



**RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN
THAILAND**

**CUI TONG
5917195410**

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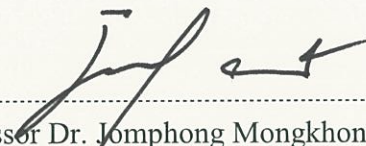


RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN THAILAND

**Thematic Certificate
To
CUI TONG**

This independent study has been approved as a partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of International Master of Business Administration in International Business Management

Advisor: Q.Y. Wei Date: 25 / 7 / 2018
(Associate Professor Qifeng Wei)


.....
(Associate Professor Dr. Jomphong Mongkhonvanit)
Acting Dean, Graduate School of Business Administration

Date: 7 / 8 / 2018
Siam University, Bangkok, Thailand

RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN THAILAND

ABSTRACT

Title: Research on the Development of Medical Tourism in Thailand

By: CUI TONG

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Advisor: Q.Y. Wei
(Associate Professor Wei Qifeng)

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Medical tourism or medical tourism was travel to another country and got better treatment and higher quality services in Thailand. The main content of the study was the reasons and influence of the increasing demand for medical tourists to receive medical services in Thailand. The source market was mainly from plastic surgery, body care, dental treatment and other medical services from foreign countries to private hospitals in Thailand. Suffering from the composition. Now the medical tourism market in Thailand has become a beautiful landscape. Thailand has superb medical technology, good medical quality and advanced medical facilities. It has much lower medical expenses than Western countries, and the medical services provided were meticulous and comprehensive. Promote people to choose Thailand as their holy place to receive medical tourism services.

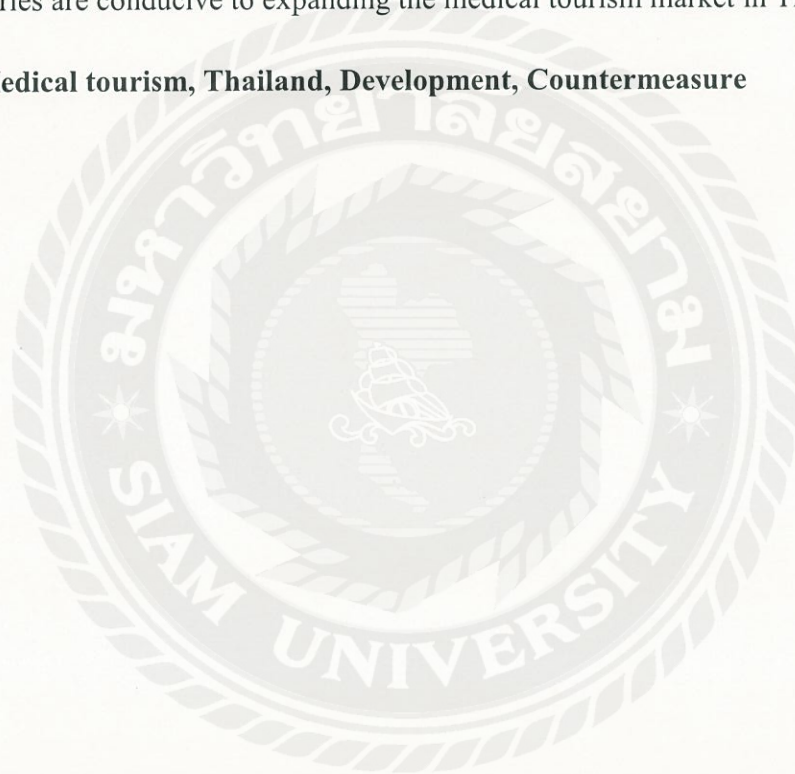
This paper adopts SWOT analysis to study the advantages and disadvantages, opportunities and threats of medical tourism in Thailand, and based on this, to do research on the development of medical tourism in Thailand.

Thailand has become a medical tourism hub in Asia, and the private sector has greatly contributed to the establishment of the medical tourism centre in Thailand over the past decade. In order to develop a development strategy to guide medical tourism in Thailand, the paper makes a detailed analysis of Thailand's medical tourism competitiveness. The results show that the advantages of Thailand's medical tourism were mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, the price of medical tourism services is lower than that of competitors. Secondly, the medical level is relatively high, and the medical staff are highly skilled and capable of doing professional treatment for patients. In addition, Thailand has fascinating scenery and many world-famous tourist attractions that allow patients to have a very comfortable trip. At the same time, the world's aging population is increasing, people's quality of life is constantly improving, and the demand for medical services was increased day by day, which will help expand the market for medical tourism in Thailand.

Thailand through competitive countermeasures, marketing strategies, government support,

and cooperation between Thailand and other countries. 1. Competitive countermeasures focus on products, prices, channels, personnel, and promotion. 2. Marketing strategies were below : ① clear market positioning, using efficient publicity strategies to promote the development of the Thai medical tourism market; ② using efficient communication strategies and target markets Conduct good communication to establish awareness of the relevant image of Thailand; ③ develop products and services needed by the market, attract more people to expand the market; ④ improve beauty care services and improve consumer satisfaction; ⑤ establish business alliances Strengthen cooperation and promote the sustainable development of medical tourism. 3.the government supports the government should set up a special working group, this working group should have a strong comprehensive, it involves all aspects of medical tourism. 4.and the United States, China, Sweden and other countries to cooperate. Good exchanges and cooperation between countries are conducive to expanding the medical tourism market in Thailand.

Keywords: Medical tourism, Thailand, Development, Countermeasure



摘要

题目： 泰国医疗旅游发展对策研究

作者： 崔桐

学位： 工商管理硕士

专业： 工商管理

导师：

Qr. Wei

(指导老师. 魏奇峰)

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医疗观光或者医疗旅游是到另一个国家旅行并在这个国家得到更好的治疗和更高质量的服务。本研究的主要内容是医疗旅游者在泰国接受医疗服务的需求不断增加的原因及影响；客源市场主要由从国外到泰国私立医院进行整形美容，身体保健，牙齿治疗以及接受其他医疗服务的病患构成。现在泰国的医疗旅游市场已经成为一道靓丽的风景线。泰国拥有高超的医疗技术，良好的医疗品质和先进的医疗设施，有比西方国家低得多的医疗费用，提供的医疗服务细致入微而且面面俱到。促使人们选择泰国作为他们接受医疗旅游服务的圣地。

本论文采用了SWOT分析，研究了泰国医疗旅游的优劣势，机会及威胁，以此为基础来做泰国医疗旅游的发展对策性研究。

泰国已成为亚洲地区的医疗旅游中心，而私营企业在过去的十年中对泰国医疗旅游中心地位的确立起了极大的促进作用。为了制定指导泰国医疗旅游的发展策略，本文对泰国的医疗旅游竞争力做了详细分析，结果表明，泰国医疗旅游业的优势主要表现在以下方面：首先，医疗旅游服务的价格低于竞争对手。其次，医疗水平比较高，医务人员医术高超，有能力为患者做专业的治疗。此外，泰国有迷人的风景，有很多举世闻名的旅游景点，可以让患者有一个十分舒适的旅行。同时，世界上老龄人口越来越多，人们生活质量不断提高，对医疗服务的需求与日俱增，这会有利于扩大泰国医疗旅游的市场。

本论文通过竞争对策，营销对策，政府扶持，泰国与其他国家多方合作四点为基础做促进泰国医疗旅游市场发展的对策。1，竞争对策侧重在产品，价格，渠道，人员，推进方面，2，营销对策为①明确市场定位，使用高效的宣传策略来促进泰国医疗旅游市场的发展；②使用高效的传播策略与目标市场进行良好的沟通，以建立泰国相关形象的认知；③开发市场需要的产品和服务，吸引更多的人使市场得以扩展；④完善美容保健服务，提高消费者的满意度；⑤建立商业联盟加强合作，促进医疗旅游业的持续发展。3，政府扶持为政府应该设立一个特别工作组，这个工作组应该有较强的综合性，要涉及到医疗旅游的方方面面4，与美国，中国，瑞典等其他国家多方合作。国家之间的良好交流与合作，有利于扩大泰国的医疗旅游市场。

关键词：医疗旅游，泰国，发展，对策

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Light and shade come in swift alternation; Days and months flash by as quickly as a weaver's shuttle.; Light travels like an arrow, and time like a shuttle. It has been two years since I entered the University of Siam, which also means that my graduate study life is coming to an end. Memories of the past, an international student left the home country to a strange place to live and study, I not only experienced countless hardships and loneliness, but also experienced a lot of happiness and warmth. I have not been accustomed to Thai life for a long time, but now I feel that this has become my second family. Two years of student life is coming to an end, I have a lot of thanks to express.

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Cui Tong
At Siam University on April 27,2018

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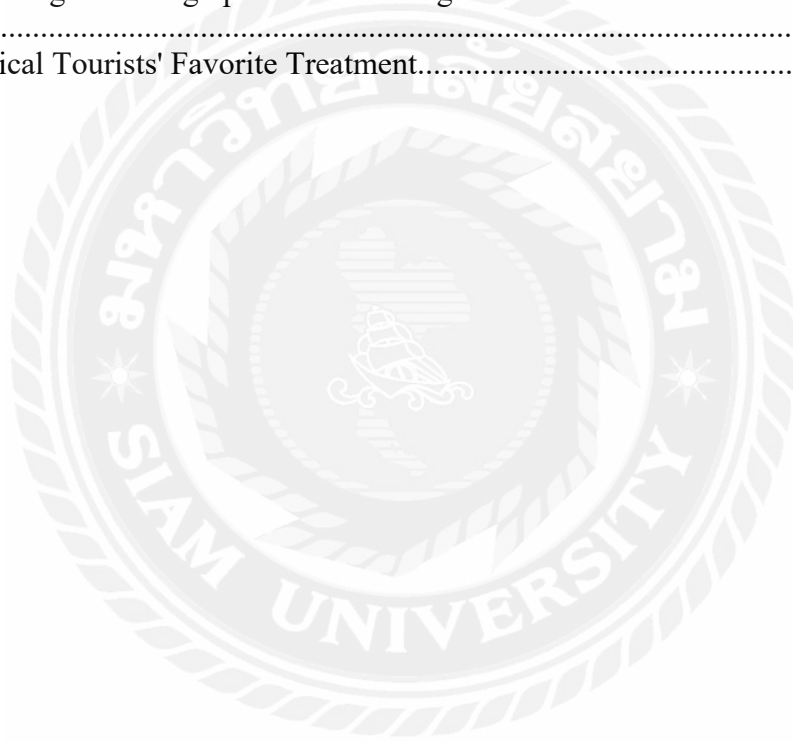
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RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN THAILAND

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background, Research Purpose and Research Significance

1.1.1 Research Background

With general tourism on the rise (UNWTO 2010), it is estimated that the volume of medical tourists could reach 4 million per annum by 2012 (Deloitte 2008a). Medical tourism has become a major force for the growth of service exports worldwide, while concentrating on a selective number of recipient countries – with India and Thailand as major global markets. Tourism is an important way of relaxation and recreation for modern people. Nowadays, most people are in anxieties and far away from the comfort and ease, due to the fast-paced life style and pressures brought by work and life. While tourism allows people to experience the happiness that is hard to be experienced in daily work. Health-tourism, particularly popular with tourists and well-received in Asia and the Americas, is developing towards globalization. When travelling, a wide range of medical services from all over the world are available for patients to choose, and then current medical tourism came into being. For those patients without insurance, high medical expenses will bother them a lot if they need long term medical services. Therefore, it is praised by patients to find some place to rest without going to hospital after the core treatment. Perfect medical services can be found in those countries in Asia and the Pacific region, such as India, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. The good medical technology and services make Thailand attract the largest number of foreign tourists in Asia and best choice for foreign patients who are in need of medical services.

The trend of health care has gradually expanded to more countries, resulting in the fact that more and more people are looking for affordable, reasonable and convenient medical tourism services. Therefore, more and more countries are paying attention to medical tourism services that can make profits for the country.

The Thai government attaches great importance to medical tourism from the processing of medical tourism service-related business to the payment of tourists' medical tour service fees. In order to attract people from all over the world to Thailand for health services, the Thai government has formulated a policy to promote Thailand as a "medical hub" since 2004. It is clearly stated in this policy that medical tourism services are playing an important role in promoting Thailand to become a "medical hub." Now both state hospitals and private hospitals in Thailand are providing medical tourism services.

