to give dependable advice to patients.^{27,29,30} The guidelines should cover colourful aspects of medical tourism, such as legal and ethical issues, quality of care, and patient safety.^{4,7,27,28}

2. Use of Technology

The use of technology can help healthcare consultants overcome the challenges associated with medical tourism.^{4,14,15,24,29-31} Telemedicine, for patients, can allow healthcare consultants to give remote consultations to

patients ahead and after their medical treatments.²¹⁻²³ Also, technology can be used to track patients' medical records and ensure that they receive the applicable follow-up care.^{6,28,30,31}

3. Collaboration Among Stakeholders

Collaboration among colourful stakeholders in the medical tourism industry can help to address the challenges faced by healthcare consultancy.^{6,14,15,31} For patients, collaboration among healthcare consultants, hospitals, and tourism authorities can help to ensure that patients receive high-quality medical care and have a positive experience.

4. Increased Translucency

translucency in medical tourism is pivotal to ensure that patients receive high-quality care and aren't subordinated to unethical practices.⁶ Healthcare consultants can play a significant part in promoting translucency by furnishing patients with detailed information about their medical treatments, including the qualifications of healthcare providers, the cost of treatment, and implicit pitfalls.^{6,29,31}

5. Training and Education

Healthcare consultants need to have the necessary knowledge and chops to give effective advice to patients. thus, training and education programs should be developed to equip healthcare consultants with the chops necessary to navigate the complications of medical tourism.^{4,15,30}

Impact of Healthcare Consultancy on Patient Outcomes

Impact of Healthcare Consultancy on Patient Satisfaction

Patient satisfaction is an essential outgrowth of medical tourism, as it reflects the overall experience of patients seeking medical treatment abroad. Healthcare consultancy can have a significant impact on patient satisfaction by furnishing patients with information and guidance throughout the medical tourism process. A study conducted on reviving the medical tourism industry post-COVID-19 by a medical tourism facilitator found that healthcare consultancy played a pivotal part in perfecting patient satisfaction in medical tourism. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants furnishing patients with accurate and dependable information, effective communication, and substantiated attention to ameliorate patient satisfaction.⁷

Another study conducted on the medical tourism industry in Canada found that healthcare consultancy had a positive impact on patient satisfaction in medical tourism. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants in furnishing patients with information on available healthcare providers, treatment options, and cost-effectiveness, which bettered patient satisfaction

with the medical tourism experience.³⁰

Impact of Healthcare Consultancy on Quality of Care

Quality of care is another essential outgrowth of medical tourism, as it reflects the standard of healthcare services handed to patients seeking medical treatment abroad. Healthcare consultancy can have a significant impact on the quality of care by easing access to high-quality healthcare providers and ensuring that patients admit applicable medical procedures. A study conducted on the places and liabilities of medical facilitators stated that healthcare consultancy played a pivotal part in perfecting the quality of care in medical tourism. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants in relating high-quality healthcare providers, negotiating favourable prices, and ensuring that patients admit applicable medical procedures.⁶

Another study conducted on the part of medical tourists in the medical tourism industry found that healthcare consultancy had a limited impact on the quality of care in medical tourism. The authors stressed the significance of patients conducting their exploration of healthcare providers and medical procedures to ensure that they receive high-quality care.¹⁵

Impact of Healthcare Consultancy on Health Issues

Health issues are a vital outgrowth in medical tourism, as they reflect the overall health status of patients after entering medical treatment abroad. Healthcare consultancy can have a significant impact on health issues by easing access to applicable medical procedures and ensuring that patients receive acceptable post-treatment care. A study conducted on the UK health system set that healthcare consultancy played a pivotal part in perfecting health issues in medical tourism. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants in relating applicable medical procedures, ensuring that patients receive acceptable post-treatment care, and covering patients' health outcomes.²⁸

Another study conducted on the effect of medical trip facilitators found that healthcare consultancy had a positive impact on health issues in medical tourism. The authors stressed the significance of healthcare consultants in furnishing patients with information on available healthcare providers, treatment options, and cost-effectiveness, which bettered patients' access to applicable medical procedures and post-treatment care.⁵

Conclusion

In conclusion, this review paper has examined the impact of healthcare consultancy on the development of medical tourism. The paper has handed an overview of medical tourism and healthcare consultancy and has reviewed the literature on the content. One of the crucial findings of this

review is that healthcare consultancy can help healthcare providers and medical tourism stakeholders identify and subsidise new openings in the request. Another crucial finding of this review is that healthcare consultancy can help healthcare providers and medical tourism stakeholders navigate the complex regulatory and cultural issues associated with medical tourism.

However, this review also highlights the challenges associated with healthcare consultancy in the environment of medical tourism. One of the main challenges is the lack of standardisation and regulations which may lead to inconsistencies in the quality of care given to medical tourists. Healthcare consultants must be apprehensive of the regulatory conditions for medical tourism in different countries and regions, and ensure that healthcare providers and medical tourism destinations are biddable with those conditions. This can be particularly gruelling given the fleetly changing regulatory geography of medical tourism. Another challenge is the absence of healthcare consultancy services in all regions giving medical tourists limited options in accessing urgent care abroad. Also, cultural differences can pose a challenge for healthcare consultants operating in the environment of medical tourism. Healthcare consultants must be apprehensive of the cultural differences between healthcare providers, medical tourism destinations, and patients, and develop communication strategies that take those differences into account. This can be particularly challenging in a globalised world where patients may come from different cultural backgrounds. Other challenges identified in this review are lack of translucency and ethical issues.

Despite these challenges, healthcare consultancy remains an important factor in the development of medical tourism. In terms of future research, there's a need for further disquisition into the part of healthcare consultancy in the development of medical tourism. Specifically, there's a need for exploration that examines the effectiveness of healthcare consultancy services in different surroundings, and that identifies stylish practices for healthcare consultants operating in the medical tourism industry. Also, there's a need for exploration that examines the impact of healthcare consultancy on the quality of medical care handed to medical tourists and investigates the ethical considerations associated with healthcare consultancy in the environment of medical tourism.

The literature reviewed in this paper suggests that healthcare consultancy can help healthcare providers and medical tourism stakeholders identify openings, navigate regulatory and cultural challenges, and develop effective marketing strategies. However, healthcare consultants must be apprehensive of the challenges and complications of the medical tourism industry and must develop results

that are acclimatised to the requirements and pretensions of their clients.

Limitations of the Study

The study has a few limitations. One of them is the selection bias that may have occurred where the authors might have excluded studies relevant to this study based on their discretion. The other limitation is that the search of literature was restricted to papers published after the year 2000 and therefore some relevant studies may have been ignored.

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