At present, patients prefer to go to countries with high quality of service, low medical costs, and short waiting times. And some of them also want to get treatment in leisure. As a favorite tourist destination for foreign tourists for a long time, Thailand is open for foreigners to invest and work, which fully meets the desires of patients for relaxation during the

treatment process. Apart from the above, many hospitals in Thailand are equipped with high-level doctors with high academic qualifications, overseas study background, rich experience, and good medical skills to serve foreign patients. It is also one of the important reasons for the rapid development of Thai medical tourism services.

The important turning point in the expansion of medical tourism services was in 1997 when private hospitals started this service in order to go through the difficulties caused by the bubble economic crisis. Like other private companies, private hospitals in Thailand spent large amounts of capital for investment on construction and expansion during the bubble economic crisis in Thailand. However, due to the reduced income caused by the economic crisis, major domestic customers had to go to the hospitals with low costs. As a result, these private hospitals began to make some adjustments and look for other customers who would pay high fees, like customers in high-income regions such as Japan, Europe, and the Middle East, in order to increase hospital and government revenues through such measures.

And then Thailand's economy was out of balance. After the bubble economic crisis, the government made great efforts to promote exports and increase the export volume of the market, including the volume of trade exports and the volume of labor exports. At the same time, the International Trade Promotion Department focused on the domestic situation and committed itself to making profits for the country in terms of health. Thailand is well-known for good health care all the time, which enables medical tourism services in Thailand to be developed and expanded, attracting retired people in Thailand and the people who have been receiving medical services and health care services at high costs. Thereby, the medical tourism generates income for the country with higher quality and at the same time promotes the sustainable development of the industry.

1.1.2 Research Purpose

Currently, Thailand's medical tourism has become an eye-catching industry in the world. With advanced medical technology, good medical quality, sophisticated medical facilities, much lower medical costs, meticulous and all-round medical services, and a cultural tradition of tolerance and humility, Thailand, known as "a smiling country", can provide friendly services to tourists. In addition, Thailand is also known as the "Great Tourist Resort of the World". Therefore, more and more people are attracted to choose Thailand as their travel destination to enjoy medical tourism services, which makes Thailand more popular than other Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, India and South Korea.

Both the tourists from developed countries that come to Thailand to enjoy medical services and the tourists from developing countries that are pursuing high-quality medical services in Thailand contribute significantly to the rapid development of medical tourism services. Of course, the rapid development of the tourism industry is also indispensable for the development of the medical tourism. Medical tourism industry is regarded as a special industry that plays a supporting role in public health and tourism. In order to get benefits from this increasingly growing industry, many countries have concentrated on the

development and improvement of medical tourism.

1.1.3 Research Significance

The study will be helpful for hospitals in providing medical tourism services as well as Thailand's relevant departments involved in the medical tourism industry in improving medical tourism services. For example, the research data and results can be applied by Thailand Tourism Bureau in the development plan of Thai medical tourism, in order to formulate a more scientific and quality medical tourism development plan and attract more foreign tourists to Thailand for Thai medical services, which will allow tourists to feel the convenience of Thailand's medical tourism industry and improve the satisfaction of tourists. In addition, the development of medical tourism can provide more jobs, increase the country's income, promote local economic growth, facilitate the development of other industries, keep the balance of national economy, and is conducive to the long-term stability of a country.

1.2 Research Status of Domestic and Foreign Scholars

1.2.1 Status Quo of Research on Medical Tourism Market Outside Thailand

It is shown in the study of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: Foreign patients visiting Thailand for medical treatment mainly seek for health examinations, dental treatments, ophthalmology lasers, and cardiac surgery. The Export Promotion Department of Thailand believes that Thailand's medical tourism industry has internationally-accepted advanced medical technology, professional medical and health care personnel, reasonable medical service fees and many other advantages. That is why more and more foreign patients travel to Thailand. Michael O eil (2006) states in the introduction to the medical tourism countries that Asia has made remarkable achievements in the field of medical tourism, especially Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Jordan and India are leading the way in the field of medical tourism and playing an important role in the development of medical tourism in the world. David (2006) puts forward many reasons for the origin and development of medical tourism. In his study, a manager of a medical tourism service company shows great confidence in medical tourism and the importance of private medical services is demonstrated in the development of medical tourism. MaggiAnnGrace (2007) provides a wide range of medical tourism information, including medical facilities, medical technology, post-operation services, tourism resources, accommodation services and other information, as well as information on the status of Asian medical institutions. Most of these medical tourism information come from practical investigations, through which the study provides detailed and accurate information for medical tourists. David G.Vequist, Edke Vakiez, and Billy Morrison (2009) have respectively made SWOT analysis of the development of medical tourism in Latin America and Asia and pointed out that medical tourism in both regions has great potential for development, but at present, neither of them has found the core competitiveness.

1.2.2 Research on the Customer Market

Michael D. Horowitz (2007) points out that it had become a new tourism model to combine medical treatment with tourism. Medical tourism is increasingly popular with tourists. Many tourists are looking for medical institutions with advanced technologies. In addition, the insurance industry has also played an important role in the development of medical tourism by effectively relieving the pressure for patients to pay the expensive treatment fees and promoting the development of medical tourism. Modern communication technologies and convenient transportation make it easier for tourists to go abroad for medical tourism, and to choose their favorite medical institution. Deloitte Center for Health Solution (2008) states that the number of outbound medical tourism from 2007 to 2010 in the United States is estimated to reach 6 million. The outbound medical tourism is mainly caused by the high cost of medical treatment or the long waiting time for treatment in the native country. The study of Erik Cohen (2008) elaborates the background of medical tourism in Thailand, the services provided by the hospital, the tourist situation, and the propaganda methods and systematically analyzes the impact of the development of medical tourism on the lives of tourists and local people. Heuang, KucukustaandSong (2010) studies the demand and supply of medical tourism. Demand mainly refers to that the intention of tourists planning to start medical tourism to get relevant information through advertisements, while supply refers to the expansion of the promotion channels to promote medical tourism information to tourists through various channels.

1.2.3 Related Research on Influencing Factors of Medical Tourism

Tracey Walker (2006) compares the medical travel costs of American medical tourists with or without medical insurance in the United States, India, Thailand, and Singapore, and points out that lower foreign medical costs are the attraction for many Americans to travel to exotic countries. It can be found in the study of Smith And Forgione (2007) that the factors affecting the choice of medical tourism destinations include: economic conditions, political atmosphere, and legal policies. The factors affecting tourists' choice of hospital for medical treatment include: the hospital's medical level, service quality, medical costs, and detailed specifications. Anchana Narong (2009) discusses the impact of Thailand's medical tourism on the economy, medical personnel, and health care system of the country. The results of the study shows that medical tourism brought Thailand a profit equivalent to 0.4% of Thailand's GDP, indicating that more and more medical personnel are moving from the private and public sectors to hospitals that provide services for foreigners, which, to some extent, has caused a shortage of medical personnel. Although there are many advantages in medical tourism in Thailand, it has also brought some negative impacts. These negative effects can be mitigated by removing restrictions on the introduction of foreign doctors and taxing tourists who travel to Thailand only for treatment. Peter Enderwick and Swati Nagar (2011) from Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand have conducted a very detailed comparative analysis of the competitiveness of the countries with potential medical tourism destinations in Asia, including Thailand, India, Malaysia and Singapore. Pongpisut Jongudomsuk (2015) reviews the process of the Thai medical system research organization from the establishment to the development and to the improvement of its ability to research

medical policies and medical systems. By taking the adjustment of the insurance coverage of the payment reform for public servants' medical benefits plan and the medical coverage plan as an example, this study discusses the importance of research capabilities in the improvement of the medical system policy.

1.2.4 Research on the Behavior of Medical Tourists

The opinion of Smith & Forgione (2007) is consistent with that of Heuang et al. (2010) They believe that infrastructure is an influencing factor in affecting medical tourists' choice of medical tourism destinations. Smith & Forgione (2007) and Yeetal (2001) propose that service quality is the most important influencing factor for medical tourists when choosing a medical tourism destination. In addition, medical tourists will also consider another two kinds of factors. On the one hand, they should consider the factors of the country, which mainly include: the country's economic conditions, political atmosphere, laws and regulations; On the other hand, they should consider the factors of medical institutions, including: The price, quality of service, time of treatment, medical team, and international certification, etc. Through the in-depth analysis of these factors, strategies for further development of the medical tourism market are put forward. Nuttapong Jodkasthira (2010) studies the influencing factors affecting tourists' choice for hospitals, especially tourists visiting Thailand. From the research report, it can be found that tourists who choose medical tourism will often take into consideration the cost of treatment in their own hospital and the length of time they enter the treatment. In addition, medical tourism tourists will also consider the treatment of the destination country. In addition, the treatment level of the destination country, treatment costs, safety of treatment, health environment, and public security status will also be taken into account. Pailin Watapalm (2010). This study demonstrates the factors that influence the choice of hospitals for medical tourism tourists, and conducts the survey of treatment satisfaction of foreign patients through questionnaires. The results of the study show: Price is not an important factor determining patient satisfaction. While, it is important whether the hospital can provide thoughtful services to the companions. Ye, Zhang, and Yuan (2011) studied influencing factors and obstacles to medical tourism. Through collecting data from Hong Kong tourists, it is concluded that the influences of medical tourism tourists can be divided into four categories: the first category is driving force factors, the second elasticity factors, the third convenient licensing factors, and the fourth other factors, such as characteristics of tourism destination, time throughout the process, attitudes of the service provider, and service quality.

1.2.5 Research on the Development of Medical Tourism Market and Industry Policy

Prasitthi (2005) discusses the reasons for Thailand to become an Asian medical tourism center and the reasons for the continuous development of fitness tourism. The results of the study indicate that Thailand is strong in medical tourism and fitness tourism, with an advanced level in Asia. It has its own characteristics in hospital treatment services and general services, and the costs of treatment in Thailand are lower than that in other countries. However, the development of medical tourism services also needs the support of the state, especially in terms of convenient permission for foreign tourists to come to

Thailand to receive services. Harryono, Huang, Miyazawa and Sethput (2006) studied the status of the competitiveness of Thailand's medical tourism. From the research of the International Competitive Advantage Theory of Porter (Porter Diamond Model), it can be concluded that Thailand's medical tourism has strong competitiveness in all aspects. Thailand's medical tourism has developed for a long time with a quite large market demand. Medical tourism related companies have rich and mature experience; at the same time, the Thai government also greatly supports for the development of medical tourism and intends to make Thailand a medical tourism center in Asia. Nooch Homrossukhon (2007) studies the competitive conditions of Thailand's medical tourism industry by using data in various periods to analyze Thailand's resources, advantages & disadvantages, opportunities, and obstacles. After analyzing the competitiveness in Thailand, it is found that Thailand is a golden tourist destination in the world. It not only develops modern medical tourism, but also provides distinct services. The development of Thailand's medical tourism services is much earlier than that in many countries, making this industry of Thailand extremely competitive in the world market. In October 2012, the Dublin Journal "Business Wire" published a research report titled "Research and Market: Asia Medical Tourism Analysis and Forecast to 2015". The report discusses the reasons for the development of the medical tourism industry, and elaborates the situation and market share of medical tourism in seven Asian countries or regions (Thailand, India, and New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan, China). It makes a prediction of the development of medical tourism in above countries and regions, and also compares and analyzes the costs for medical tourism in Asia and in the United States in great detail.

2.MEDICAL TOURISM OVERVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Medical Tourism

Although there are many definitions of medical tourism, the medical tourism is most commonly defined as an activity that provides transnational travelers with various kinds of medical services, including dental medicine, condition detection and disease analysis. In addition, there are many definitions of medical tourism, such as:

Medical tourism refers to the activity that residents of a country travel to another country for medical services. The quality of the received medical services is better than that of their own country or the same as their own country. Under certain conditions, the cost of received medical services is lower than that in their own country.

The medical tourism is part of health tourism. While visiting some natural cultural landscapes experiencing the local customs, conducting some other tourism activities in the destination countries, patients also receive some medical services in the process of the tourism, such as: physical treatment, physical examination, health recovery, etc.

Surapong Lukhanumanjao and Piyanuchhongyok believe that health tourism is to receive some medical services, and combine leisure travel with health services at the same time. Some of the tourists choose health tourism to treat physical problems or congenital diseases; some of them plan to receive regular physical examinations or physical rehabilitation; others are to receive some beauty services when traveling to keep themselves in a better state and a beautiful look after returning home.

Tourism Bureau of Thailand: Medical tourism is a tourism with intention of medical treatment. People can get treatment in hospitals or other places where medical services can be provided. The medical services include physical examinations, various kinds of disease treatments, cosmetic plastic surgery and transsexual operation.

Hall's definition of health tourism is that a person spends the night in a tourist attraction different from their original environment. And the environment of this tourist attraction can make their physical condition better. From the initial significance and nature of medical tourism, it can be drawn that medical tourism is part of Health tourism. Its market value in 2012 was between US\$5 billion and US\$6 billion, and it is predicted that it will grow rapidly and the market will continue to expand (SRI international, 2013). As is shown in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1 Relationship between health tourism, medical tourism and health-keeping tourism From: Hall, C.M

In summary, medical tourism is an activity for a tourist to travel to another country in order to receive better treatment compared with that in his own country. They choose medical tourism probably for the purpose of health check-up, cosmetic, dental correction or

treatments of other special diseases. What motivates them to choose a destination country may be the lower medical costs in destination country, or the inaccessibility of medical services they need in their own country, or the inconvenience to receive the required medical services in their own country.

2.2 The Origin and Development of Medical Tourism

Historically, patients of developing countries often journeyed from less developed countries to medical centres in more developed countries, where they received services that were not available in their countries of origin - as medical know-how and technology were missing. As technology and medical know-how dissolved to emerging market countries, a new model of medical tourism – from rich to poor countries – evolved over the last two decades. Rich country tourists started to exploit the possibility of combining tourist aspects with medical ones. Today, one finds modern hospital facilities close to major tourist attractions in countries like India, Hungary, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey.

The output value of medical tourism accounts for a high proportion in the entire tourism industry, and it continues to grow at a rate of 28% annually. In 2000, the total value of medical tourism in the world was less than US\$10 billion. After that, the value of medical tourism industry in the world reached 478 billion US dollars in 2014. In addition, according to the statistics of The Global Spa Summit, about 283 billion people chose medical tourism in 2010. From the current information on medical tourism, the number of medical tourists and its proportion in total tourists is constantly increasing.

Medical tourism mainly involves people who receive medical services, including beauty therapy and disease treatment in other countries. In the past, it is common for people from developing countries travel to developed countries for medical tourism for the purpose of seeking advanced medical technologies that were not available in their own countries. Since 1990, the above situation has begun to change: countries that can provide patients with cheaper medical costs and more convenient medical services are becoming popular with medical tourists. Most of these countries are developing countries, especially Asian developing countries such as Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, and India. Therefore, the current medical tourism is different from that of the past. People in developed countries began to travel to developing countries for medical treatments.

Most of the multinational tourists receiving medical tourism can be roughly divided into two types according to the reason for their choices. As follows:

Technology gap/or Service gap. For example: Burmese, Lao, Cambodians travel to Thailand for medical services in order to find a high level of treatment that is unavaiable in their country.

The price gap of medical tourism. For example, the Australians came to Thailand to receive beauty and cosmetic surgery treatment with less cost, because Thailand's beauty and cosmetic techniques are no worse than that in other countries. However, the cost of beauty and cosmetic surgery in Thailand is relatively low in Asian countries.

In the past decade, many of the world's medical tourism have continued to develop. From the world-leading medical tourism destination given by the Deloitte Center for Health Solution, Thailand is one of the world's leading medical tourism destinations. Singapore and Malaysia are major competitors of Thailand in Asia. According to the information released in 2006, the amount of hospitals in Singapore that meet the standards of JCI(Joint Commission International Accreditation) is about three times that of Thailand. However, due to Thailand's lower medical expenses,large-scale private hospitals, Thailand's cultural atmosphere, the development model of the combination between hospitals and hotels and famous tourist destinations, the number of patients in Thailand is approximately three times that of Singapore. For Malaysia and India, the number of the patients in those two countries are less than that of Thailand, because they are far behind Thailand in terms of national stability and resources, although their medical costs are lower.To sum up, Thailand has become a leader in medical tourism in this region.

The reasons for the importance and popularity of medical tourism also include:

With the continuous increase in the population, especially in developed countries, such as Europe, the United States, and Japan, the ageing population continues to grow, resulting in the increase in the number of chronic disease patients, and the increase in demand for medical tourism. However, some developed countries have some limitations on medical tourism. The health care cost in developed countries increases (Healthcarecost). Most of the developed countries provide the medical services with inconvenience and a long waiting list.

The general decline in ticket prices has reduced the cost of round trips between countries, and cut the time of flight.

Affected by the above factors, the number of tourists going abroad for medical tourism continues to grow, especially medical tourism tourists from developed countries such as the United States, Australia, Russia and other European countries.

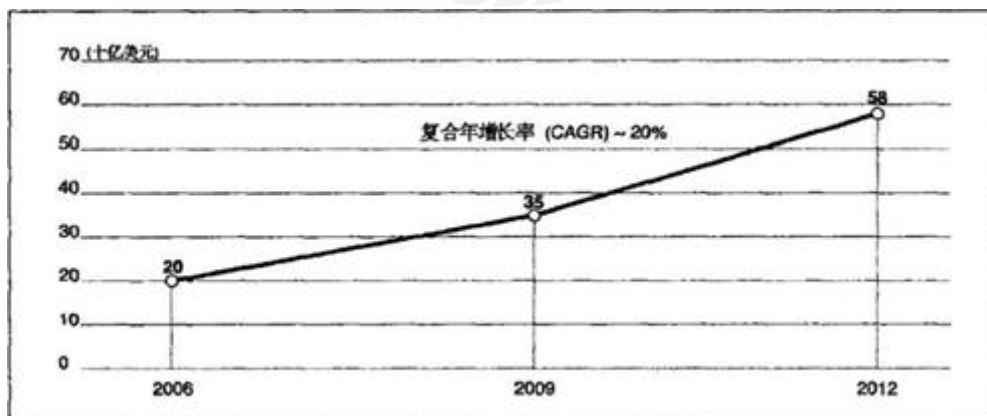


Figure 2.2.1 The scale of the world medical tourism market

From the study of The Boston Consulting Group (2008) and RNCOS (2009), the market value of medical tourism has continued to rise since 2006. The market size of medical tourism was approximately US\$20 billion in 2006 and was expected to increase to 58 billion US dollars in 2012, with an average annual compound growth rate of 20%. (Figure 2-2) At the same time as Asia's important medical tourism market, the market size of South Asia and Southeast Asia accounts for 15% of the world, and continues to increase, with an average annual compound growth rate of 28% (Figure 2.).

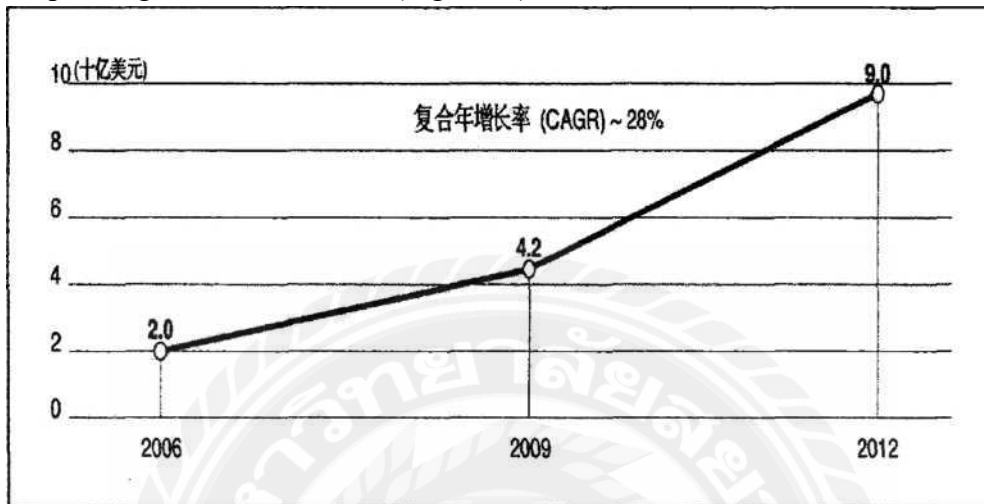


Figure 2.2.2 The medical tourism market scale of Southeast Asia Source: The Boston Consulting Group, RNCOS

2.3 Medical Tourism Products

Consumers can choose their own medical tourism products according to their own personal preference and health conditions, such as: dental treatment, cosmetic surgery, orthopedic surgery, heart surgery, neurotherapy, health examination and so on.

According to the survey by Horowitz & Rosensweig, there are seven medical specialties that are widely pursued by patients in medical tourism. As shown in the table (Table 2.3)

	Breast augmentation
	Facelift
Cosmetic surgery	Blepharoplasty
	Liposuction/ Body contouring
Dentistry	Cosmetic dentistry
	Dental reconstruction / Prosthodontics
	Coronary artery bypass
Cardiology and Cardiac surgery	Cardiac valve replacement/Reconstruction
	Percutaneous coronary angioplasty/Stenting stem cell therapy for heart failure

Orthopedic surgery and Spine surgery	Hiprep acement/Resurfacing/knee replacement Arthroscopy / Joint reconstruction Laminectomy /Spinal decompression Disk space reconstruction/
Bariatric surgery	Disk replacement Gastric bypass Laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding In vitro fertilization
Reproductive system	Hysterectomy
Organ and Tissue Transplantation	Prostatectomy/Transurethral resection Gender reassignment procedures Solid organ transplantation,Renal, Hepatic Bone marrow transplantation Stem cell therapy,Heart failure,Neuro ogic diseases
Other (Other services)	Laser eye surgery Genera medical evaluation/check-up Wide range of diagnostic studies

Table 2.3 Demand of Medical Tourism Patients

According to Deloitte's research, among the above medical services, American citizens mainly choose medical services related to surgery that require follow-up care for a week. In recent years, the number of Americans that have gone abroad to receive medical services is growing. Some tourists will choose cosmetic surgery, dental treatment, orthopedic treatment and cardiovascular disease treatment. At the same time, Pollard research also shows that these four medical services are the most popular.

2.4 Medical Tourists

Medical tourists are individuals who travel abroad for medical services. They may simply go for treatment with no other purpose. They may conduct some tourism activities after receiving treatment or recovering,such as Shopping, beach tour or Citytour.In addition, the medical tourists also include: those tourists who once went abroad for tourism but decide to get medical services,including medical examinations, plastic surgery, dentistry, etc. in destination country after understanding the relevant information of the destination country's medical tourism. Foreign patients that can receive medical tourism can be roughly divided into the following categories:

(1) Medicated tourist. Foreign tourists who get treatment in hospitals,clinics and other medical institutions in another country.That is, the country where they get treatment when they suffer physical diseases or accidents during travelling.

(2) Medical Tourism Proper: Tourists that have planned to receive medical services abroad, such as orthopedic surgery, cosmetic surgery, and beauty treatments, and also want to conduct some tourism activities during medical services. Or, after arriving in the country of destination, they decide to carry out medical tourism. For example, they may become interested in medical tourism because of the medical tourism information of the country released on the relevant media. Then they are motivated to experience physical examinations, dental treatments, etc.

Vacationing patients: Tourists with a very clear intention when going abroad. They come to the destination country for treatment, and enjoy shopping, spa, and other tourism activities related to the country of destination after the treatment or during the recovery of the body.

Merepatients: Foreign tourists who come to the country of destination in order to receive treatment. No tourism activities during the process.

From the above classification of patients, it can be seen that Medicated tourists are not medical tourists because this type of tourists has no intention to get treatment in a foreign country, but they have to stay for a treatment due to their physical conditions.

2.5 The Summary

There are many factors that affect the decision making of medical tourists, including the prices of medical services, medical service technologies, doctors' attitudes and capabilities, and tourist attractions and natural beauty of destination countries. Popular medical services include: dental treatment, cosmetic surgery, orthopedic surgery, cardiac surgery, neurolothaphy, and physical examination.

According to the definition of medical tourists, medical tourists include foreign tourists who have received medical services in Thailand for less than 12 months, tourists that have plans to receive medical services in Thailand or have decided to receive medical services after noticing relevant promotions in Thailand, and tourists that have received medical treatment in Thailand and have enjoyed other tourist activities. Tourists who have suffered medical accidents while traveling in Thailand and have to receive the treatment are not medical tourists.

3. STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN THAILAND

3.1 Overall Development of Medical Tourism in Thailand

Medical tourism is a type of high-consumption tourism. It is a policy made by the government to develop medical tourism in order to make the country a medical hub in Asia. In the past decade, that is, between 2005 and 2015, medical tourism in Asia, including Thailand, has kept on a sustainable development.

From the existing research data on medical tourism, it can be concluded that medical tourism in Asia has a huge market, mainly consisting of the increasing elderly citizens from developed countries. Meanwhile, some insurance companies have also entered the medical tourism industry. Medical tourism in Thailand, India, Singapore, Malaysia and some other Asian countries is rapidly developing. These countries are capable to provide services for those who are in need of medical tourism services.

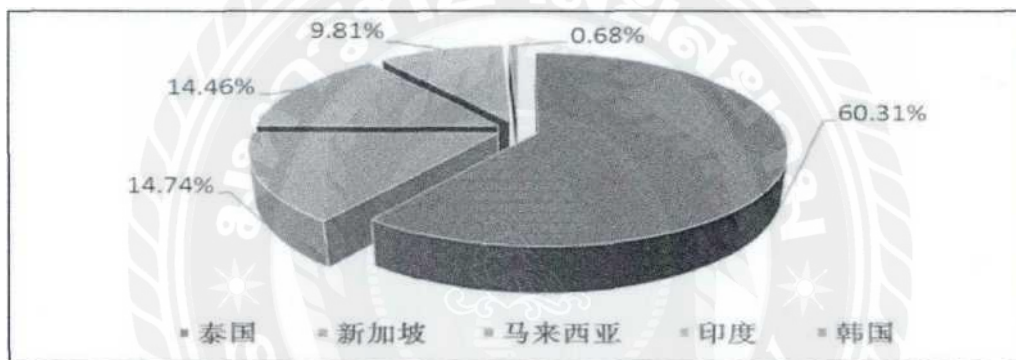


Figure 3.1 Types of Services in Medical Tourism Market

Thailand's medical tourism is supported by the government, which has promoted the development of medical tourism and has formulated policies to develop it into a Medical Hub of Asia as well as policies to promote the development of the health care industry. The medical hub policy consists of three parts, namely, the hospital treatment service business, the health care business, and the Thailand Health care Herbal Product business. The Department of Tourism investment. The Study of Medical Tourism Investment (2008-2009). Bangkok: Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2009.

The hospital treatment service business is the most important business, with 218' private hospitals as the main body. Some of these hospitals also have some proficient doctors with high medical skills and overseas learning backgrounds.

Figure 3-1, the types of services in the medical tourism market in Asia shows that Thailand's medical tourism services accounted for 60.31% in the medical tourism market, ranking first; Singapore's medical tourism services accounted for 14.74%, ranking second; followed by Malaysia, India and South Korea. In addition, from various sources in different countries, it can be learned that the diversity in Thai medical services makes many foreign

tourists to select Thailand as their medical tourism destination. For example, as is stated in the report made by Bloomberg.com on June 25, 2013 (JordanRobertson, <http://www.bloomberg.com>, 2013), Thailand has the largest number of medical tourism tourists in the world. However, in terms of medical tourism revenue (Figure 3-2), it can be seen that Singapore has a market share of 47.55%, much higher than Thailand's 30.23%, followed by India, Malaysia, and South Korea.

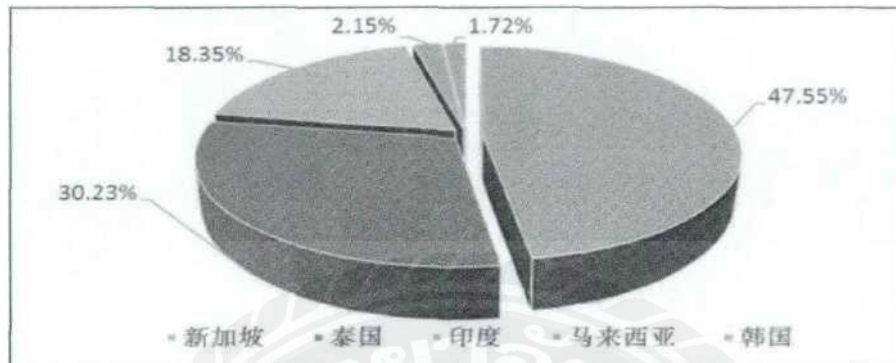


Figure 3.2 Income distribution in the medical tourism market

The growth rate of Thai medical tourism tourists is much higher than that of medical tourism. According to the statistical data of foreign patients who came to Thailand for medical tourism, the number of visitors increased from 1.37 million to 25.3 million from 2007 to 2012, with a growth rate of 16.93% per year. However, the growth rate of medical tourism income was only 2.81% per year, rising from 106.64 billion baht to 1216.58 billion baht. It can be predicted that in the next five years, Thailand's medical tourism income and the number of foreign patients (between 2013 and 2017) will continue to grow, as shown in Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4.

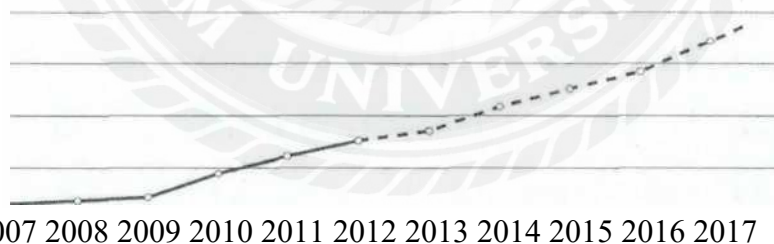


Figure 3.3 Number of foreign patients coming to Thailand for medical tourism

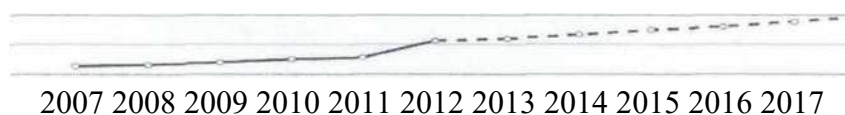


Figure 3.4 Income from Medical Tourism in Thailand

Statistics show that most of the foreign tourists in Thailand are Americans, Japanese, Middle Easterners and Canadians. Due to the development of medical tourism and the involvement of the government and investors in the medical tourism market, Mangow has become a medical tourism hub and has been widely praised in medical services, including:

cosmetic plastic surgery, cardiac surgery and general physical examination. The main factors affecting foreign tourists or foreign patients to receive medical services in Thailand are: lack of medical experts in the native country, long treatment time, high treatment costs, and lack of good treatment facilities in some countries, especially underdeveloped countries. In addition, the Thai people's unique characteristics, gentle character, and manners of courtesy and friendliness all attract foreign tourists to Thailand for treatment or return to Thailand for medical services.

3.1.1. The origin and development of Thailand's medical tourism

Thailand formally started to provide medical tourism services probably in 1997. After Thailand went through the economic crisis, private hospitals started investing to expand their businesses. Some hospitals even expanded their business before the economic crisis, which successfully solved the problem of drastic reduction in the use of hospital beds. Private hospitals provided some beds for high-end customers. Influenced by the sluggish development of Thailand after the economic crisis, people's income has dramatically declined. Most people go to less expensive government hospitals, resulting in the deduction of the number of patients receiving treatment at private hospitals with relatively expensive expenses. Therefore, these private hospitals need to self-adjust to increase the number of foreign patients. By relatively low medical costs in Thailand, these private hospitals attracted patients from the countries with high level of consumption such as Japan, Europe and the Middle East. Some hospitals also introduced management teams and medical care personnel that can take care of foreign patients from abroad. Through these measures, the hospitals in Thailand went through the difficult time of the financial crisis. With the adjustment of these hospitals, Thai medical tourism began to emerge.

In addition, since 2004, the Thai government has also promoted a national development policy to allow the country to develop into a Center of Excellent Health Care of Asia within five years. The first phase (2004-2008) focuses on three aspects: hospital medical service business, health care business service, and health herb product business. The successful implementation of the above business made foreign tourists pay more attention to medical tourism in Thailand, and at the same time earned profits for this industry and related industries. Then, the second-phase development plan was made out by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Commission and the Ministry of Health to promote the sustainable development of health care services. The plan is known as the Thailand International Health Center Development Plan (2010-2014), focusing on making Thailand become World Class Health care Destination and Academic Medical Hub of Asia. At the current stage, the development plan for Thailand Hub of Wellness and Medical Services (2016-2025) was established.

At this stage, the Thai government will focus on medical technology and medical academic research, and vigorously promote the development of Thai traditional medicine and health care products. The above-mentioned policies aim to strengthen the competitiveness of Thailand in health services and enhance the level of Thailand's health service to the

international height. At the same time, the government will promote the joint development of government hospitals and private hospitals, and make the services of private hospitals more distinctive without affecting the country's major health care system.

So far, great achievement has been made in Thailand's medical tourism in terms of the number of tourists and medical tourism revenue. Doctors are proficient in medical skills and act in a friendly manner; Medical devices are sophisticated and relatively advanced; The introduction of advanced treatment technologies and modern medical devices enable patients and their relatives to receive good treatment and care; Treatment costs and examination fees are far lower than that of developed countries; Thailand's operative successful rate is the same as that of developed countries, making Thailand the “leader” of medical tourism in Asia and the world. For the above reasons, many patients from developed countries go to Thailand to receive high-quality medical tourism services at low costs. According to a report from the Health and Wellness Tourism Thailand, the Thai government has established an international standard for medical services to promote the development of medical tourism in Thailand. In terms of tourist sources, according to the data from the Export Promotion Department and the Ministry of Commerce, most of the foreign patients coming to Thailand for medical tourism in 2012 came from the Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and the North America. And the foreign tourists mainly are Japanese, Americans, Britishmen, Arabins and Italians.

(Figure 3-5)

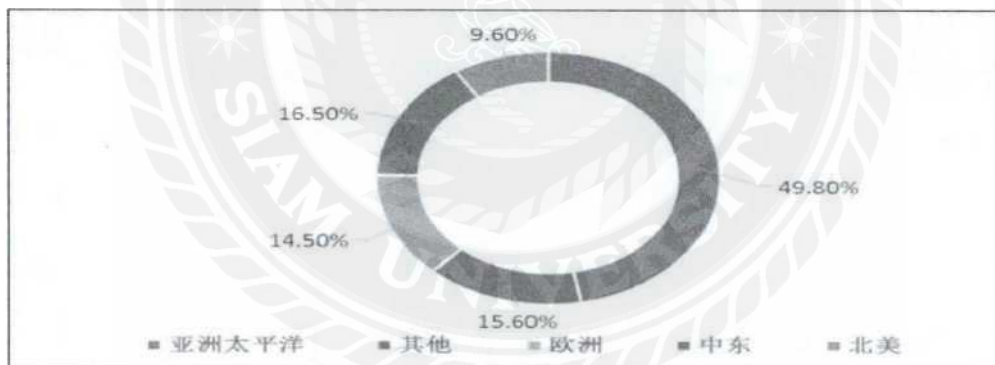


Figure 3.5 Percentage of foreign patients travelling to Thailand for medical tourism in 2012

In terms of the number of tourists, Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia have taken the lead in the medical tourism market. The Thai-Chinese Farmers Research Center expects that the number of foreign tourists in Thailand will be approximately 3.2 million in 2016, of which about 2.6 million will be medical tourists, accounting for about 80% of the total number of tourists.

In terms of medical projects, the following five types are most popular with tourists: medical examination, cosmetic surgery, dental treatment, orthopedic surgery, and cardiac surgery (see Figure 3-6).

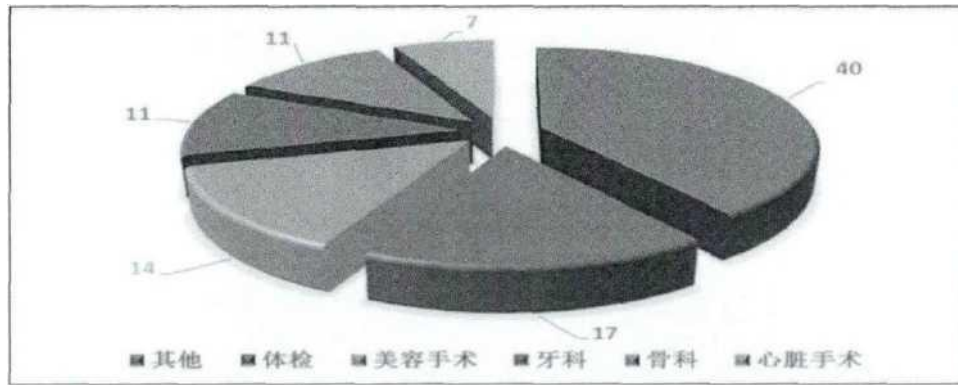


Figure 3.6 Medical Tourists' Favorite Treatment

3.1.2 The purpose of medical tourists for visiting Thailand

Thailand's medical tourism has risen since 1997. In 2004, the number of foreign tourists increased from 500,000 in 2001 to 1.1 million, and then to 1.4 million in 2007. In 2008, Corben created billions of dollars in revenue for the Thailand. This shows the great trust of foreigners in Thai medical tourism services. At the same time, Ruben Toral, the top executive of Medeguide Consultancy, also stated that Thailand has been affecting the Asian medical tourism market since 2001-2006.

In despite of a large medical team of about 21,051 people including dentists, Thailand is still in lack of doctors. All health care costs account for about 35% of the GDP of Thailand. 63% of the health care costs lie in public health and 37% in private institutions. Thailand ranks 174th in terms of medical expenses and 47th in terms of medical quality in the rankings of the World Health Organization.

By a good combination of low prices and high quality, Thailand surpasses many strong competitors. According to the quote from Medical Tourism Publication in Thailand, Thailand is the favorite place for Americans. In the respect of the service objects, the main target markets of Thailand are: the United States, Japan, Australia, Middle East, and Europe and Southeast Asian countries. Because of the increasing medical fees and the excessive use of medical instruments, domestic patients decide to go to other countries for better quality medical services at lower prices. Even if they will need to pay more for travel expenses, the total expenses are still lower than the treatment costs in their own country. Bumrungrad Hospital is the leader of Thailand's medical tourism service, and the medical expenses are almost one-eighth that of U.S. hospitals, and Thailand's treatment costs are also lower than that of Asian countries at the same level.

Many articles has mentioned that Thailand is a medical center in Asia. For example, Woodman said that Thailand has more than one million medical tourists each year, and as the only hospital that accepts patients from hundreds of countries, Bumrungrad Hospital will receive more than 1,500 patients each day. Patients from the Middle East have changed their destinations for medical services from the United States and Britain to Thailand, especially

after the September 11 incident when the disputes between countries have intensified.

In addition, Woodman also introduced special medical services in Thailand, such as: cardiac and coronary surgery, cosmetic surgery, oral care, transsexual surgery, neurology, cancer treatment, eye disease treatment, musculoskeletal surgery and bariatric surgery. From the Corben, the medical projects favored by tourists are: dental treatment, transsexual surgery and cosmetic surgery.

Many hospital leaders in Thailand have set up service centers to contact with patients in various countries. Bumrungrad Hospital and Bangkok Hospital also set up their own offices.

3.1.3 Thailand's medical tourism products

Within the payment capacity of medical tourists, Thailand provides first-rate medical services and personalized services for medical tourists. Cosmetic surgery has made remarkable achievements in Thailand's medical tourism industry, creating a lot of income for Thailand. Thailand Medical tourism agencies provide a list of medical service projects, as shown in Table 3.1.3.

Cosmetic / or plastic surgery (Plastic surgery)	Breast augmentation surgery/ Breast lift surgery + (Eyelid surgery)
Dentistry	Tummy Tuck Laser whitening teeth Dental implant
Orthopedic surgery	Hip replacement/Resurfacing Knee Replacement Shoulder arthroscopy Ankle Arthroscopy Acupuncture
Holistic/Anti-aging	Detoxification Stem cell treatment rejuvenation Birthmark removal
Dermatology	Mole removal Cellulite treatment Lasik eye surgery
^#l(Other services)	medical -up Sex reassignment surgery

Table 3.1.3 Favorite Treatment Projects of Medical tourists

3.1.4 The Characteristics of Thai Medical Tourists

Foreign patients who receive medical services in private hospitals in Thailand are divided into the following three categories.

The first category: Residential expatriates that are living in Thailand or Thailand's neighboring countries account for approximately 70-80% of all patients, of which

approximately 70-75% are expatriates working in Thailand, another 5% are long-stay foreigners living in Thailand. When deciding to receive medical services, these patients mainly obtain information through the Medical Consulting Company, hospital websites, and friends and acquaintances. According to the characteristics of patients, these patients can be divided into two sub-categories:

Expatriates working in Thailand include foreign embassy officials in Thailand, foreign employees working in foreign companies in Thailand, and people working in neighboring countries with underdeveloped medical technology such as Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Myanmar. These people will be assisted by insurance companies, Medical Assistance Company recommended by the government or medical institutions selected by their companies.

Long-stay foreigners in Thailand. Most of them are retired old people in foreign countries. Since the living costs in Thailand are lower than that of their own countries, most of foreign tourists decide to stay in Thailand for a long time, especially the Japanese. Generally, this group of people consults friends or relatives when choosing a hospital, or searches information from web pages based on conditions such as hospital location, nursing level, medical expenses, and whether insurance provided by the insurance company can be applied or other conditions.

The second category: General tourists who suffer accidents or sudden illnesses while travelling in Thailand. These tourists are usually foreigners and will receive some medical services in hospitals under the supervision of insurance companies. It is stated by Cohen that such tourists are called Medicated tourists. The hospitals where they get treatment are mainly famous tourist cities in Thailand, such as Chiang Mai, Bangkok, Phuket, Koh Samui and other major tourist attractions. Most of these tourists have suffered digestive diseases such as diarrhea, food poisoning, etc., or were injured in accidents. They will be sent to Bangkok for treatment if they are in severely bad conditions. These patients account for about 10%-15% of all foreign patients.

The third category: Medical tourists. Such tourists visit Thailand to receive medical services. Medical services may be the only activities they conduct during the trip, and they will not perform any other travel activities. • Medical services may also be part of their travels and they will also perform other travel activities. Through various channels such as Medical Tourism Facilitator, hospitals' websites, hospitals' roadshows, and recommendations from friends and relatives, these tourists learned about the relevant information about Thailand's tourism and select the hospital where they want to get the medical services. These patients account for approximately 5% - 10% of all foreign patients. And this category of foreign patients can also be divided into 3 subcategories, as follows:

The foreign patients who directly receive medical treatment at the hospital and do not carry out any other travel activities during the stay in Thailand. According to Cohen, this type of tourist is called a Mere patient.

Foreign patients who receive medical services during their travel to Thailand. According to Cohen, this type of tourist is called a Vacationing patient.

Foreign tourists who decided to receive medical services in Thailand before they visit Thailand. In addition, they will carry out other tourism activities during their stay in Thailand. According to Cohen, this type of tourist is called a Medical tourist proper.

3.1.5 Development of Medical Tourism in Thailand

Nowadays, the medical tourism market in Thailand has been paid much attention. Although Thailand has a lower medical costs than that in Western countries, the medical technology and medical quality of Thai hospitals are not worse than that in any country. In addition, the use of modern medical tools and medical devices that are in accordance with international standards, Thai-friendly services, and the name of "one of world's first tourist destinations," have made Thailand attractive to patients in many Asian countries including Singapore, Japan, and South Korea and become their ultimate choice for medical tourism destinations.

In general, the significant positive impact of the development of medical tourism is to make revenues for the country, increase income for medical personnel, and promote employment for the tourism industry, trade, and other service industries; Apart from these, Thailand's strength in health care has been promoted which attracts foreign businessmen to come to Thailand for related investments; at the same time, medical personnel are motivated to study medical technology abroad to further improve themselves, and the development of hospital medical quality has been promoted.

3.2 Main reasons for the development of Thailand's medical tourism

Tourists are willing to go abroad for medical tourism mainly because the countries of destination are different from their own country in terms of medical prices, medical technology, and medical services. The image of medical tourism countries, the proficiency of doctors, the quality of medical services, and whether the famous tourist attractions can provide medical services and other factors directly affect the choice of medical tourists. The development of Thailand's medical tourism is mainly contributed by the following reasons:

3.2.1 International Medical Certification (JCI) Passed by Thailand Hospital

Each year, Thailand will provide safe medical services for about one million people. High-level hospitals or hospitals that even reach international standards may be the choice of patients who come from distant areas. Such as, hospitals that have passed the International Standard (JCI) certification by the U.S. International Joint Commission. Many private hospitals in Thailand have passed international medical certifications such as ISO9002, ISO 900: 2000, ISO14001. Because of the safer and more guaranteed treatments provided by

the private hospitals in Thailand, a large number of patients will always take delight in talking about the delicious food, the proficiency of doctors, and the high quality medical services in the hospitals after they return home.

3.2.2 Low medical tourism costs

The medical costs in Thailand are much lower than those in the United States. Since Singapore's medical expenses are similar to the medical expenses in Thailand, it becomes a very strong competitor for Thailand in this region. India has made a rapid development in medical tourism. Although India's medical costs are lower than those in Thailand, the public facilities provided to tourists are worse than those in Thailand.

3.2.3 Rich tourism resources

In Thailand, there are many tourist attractions in each of the provinces. Some of these attractions are world-famous. With the uniqueness, these attractions rank among the best in the list of all kinds of tourist attractions in the world. Thailand is featured by these rich and beautiful tourism resources which are conducive to promoting the development of Thailand's medical tourism.

3.2.4 Convenient transportation

Bangkok International Airport is the center of connection between Thailand and other countries. The aircraft from more than 80 international airlines will take off and land at Bangkok International Airport, making it convenient for flights of various countries to come to Thailand. In addition, the low-price air tickets reduce travel costs for tourists and attract tourists to Thailand.

3.2.5 Rich medical projects

There is a variety of medical services in Thailand. Foreign tourists can choose the services according to their needs. Modern medicine, Thai ancient medicine, Thai traditional medicine, Chinese traditional medicine and other health promotion services, as well as the services provided by the Integrative Wellness Center are available for foreigners, such as the Destination Spa Medical spa, Thai massage, Thai health care activities, health rehabilitation activities, elderly rehabilitation activities, long-stay health care activities, dietary therapy and other medical projects. At the same time, under the supervision of relevant departments, doctors must be licensed to provide medical services, which to a certain extent guarantees the safety of tourists.

3.3 SWOT Analysis of Thailand's Medical Tourism

In order to formulate a correct development strategy to enable Thailand to compete with other medical tourism countries in the region and become the "leader" in the region, it is

necessary to analyze the situation of Thailand's medical tourism, including the strengths weakness, medical tourism opportunities and obstacles. The SWOT analysis of Thailand's medical tourism is as follows:

3.3.1 Strengths

It is analyzed that the strengths of Thailand's medical tourism is the highlights that should be protected and developed in order to enhance the competitiveness. The strengths of Thailand are as follows:

(a) High proficiency of doctors

A large number of proficient doctors with overseas learning backgrounds is a major highlight of Thai medical tourism. These professionally trained doctors have made the patients more trust in the hospital's treatment, and their foreign language skills have also helped them to better serve patients. Focusing on the development of medical personnel, hospitals in Thailand encourage and support medical personnel to keep learning, in order to enhance their professional knowledge, master advanced technology, and enrich their treatment experience.

(b) Reasonable medical tourism costs

Price is an important factor that influences the patient's choice of destination for medical tourism. The rise in medical costs in developed countries has increased the demand for medical tourism services in developing countries. In order to enable medical tourists to find medical tourism services at the right price, Medical Tonris.com provides price comparison tables for medical tourism projects in selected countries. India, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore have more obvious price advantages. As shown in the following table 3.3.1

Medical procedure	The THAILA						
	United States	Costa Rica	india	Korea	ND	Malaysia	Singapore
Heart Bypass (Heart Bypass)	\$123,000	\$27,000	\$7,900	\$26,000	\$15,000	\$12,100	\$17,200
Angioplasty	\$28,200	\$13,800	\$5,700	\$17,700	\$4,200	\$8,000	\$13,400
Heart Valve	\$170,000	\$30,000	\$9,500	\$39,900	\$17,200	\$13,500	\$16,900
Hip	\$40,364	\$13,600	\$7,200	\$21,000	\$17,000	\$8,000	\$13,900
Knee	\$35,000	\$12,500	\$6,600	\$17,500	\$14,000	\$7,700	\$16,000
Spinal Fusion	\$110,000	\$15,700	\$10,300	\$16,900	\$9,500	\$6,000	\$12,800
Dental Implant	\$2,500	\$800	\$900	\$1,350	\$1,720	\$1,500	\$2,700
Milk (Breast)	\$6,400	\$3,500	\$3,000	\$3,800	\$3,500	\$3,800	\$8,400
Rhinoplasty	\$6,500	\$3,800	\$2,400	\$3,980	\$3,300	\$2,200	\$2,200
Face Lift	\$11,000	\$4,500	\$3,500	\$6,000	\$3,950	\$3,550	\$440

Liposuction	\$5,500	\$2,800	\$2,800	\$2,900	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,900
Tummy Tuck	\$8,000	\$5,000	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$5,3	\$3,900	\$4,650
Lasik both eye	\$4,000	\$2,400	\$1,000	\$1,700	\$2,310	\$3,450	\$3,800
Cornea per eye	\$17,500	\$9,800	\$2,800	N/A	\$3,600	N/A	\$9,000
IVF Treatment	\$12,400	N/A	\$2,500	\$7,900	\$4,100	\$6,900	\$14,900

Table 3.3.1 Price Comparison of Medical Procedures in Various Countries in 2016

According to the statistics of the relevant departments and evaluations of patients from overseas, most of the patients were satisfied with Thailand's medical expenses and hospital's medical quality. The average medical costs in Thailand are 65%-90% that in India, 65%-80% in Malaysia, 50%-75% in the United States, 45%-65% in Costa Rica, 30% in South Korea, 25 %-40% in Singapore . Thailand's advanced medical technology and reasonable treatment costs are enough for Thailand to compete with its competitors.

(c) High-end medical technology and medical equipment

With modern medical devices, hospitals in Thailand can better diagnose conditions, reduce infections, reduce operative wounds, shorten recovery time, ensure medical quality, meet patient needs, improve patient satisfaction, and attract more Patients from developed countries to travel to Thailand for treatments.

(d) High standard, high quality medical care

Thailand has advanced technologies and higher qualities in medical treatment services, such as cardiac coronary therapy, cosmetic surgery, oral care, transsexual surgery, general surgery, neurology, orthopedic surgery, and physical examination. These medical projects not only meets the needs of the patients but also become a major highlight of Thai hospitals. In order to attract patients and potential medical tourists, these professional medical services can found at tourist attractions outside the hospital.

(e) Famous health services

The development of Thai traditional medicine services is encouraged by the Thai government. Foreign tourists are attracted by those health care services with Thai characteristics such as Thai traditional herbal medicine therapy, Thai massage treatments, and spa treatments.

(f) Friendly service attitude

The hospitality of the Thai people is one of the treasures of Thailand. Doctors, nurses, and other staff who provided services impress the patient a lot with a big smile on the face which attracts more patients invisibly.

(g) Famous tourist destinations

Thailand is one of the countries with a relatively developed tourism industry in the world.

A lot of beautiful tourist attractions, many natural scenery, culture and arts, delicious food and entertainment items are available for tourists. According to the list of the world's best tourism cities in 2011 published by the famous travel magazine "Travel & Leisure" in the United States, Bangkok is at the top of the list. The results of this list is obtained through the magazine's online voting survey. The voters are required to evaluate and rank the cities according to six questions, namely, the beauty of the tourist attractions, the charm of culture and arts, the charm of food and drink, the affinity of cultural customs, the attractiveness of shopping, and the cost-effectiveness of shopping. Among them, shopping, cultural affinity, roadside food are the focus of the evaluation. The city of Bangkok gets up to 90.48% of votes in this evaluation.

3.3.2 Weaknesses

It analyzes the current deficiencies in medical tourism to provide some reference for the future improvement and development of medical tourism. There are several problems in Thailand's medical tourism:

(1) High sales tax and medical equipment prices

Most medical devices, especially modern and advanced medical devices, are introduced from the countries with high tax rates. As higher taxes are imposed on relevant medical facilities and equipment imported from abroad, part of the taxes have been paid by the patients from the treatment costs. The increase in medical expenses has prevented Thailand from attracting more medical tourism tourists to some extent.

(2) Lack of doctors and related personnel

The most important problem in Thai health care services is the lack of a high-level medical team, which is particularly prominent in northern Thailand. At the same time, the development of Thailand's health care tourism has also caused a shortage of medical teams in the country, especially in northern Thailand, leading to heavy workload and great work pressure for the existing medical team and related staff, which will damage the staff's Confidence and patience, and reduce work effectiveness.

(3) Lack of regulations related to medical services

No specific laws and regulations have been formulated for medical negligence or medical crimes, so that patients' rights and interests can not be protected. Great risks have to be assumed by patients, thus seriously affecting the patient's confidence in treatment. At the same time, it is also not conducive to guaranteeing medical quality and the long-term development of the medical tourism industry.

(4) Overstrict restrictions on entry

Many restrictions have to be conformed and complicated procedures have to be completed before entering Thailand, especially in terms of VISA for Thailand. For tourists who visit Thailand to receive health care services, this process is cumbersome. In contrast, it is more convenient for the application of visas for countries such as Singapore and India.

Multiple visas are available as long as tourists hold a doctor's certificate.

(5) No relevant functional department promoting corporate publicity

At present, there are no relevant organizations to promote cooperation between hospitals. Each hospital or clinic has to look for resources, information, and summing up experience by itself. Due to the lack of cooperation between hospitals, the information about each hospital is limited and varied. The prices offered to tourists who come from another country are very different, which has caused confusion for tourists and is not conducive to the development of hospitals.

(6) Language and culture obstacles

Due to the differences in Language and culture, it is hard for the staff of the hospital and the medical tourists to communicate with each other. In addition to the tourists who speak the international language-English, there are also some tourists that speak other languages, such as: Chinese, Japanese, Russian and German. Good communication can not be realized between the hospital and these tourists, which also negatively impacts the quality of medical services.

3.3.3. Opportunities

The beneficial external factors are analyzed in order to make full use of them to promote the development of Thai medical tourism.

(a) Increased freedom of trade

The reduction of trade rules has made it easier for countries to import and export products and services, which is conducive to the supply of doctors in Thailand and to the import of medical equipment and devices. In addition, the rapid development of the logistics industry has made cargo transportation faster.

(b) Low-cost airlines

The decrease in international ticket prices has led to a sharp increase in the number of people traveling both at home and abroad. A large number of foreign tourists are attracted to travel to Thailand by Thailand's high-quality, low-cost air services.

(c) The limitations of treatment in some countries

Influenced by religious beliefs and values, there are some restrictions in treatment categories of some countries. However, there are no such restrictions in Thailand, making a large market occupation for Thailand in some countries. For example, Thailand is well-known for its stem cell therapies, through which some diseases that are difficult to cure can be treated. Some hospitals in Western countries are not allowed to conduct related treatment in the country. Patients then come to Thailand for related services and get the expected results, and accordingly, the influence of Thailand has been expanded in the world medical market.

(d) Elderly Tourism Market

As the world's aging population continues to increase, citizens born during the Baby Boomer era, that is, citizens born after the Second World War are currently the generation with the most consumption. This group of people often chooses beauty treatment in medical tourism. According to investigations and studies, the number of American citizens born in the Baby Boomer is approximately 77 million, of which approximately 12% did not purchase medical insurance. Thus these elderly patients are not able to receive treatment at a very low price in the country. Then the lower cost medical tourism and fake tourism will become a good choice for older citizens born in the Baby Boomer era.

(e) Medical Health Service System

In the UK and Canada and many other countries, public health services are extremely inefficient, and these countries are slow to provide services. It is still a problem in many western countries that patients have to wait for quite a long time to get treatment. For example, patients in the United States who are undergoing surgical treatment have to wait for an average of three weeks. In Canada, these kind of people will spend as long as eight weeks in waiting. For hip and knee replacement surgery, patients have to wait for 200 days. However, emergency surgery in Thailand only takes 2-3 days.

(f) Beauty Services

In Western countries, the demand for beauty services is not only from the elderly. Face lift by the use of botulinum toxin is becoming popular with the young generation. The demand for cosmetic surgery is increasing day by day, and is gradually well-received by every age group. However, there is no systematic guarantee for such cosmetic surgery because it is excluded from the national medical benefits. In order to receive the cosmetic surgery that is not available in the domestic country at a lower cost, more and more people are beginning to choose medical tourism and travel to other countries to receive the cosmetic surgery they need.

(g) Advanced Information Technology (ICT)

Through the use of information technology, accurate market information can be obtained, and good communication can be made with the outside world in a timely manner. The development of information and communication technology has adjusted the service industry and added new revenue sources for the service industry. All in all, the application of advanced information technology in Thai medical tourism has made Thailand more competitive than its competitors.

(h) Increase the number of medical tourism service personnel from developed countries

The demand for health services of citizens in developed countries have gradually increased. However, treatment expenses are too high due to the long waiting time for treatment in domestic country, and the exclusion of some medical projects from state medical benefits. As a result, more and more people choose to travel abroad for medical treatment. Thailand should seize this opportunity and fully prepare itself to provide these citizens from developed countries with high-quality medical tourism service personnel and

provide them with high-quality medical services and reasonable medical expenses.

(i) Insurance companies cover medical tourism destinations

The insurance companies and practitioners in the insurance industry in the developed countries are very familiar with the development trend of medical tourism. They know that citizens often receive medical services in developing countries with short treatment time, low cost, high quality, and low risk. Therefore, in order to expand business volume and increase income, more and more insurance companies are beginning to provide tourists with insurance services in medical tourism, so that tourists can also be treated without worries in foreign countries.

3.3.4 Threats

The unfavorable influence factors are analyzed, and the negative influence of these factors should be avoided.

(a) Competitiveness

The growing demand for medical tourism services has intensified the competition in the medical tourism industry, and the number of Thailand's competitors have also continued to increase. For example: Singapore, Malaysia and India, are strong competitors for Thailand in medical tourism.

(b) Security issues

The instability of the country and the lack of peace in the three southern border provinces have caused great panic among tourists who travel to Thailand for treatment. Safety issues are much more emphasized by Medical tourists than any other type of tourists. Therefore, the instability of the country, not conducive to national security, makes patients more willing to travel to other countries for treatment.

(c) Increased oil prices

The rise in oil prices always bothers the countries that provide medical tourism services. As is known to all, the rising oil prices will increase the costs of transportation and then increase the travel costs for tourists, which will prompt tourists to choose to receive treatment in neighboring countries with less travel costs, thus reducing the number of tourists from Western developed countries to visit Thailand for medical tourism.

(d) Thai baht exchange rate

The appreciation of the Thai baht has increased the travel costs and expenses of foreign tourists to visit Thailand, resulting in the decision change of destinations of some tourists and the profit loss in Thailand.

3.4 The Summary

At present, Thailand's medical tourism market is mainly composed of three types of

foreign patients. The first type of patients are foreigners living in Thailand with the market share of approximately 70%-80%. The second type of patients are foreign tourists suffering from illness while traveling in Thailand with the market share of approximately 10%-15%. The third type of patients are medical tourists, with a market share of about 5%-10%. According to the above data, foreigners living in Thailand are the largest group in Thailand's medical tourism market.

At present, Thailand has become a medical tourism hub in Asia, and private enterprises have greatly promoted the establishment of Thailand's position of medical tourism hub in the past decade. Thailand's medical tourism industry has occupied an important position in Asia. It is very popular in orthopaedic surgery, dental beauty, and health examinations and also well-known for cosmetic surgery and the treatment for complex diseases.

From the above data, it can be concluded that medical tourism has a tendency of continuous development. The number of tourists who decide to travel abroad and receive medical services in destination countries is gradually increasing. In particular, more and more tourists from developed countries began to receive medical services in developing countries. This is mainly because of the increasing number of elderly people in many developed countries, the increase in the country's medical service costs, and the lower cost of medical services in Asian countries; at the same time, the decline in the cost of international transportation and the development of low-cost airlines have also made some contributions to the development of the medical services. In Asia, the market share of Thailand's medical tourism is higher than that of other countries in the same region. Thailand's customer market is mainly in Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and North America. Most of the foreign tourists in Thailand are from Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Italy.

In order to formulate a strategy to guide Thailand's medical tourism, this paper analyzes the competitiveness of Thailand's medical tourism. The results show that the advantages of Thailand's medical tourism are mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, the price of medical tourism services is lower than that of competitors. Secondly, the hospitals have high medical levels, and the medical personnel are proficient to provide professional treatment for patients. Thirdly, the hospitals are equipped with advanced medical equipment and the medical personnel can provide warm and thoughtful services to patients. In addition, the fascinating scenery and world-famous tourist attractions in Thailand allow patients to enjoy a very comfortable trip. At the same time, with the increasing elderly population in the world and the improved quality of people's lives, people's demand for medical services is increasing which will help expand Thailand's medical tourism market.



4. COUNTERMEASURES FOR PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THAILAND'S MEDICAL TOURISM MARKET

4.1 Competition Countermeasures for Thailand's Medical Tourism

Within the same region, Thailand's competitiveness in medical tourism is much higher than that in other countries, which is contributed by Thailand's unique geographical location. Thailand faces Pacific Ocean in the southeast and face the Indian Ocean in the southwest, and borders with many other countries. It is more convenient for foreign tourists to travel to Thailand. At the same time, Thailand has attracted many overseas tourists by combining medical services with famous tourist attractions.

Compared with the competitor Singapore, Thailand has similar service quality to that in Singapore, but medical costs in Thailand are lower. Moreover, Thailand also has proficient doctors and modern medical facilities comparable to those in Singapore. In addition, there are many private hospitals in Thailand, and some of them are well-known both at home and abroad; while Singapore, due to the small area size, is not able to build more hospitals, nor can it accept large numbers of foreign tourists who need medical tourism. From the analysis of the strengths, Thailand's strengths in medical tourism is much more than that of competitors in Asia, especially in terms of cosmetic surgery and knees surgery. Thailand also provides thoughtful medical services and travel services for foreign patients .

Corresponding strategies have been put forward for how to expand Thailand's medical tourism market. This will help the government, providers of medical services and other relevant departments to formulate comprehensive development plans and thus attract more tourists to visit Thailand for medical tourism. The strategies are put forward in the respect of the following aspects:

4.1.1 Product

(A) Establishing and Promoting the Image of "A Country with High Quality Medical Tourism Services" in Thailand

It is very important for a country to establish a good image. It not only enables the country to display its own identity, but also help it to display the highlights of the country in tourism. Therefore, Thailand should focus on establishing an image that conforms to "a country with high-quality medical tourism services" and publicize itself through advertisements and other media to increase visitors' awareness of Thailand's high-quality health care services. At the same time, every hospital should pay enough attention to the treatment quality and the medical technology to establish an image of an excellent hospital. On the one hand, hospitals should provide a variety of medical projects - from ordinary medical services to the treatment therapies of various complicated diseases, to meet the various needs of patients. On the other hand, hospitals must attach importance to the details.

It should not only provide modernized medical technology, high-quality medical services,

and a skilled medical team, but also be certified and authorized by international authority agencies, so that it can get the trust from patients and offer quality services to patients.

(B) Establishing and Developing a New Model of Medical Tourism

Thailand is famous for the tourist attractions in the country. Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya and Koh Samui have become the main destinations for medical tourists visiting Thailand. The cities should combine their own characteristics to make local tourism products more distinctive. For example, as the capital of Thailand, with modern medical equipment, a professional medical team, high-quality medical personnel, and advanced technology for treating complex diseases, Bangkok should combine specialist medical services with shopping, entertainment, city sightseeing, and cultural activities in tourism. Similarly, Phuket, Pattaya, and Koh Samui, as coastal cities with beautiful beaches, coral reefs, and fascinating tropical scenery, should integrate medical treatments such as cosmetic surgery and oral care with seaside activities and vacation tourism. The combination of medical services and other entertainment and sightseeing activities can provide tourists more choices, and promote cooperation between different industries, thus increasing the income of the practitioners in some industries.

(C) Destinations for health tourism

The Thai government needs to promote the development of health tourism. It is a misconception by most of people that health tourism is merely spa therapy and massage, which has no connection with health care. In fact, these health care programs are also part of the medical services. Thai spas, massages and other physical therapies are well known in other countries. Therefore, the Thai government should seize the opportunity to value and vigorously develop health tourism so as to attract more tourists that is interested in health tourism.

(D) Promotion of health services

In order to expand the medical tourism industry and promote the fame of Thailand's medical tourism services, the Thai government must vigorously promote hospitals with high-quality medical technologies. Therefore, the Thai government should build related websites, strengthen cooperation with other countries, and promote the expansion of Thailand's medical tourism market. Thailand's major hospitals such as: Bumrungrad Hospital and Bangkok Dusit Medical Company (jointly operated by Samitivej Hospital, Bangkok Central Hospital and BNH Hospital) currently invest in various hospitals and medical centers in the Middle East and neighboring countries. Similar to this, the expansion of Thailand hospital branding should be carried out as always, thus increasing the influence of Thai hospitals.

4.1.2 Price

Hospitals with high-quality medical services and low medical costs are always a major strength in Thailand. Combining the cost of hospital treatment with the quality of service, it can be concluded that Thailand's medical expenses have always remained at a relatively

reasonable level. Most of the patients are quite satisfied with Thai medical services, medical expenses and various medical packages. It shows to us that Thailand's pricing strategy and hospital treatment are very scientific and reasonable. In order to maintain this advantage, the government should monitor and supervise the quality of medical services and support hospitals in formulating transparent medical fee charging mechanisms to avoid unreasonable charges.

At the same time, a high level of medical quality and reasonable medical expenses are also important factors for medical tourism tourists to be taken into account when selecting foreign hospitals. It can often be seen that patients will be confused about the high cost of medical treatment, which will seriously affect the image of Thai medical tourism. Therefore, charging standards should be set by hospitals in cautiousness to ensure the patients are charged in a transparent way to avoid misunderstandings.

In order to support the health care industry and promote the development of modern medical technology, the government should reduce the hospital's tax revenue, and at the same time lower the interest rate on the purchase of medical equipment and necessary loans for hospitals. This can promote the development of Thai health services and make Thailand competitive in medical expenses.

4.1.3 Place

The advantages of information technology should be fully acknowledged and the Internet should be attached importance and be used as a marketing tool to promote medical tourism related information. At the same time, service providers need to build up their own websites and export their products and services to overseas markets. At present, however, many hospitals are not known due to the limited resources, low development, and limitations in the use of networks in the operating market. The Thai government should establish a central website with all data and links to other related information of interests to promote the development of Thai medical tourism. This website will become a collection center for Thailand's medical tourism related information, such as: medical services, other non-medical services for overseas tourists, doctors lists, hospital lists, hospital quality certification, health service packages, basic information of Thailand, and other necessary information for the patients and the relatives of patients. Other useful information related to medical tourism such as hospital brochures, medical tourism reference books, national maps, press releases, magazines, news and newspapers, books, and promotional videos should be promoted by the government and hospitals.

4.1.4 People

Since health care personnel and other staff members play an important role in health care, hospitals should focus on building excellent medical teams to advance the development of the medical health care industry. The government and hospitals should strongly support doctors' self-development and encourage physicians to expand their knowledge and

skills. Eyes!] The lack of doctors in some areas is still an important issue in Thai health care. Therefore, a good balance between the domestic health care system and the health tourism industry has to be maintained by the government. The Thai government should support its people to select medical tourism related disciplines to increase the number of doctors. And the government should pay the profits earned from health tourism to the staff of private hospitals on a monthly basis, so as to alleviate the shortage of medical personnel in health tourism in the underdeveloped areas. At the same time, the government must comprehensively analyze the impact of health tourism, launch policies or regulations to control the flow of doctors from government departments to private hospitals.

In order to improve the overall level of the health care personnel, it is necessary for the management of the health tourism industry to value the education and training of the staff. Medical staff and other staff who are in direct contact with tourists should be particularly trained in a strict way. Because good English communication skills and in-depth understanding of cultural differences all contribute to improving the quality of service in the health care industry and providing better services to patients from other countries.

4.1.5 Promotion

From the study by Sutherinetal and others in 2007, word-of-mouth, information searched from the Internet, newspaper advertisements, TV promotion videos, hospital magazines and data obtained from the tourism information center, become channels for those medical tourists to learn about Thai medical conditions before vising Thailand. Therefore, the research on promotion strategy is as follows

(1) Publicity

The government should use various media channels to properly implant medical tourism promotion activities. Advertising and public relations activities should be put on well-known websites, television stations, tourist maps, airplane newspapers, magazines, and foreign local TV stations. Since some patients are hesitant to travel to Thailand for treatment from their own country, advertisement and publicity should repeatedly emphasize the high quality of Thai medical services and the good image of Thai hospitals, so as to improve the awareness and trust of those patients. In the future, hospitals should use various channels to introduce the hospital's service quality and medical quality and continue to establish a good image.

For hospitals and clinics, presentations on patient treatment success, hospital quality certification, medical facilities, new medical technologies, and outstanding doctor teams should be included in the advertising campaign to make foreign markets more convinced with the good service quality and advanced medical technologies.

(2) Combination sales

The government should encourage the health care industry to establish partnerships with hotels, airlines and other industries, such as: the combined therapy with hotels, combined health services with aviation, etc., in order to promote Thailand's health care tourism and

attract more international tourists. Hospitals should focus on innovation and the introduction of other treatments such as physical examinations, vaccines, surgery (cosmetics, heart transplants, caesarean operation), etc., and provide discounts on medical expenses.

In addition, the services should be extended beyond treatment. For example, in the airport-hotel-hospital trip, the hotel's costs can be reduced, and dinner and spa should be sold as a package.

(3) Word of mouth (widely spread)

Word of mouth is an important channel for spreading information on Thailand's medical tourism. According to Suthinetal, word of mouth is an important way to promote the development of health care in and outside the country. Patients will be attracted to go to the hospitals and clinics by the online presentations on other patients' successful treatments. Therefore, the government should strengthen the supervision. Hospitals and clinics need to maintain excellent service quality, high treatment standards and friendly Thai services to meet the needs of patients and enable them to introduce the high-quality medical services to their relatives and friends.

4.2 Marketing Strategies for Thailand's Medical Tourism

1. To clarify the market position and promote the development of Thailand's medical tourism market through the use of efficient promotion strategies

The market position of Thailand should be clarified, focusing on promoting the differences between Thailand's medical tourism and other industries to attract tourists' attention.

2. To communicate efficiently with the target market to build relevant image awareness of Thailand through the use of efficient promotion strategies

The government can produce brochures on local featured services to provide tourists with information on medical services; set up a medical tourism service consulting office at the airport and display related advertisements on large billboards around the Immigration Department to attract tourists and arouse their medical tourism interest; disseminate medical tourism related information to tourists, and promote medical tourism through advanced science and technology and modern marketing methods, like the use of digital marketing strategy. Visitors can click on the official website of the Thai Tourism Bureau to enter the websites with relevant medical information.

The government should actively look for opportunities to hold world-class medical conferences in Thailand to establish a good image of the professionalization of Thailand's medical services and to strengthen the awareness of other countries in Thailand's medical services. Different agencies can go abroad to carry out roadshows in different countries to display Thailand's medical tourism services. When carrying out activities abroad, department stores and other places where people were gathered should be selected, and well-known media, columnists, thought leaders should be invited to influence all sectors of society. People, through their promotion and participation, are driven to Thailand for medical

services. The government should look for opportunities to hold world-class medical service related conferences in Thailand to promote the professional image of Thai medical services and increase the awareness of relevant countries in terms of Thai medical services. It should effectively communicate with the target market, and put the focus on the cities that are influential in one country, rather than the widely promotion throughout the country. Through effective communication and publicity, they will be aware of the highlights of Thailand, understand the status quo and stability of Thailand and show their trust in Thailand.

3. To develop products and services needed by the market to attract more people to expand the market

First of all, consumer behaviors and concepts are gradually changing. Because of the fast-paced life style, consumers will pay more attention to the efficiency and effectiveness of their behaviors. They will favor the products and services that have long-lasting effects and obvious results in a short period of time, such as weight-loss products that can be effective in a short term, cosmetic surgery that can generate a long-lasting effect. In addition, Thai massage is not enough to attract people in order to develop products and services with Thai characteristics because it is already widely available in other countries. Thai Spa Experience can be enjoyed in their own country. Multiple services should be developed to make it one-stop service and more popular services that visitors need should be introduced into Thailand, such as laser field therapy, rejuvenation, psychotherapy, and double-sex therapy. In addition, it is necessary to develop services that can attract potential medical tourists, penetrate the niche market, and provide special services for various special groups, such as: business tourists; East Asian tourists, tourists from Southeast Asia and the Middle East; couples tourists and honeymoon tourists (women have a great influence on the choice of honeymoon travel places, and men who travel together may escort their companions to use beauty care services).

4. to improve beauty and health services to enhance consumer satisfaction

Standardized and professional services are clearly different from other services. The company's services can be classified to promote service levels and the overall development of the industry. Second, the government should strengthen local management, improve service quality, increase the chance of obtaining international awards and related certificates, enhance the credibility of Thai beauty care services, and establish a good image in the hearts of patients. In addition, it is necessary for the state enterprises to jointly train with private companies to improve the quality of various types of medical service personnel. In particular, it is necessary to improve the foreign language skills of service personnel and improve the skills of Thai massage and other Thai traditional health care services. At the same time, it is necessary to promote health care careers and increase the number of employees to meet the needs of future tourists. Besides, the convenience of visitor visas and immigration inspections should be increased to attract more tourists.

5. To Establish a business alliance to strengthen cooperation and promote the sustainable development of medical tourism

It is necessary to actively establish cooperation between the state and private enterprises,

clarify the role of each department in the medical tourism market, pay attention to the coordination among various units, and establish business alliances. For example: state enterprises and private enterprises can cooperate to carry out promotional activities, aviation companies can provide discounts for passengers, companies jointly carry out promotional activities. In addition, it is necessary to expand the market by adopting a series of measures to collect various favorable information and data that guide the development of the market, such as tourist information, tourist behavior, tourist satisfaction, benchmarking, and results tracking. (Monitoring), etc., which can more effectively advertise and provide visitors with related services.

4.3 Government Support

The government should set up a special working group with strong comprehensiveness involved in all aspects of medical tourism. At the same time, it must provide rich professional knowledge related to medical tourism so as to promote the development of medical tourism by using scientific policies and methods. The departments related to medical tourism, such as the Thailand Tourism Bureau, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Health, should join hands to formulate relevant policies to promote the development of Thailand's medical tourism industry. However, in recent years this issue has not been handled in an effective way. Many private hospital administrators believe that the government should increase the budget for Thailand's medical tourism promotion, increase the promotion of Thai medical tourism, make people more aware of Thailand tourism, and then attract them to Thailand and receive medical tourism related services; Enterprises should play their own role in promoting the medical tourism as some companies' work experience and professional knowledge are more abundant than that of government departments. Private hospitals should also provide more complete information on their own websites to provide more convenience for customers to access information and understand Thai medical tourism.

4.4. Multilateral cooperation between Thailand and other countries

(1) United States

The Thai Embassy in Washington has played an important role in promoting Thailand to become a medical hub in Asia. Seminars on medical services between Thailand and the United States have been held and the Chambers of Commerce of each state are invited to participate with Thai representatives. The seminar was held for commercial negotiations. The embassy strongly supports the exchange between Thai representatives and private American companies. Some U.S. companies such as ConsumerDirectedHealthCare (CDHCC), KereonHAS, and GlobalHealthDirectMedRetreat expressed interest in Thailand's healthcare industry and they will cooperate with Thailand's potential hospitals, such as: Bangkok Hospitals, Kangmin Hospital and Paayatai Hospital because they need to reduce costs in terms of national medical benefits.

In addition, the embassy also held a meeting with the National Institutes of Health. The U.S. National Institutes of Health is a U.S. public health research unit that can promote the

development of potential medical fields in Thailand, improve the quality of Thai medical personnel, and develop drugs for the treatment of respiratory diseases and other diseases, including avian flu. It has Invested in and set up various research bonuses, sent Thai civil servants to receive NIH training, and established a cooperative research and development agreement (CRADA).

(2) China

In order to develop Thai medical tourism and achieve its goal of becoming a medical tourism hub in Asia, the Thai Investment Committee and the Tourism Bureau Office in Beijing also held meetings with the Chinese side including the exchange seminars and the conferences on Thailand-China medical tourism cooperation.

As China is entering an aging society, Chinese citizens are paying more and more attention to health care. Health products and related services are becoming more and more popular. In addition, in China there are a large number of upper middle income people who like to travel abroad for medical tourism. The United States, Europe and South Korea become their destinations for plastic surgery, physical examination and even cancer treatment. Between 2008 and 2012, the number of Chinese people visiting Thailand for treatment was around 400,000. It ranked 7th, following Japan, the United States, South Asia, the United Kingdom, the Middle East, and ASEAN. Whether in terms of the level of medical personnel and experience, or in terms of the quality of Thai-style service,

Thailand is a leading health care country in the world. China and Thailand can cooperate with each other on the above mentioned projects.

(3) Sweden

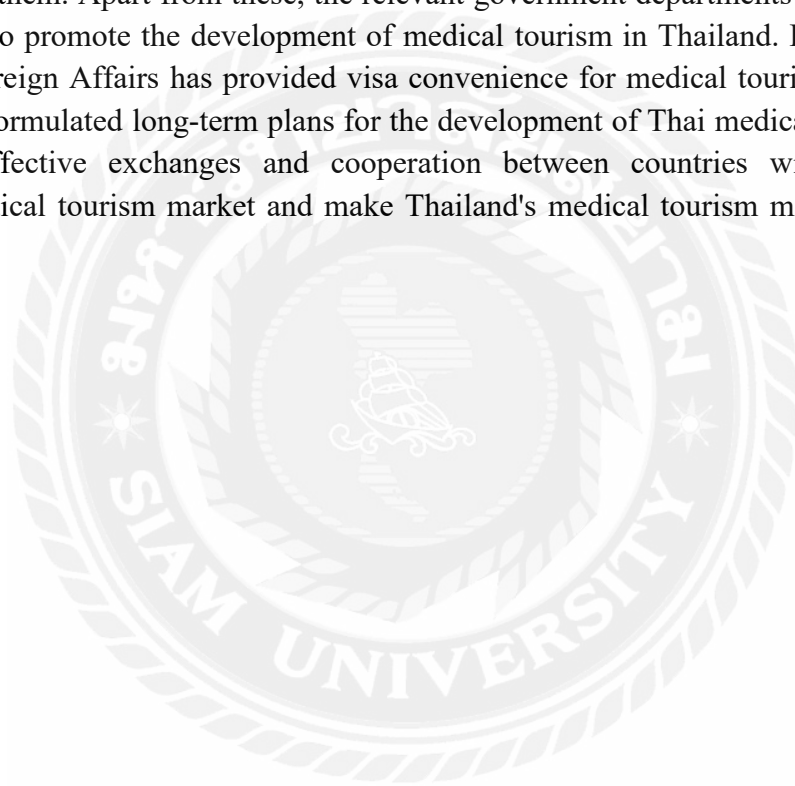
Scandinavia tourists may be the most potential tourist group. They are keen to travel to Thailand for treatment and tourism. The number of Scandinavia tourists visiting Thailand is increasing every year. Because the citizens in these countries quite appreciate the good manners of Thai people. It is a prominent problem in their national health care system that citizens have to wait for a long time for the treatment. If the waiting time exceeds 90 days, the government will arrange patients to receive medical services in other hospitals within the scope of the EU countries. Thailand is capable for the treatment of these patients. The Ministry of Health in Thailand has promoted exchanges and cooperation with Sweden in the development of the Reimbursement System and exchanged the main payment rights of the National Health Insurance system. For the Swedish people visiting Thailand for treatment, there are DGR rules for the activities outside the rights and interests. In addition, they have proposed to the Swedish government to make sure that the retired people can receive pensions and receive medical services including short trips and long-term visits under the prescribed rights.

4.5 The Summary

At present, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and India all have certain advantages in

medical tourism. According to their own advantages, they should compare these comparative advantages. Due to the different market positions and different medical services, the tourist markets should be targeted accordingly. Therefore, there are few competitions in medical tourism among countries in the Asian region.

The spread of word of mouth by patients are attached great importance by many providers of medical services because of the lowest investment in this type of publicity channel. First of all, companies will provide detailed and real information for patients; secondly, hospitals will create a good medical environment for patients and provide complete facilities; meanwhile, they will also provide good services to the relatives and friends of patients to get the trust from the patients. Through these measure, patient satisfaction can be improved so that they can recommend Thailand's medical travel services to relatives and friends around them. Apart from these, the relevant government departments have formulated some policies to promote the development of medical tourism in Thailand. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided visa convenience for medical tourists; the Ministry of Health has formulated long-term plans for the development of Thai medical tourism. At the same time, effective exchanges and cooperation between countries will help expand Thailand's medical tourism market and make Thailand's medical tourism market prosperous in the future.





5. CONCLUSION

Medical tourism is part of Health tourism. With the trend of the sustainable development, it is expected to continue to develop rapidly in the future. The group of people that pay attention to health care are continuously expanding, making Thailand one of the important medical tourism centers in the world. Influenced by Thailand's traditional culture, the Thai medical personnel are very friendly when providing services to patients. Besides, the lower medical expenses, the development model of the combination between hospitals and hotels launched by private hospitals, as well as numerous world famous domestic tourist attractions enable Thailand to attract a large number of foreign patients and make it the "leader" of medical tourism in the region.

As one of the fastest growing emerging industries in the world, medical tourism is extremely important for economic development. It can generate billions of baht per year for the country. Through the analysis of the current situation in Thailand's medical tourism market, it can be found that there are many factors influencing Thailand's medical tourism. This study can provide an orientation for the settlement of problems and future development of Thailand's medical tourism industry, enabling Thailand's medical tourism industry to develop in a sustainable way and help enhance its competitiveness in Asia and the world. Thailand is very competitive in terms of medical technology, infrastructure, service quality, tourist attractions, natural scenery, and other aspects, making it comparable with other competitors. In order to become the medical hub in Asia, Thailand must vigorously develop the medical tourism market and improve the supervision system of the medical tourism market.

To promote the development of the medical tourism market, much attention should be paid to improving the cost-effectiveness of Thai treatment, in addition to the reduction of medical expenses. When customers travel to Thailand for medical treatment, they should be provided with comprehensive medical tourism information, beautiful and comfortable medical environment, complete public facilities, and thoughtful services. These are very important in medical tourism services and guarantee the quality of Thai medical tourism. At the same time, it will increase the satisfaction of medical tourism tourists and make them feel delight in talking about the services they have received in Thailand, so that more people will travel to Thailand for medical tourism.

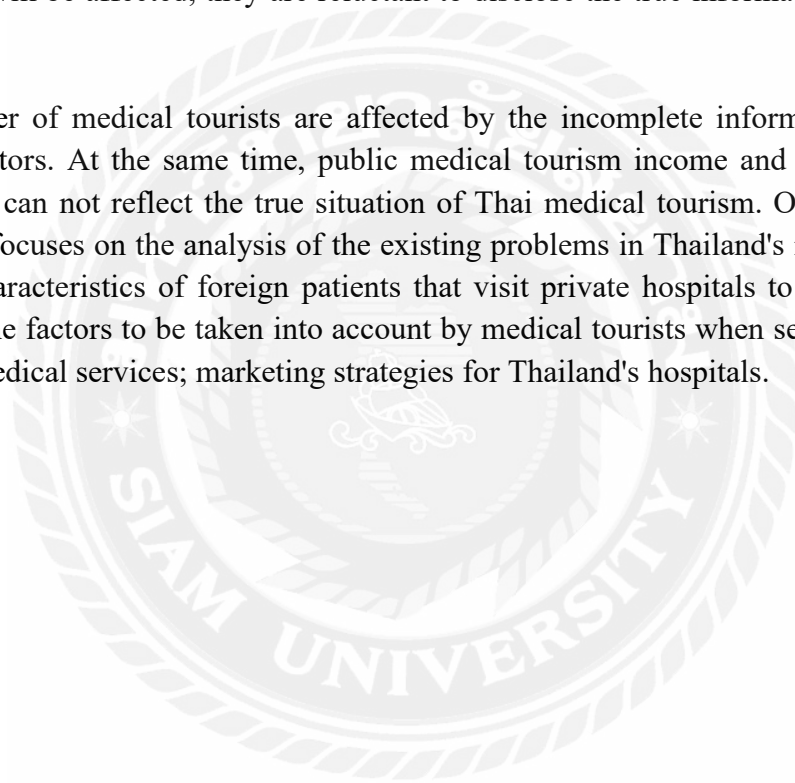
According to the latest report of the joint market research on "The opportunity and prospects of the world medical tourism market in 2014-2022", the output value of the world's medical tourism market will reach 143.8 billion U.S. dollars or 5 trillion baht in 2022, and it will achieve a compound annual growth rate of 15.7% during the period from 2015 to 2022. Thailand, Singapore and India will dominate the medical tourism market in the Asia Pacific region and will occupy more than three quarters of the market's share. Among them, Thailand will take the lead with 38% of market share. with the strong competitiveness and the certifications provided by JCIW.

Increasing the variety of medical services will lead to a multi-polar and more complex world – with various countries specializing on the medical treatments they have a comparative advantage in.

International Medical Service Standards. They are capable to serve overseas patients, with relatively low medical expenses and strong support from the government.

Since there are less public medical tourism information about Thailand, it is impossible for the government's policies to provide much help for the development of the private sectors. The unclear definition of medical tourists is an important cause of incomplete medical tourism information. At the same time, as the provider of medical tourism services, most private hospitals are faced with fierce commercial competitions. Due to concerns that their business will be affected, they are reluctant to disclose the true information of their own hospitals.

The number of medical tourists are affected by the incomplete information disclosure made by operators. At the same time, public medical tourism income and medical tourism related models can not reflect the true situation of Thai medical tourism. On this basis, this article mainly focuses on the analysis of the existing problems in Thailand's medical tourism, such as the characteristics of foreign patients that visit private hospitals to receive medical services, and the factors to be taken into account by medical tourists when selecting hospitals and types of medical services; marketing strategies for Thailand's hospitals.



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