



Medical+Wellness Tourism

News and analysis for the medical & wellness tourism industry **ISSUE 3** NOVEMBER 2010

Let's clear the terms first

By Dr Prem Jagyasi



The ever-evolving nature of industry-specific terminology, especially in the healthcare tourism segment, can often be left wide open to interpretation and confusion. Armed with invaluable insight into this market and yielding a synergetic approach, renowned consultant and expert, **Dr Prem Jagyasi** offers us a dose of clarification.

It is correctly stated: "A definition is the envelope of ideas caught in the wall of words." The definition must serve the general purpose and betterment of the term. In actual fact, it is not about 'the term' itself, it is about what you *perceive* from 'the term', and perception towards something is not necessarily how something *is*, rather how you *think* it is. Hence, every term might create a different perception in every person, which naturally creates some confusion.

Unfortunately, that confusion is amplified in an industry in which patients travel from one destination to another to receive healthcare or medical services, as there are several terms used across the world to refer to the industry. The most popular and probably most controversial is 'Medical Tourism'. Other terms are less popular

but they do express similar meaning, yet bring some confusion too. For example, 'Global Healthcare' is used widely, even outside of the specialist medical/healthcare tourism/travel field.

Recently, I conducted a survey on the terms used to describe the industry (report available at www.DrPrem.com), which showed that the preferred term from the total of 85 per cent of respondents for this particular sector of the healthcare industry is 'Medical Tourism,' with 35 per cent selecting this option. 'Global Healthcare' was the next most popular term at 22 per cent, with 'Health Tourism' running a close third at 21 per cent. 'Medical Travel' was identified by 10 per cent of respondents as their preferred description, with 'Healthcare Travel' and 'Value Medical Travel' both at six per cent. Please note that the term 'health travel' was

omitted in the research, as it is already established as a term used for 'travel medicine' or 'health travel medicine'.

Global Healthcare is a simple phrase reflecting the impact of globalisation of healthcare, but this term is certainly not only consumer-focused. Global Healthcare is a wider term in which a greater exchange of healthcare knowledge, resources, technology, products and services takes place.

For consumers, 'Medical Tourism' is a term interchangeable with 'Medical Travel', 'Health Travel' and 'Health Tourism'. Each can be broken down into its constituent parts that basically describe individuals travelling abroad for any type of medical, quasi-medical or health treatment.

The term also describes the growing global industry of healthcare

Continued on page 2

Quick Guide

- 03 Medical tourism news
- 08 Accreditation
- 10 Insurance
- 11 Destination Cyprus
- 17 Destination UK
- 19 Central Europe
- 23 Focus on...Dental Tourism
- 25 Wellness tourism news
- 30 Exhibition check, Chatter box
- 31 Calendar

11



DESTINATION CYPRUS

17



DESTINATION UK

19



DESTINATION CENTRAL EUROPE

SoundBites

We believe in long term partnerships creating a win-win environment for patient and provider.

PAGE 10
 Founder, Angelis Group,
 Leila Wilcox

We hope our location will play a big part in attracting medical tourists within our reach as we are at the crossroads between the continents. Cyprus has always been a stepping stone for international travellers stopping over at our airports as they rest from their long haul flights.

PAGE 11
 Hospital manager,
 St. Raphael Private Hospital,
 Angela Constantinides

Looking for answers

This issue is centred on the Old World, Europe, and it was not difficult to reach out to the home continent and find interesting people who were eager to share their stories.

We covered some rather firmly established destinations in Southern and Central Europe, as well as the aspiring 'new kids on the block' from the East. It soon became pretty clear that a lot has been going on there as the countries make every effort to reap the fruits of their health tourism labour.

But the task of uncovering the UK's standing in this business proved a little more challenging. I did of course come across stories of British residents travelling the world for medical and wellness purposes, and I learnt about international doctors bringing their knowledge, expertise, tools and attractive prices to the UK. And this

left me feeling somewhat divided...

On the one hand, it seems that the UK is a potentially fit market for producing medical travellers. The prices are, in some cases, proclaimed to be too high in the private healthcare sector and the NHS waiting lists and available procedures may ward off even the most patient from being loyal to local medical services.

Yet on the other hand, Britain and in particular London, according to Team Tourism Consulting 2010, has been involved in the travel for medical care for many years, "well before medical tourism became a business" with a lot of Middle East patients choosing it as their trusted medical hub.

Apparently efforts are being put into exploring the potential for medical tourism in the UK, despite the country rarely being mentioned at health tourism events. "Yet it ranks in the top ten destination countries in terms of medical tourist numbers

and probably in the top five in terms of revenue generated. London continues to attract high value medical travellers seeking expertise and quality rather than the lowest prices," said managing director, Intuition Communication, Keith Pollard.

"The average treatment cost for these patients is around £20,000 [\$31,450], and for individual patients it can be much more. London also benefits significantly from the related expenditure of these medical travellers, e.g. accommodation for friends and family during these extended patient stays."

With this in mind, my question is this: Is the UK a part of the new big game? Is it interested in becoming one? The team here will be attending World Travel Market in London, along with this issue in hand, and hopefully we will find some answers. Maybe you have your own opinion on this dilemma? If so, please do drop me a line.

Zarema Plaksij **Editor MWT**
 editor@mwtourism.com

Let's clear the terms first Continued from front page

providers, doctors, clinics and hospitals who are marketing themselves to overseas patients. Meanwhile, the term 'Value Medical Travel' is mainly used in India. Other terms such as 'Wellness Tourism' could be considered part of 'Health Tourism'.

Theoretically, 'Global Healthcare' is a mother term, therefore, a customised use of this term would yield better results. However, the term 'Medical Tourism' remains popular because it is highly promoted by tourism authorities, and was easily accepted by media and easily understood by the consumer.

The term 'Medical Travel' is also argued as a good term as it reduces the tourism share, and the focus is shifted onto the words 'health' and 'medical'. Quite obviously, health professionals do not prefer to mix the word 'medical' with 'tourism'. They have an idea that the word 'tourism' reduces the value of decision, which is primarily made for medical services. They also argue that not every patient gets involved in tourist activities.

An interesting argument would be: if patients travel abroad, they would be certainly exposed to the culture,

environment, food, heritage, leisure or other aspects of a destination's activities. Isn't that tourism? Isn't all travel across the border a tourism activity, unless that travel is a one-way migration (with the sole purpose of permanently moving from one destination to another)? All travel exposed to culture, food, entertainment or even shopping within a destination becomes part of tourism, doesn't it?

Obviously, emergency or critical-care travel should not be considered as medical tourism. Such travel could be subject to medical travel, for instance, medical evacuation, but not medical tourism.

On the whole, the phenomenon of travelling for health is not new, while currently used terms are. We are talking about an industry which was established in 4200BC; and the history of medical travel is inseparable from that of medicine itself. The written word has many a time illustrated how humans have voyaged to the end of the world to find remedies for their ailments or to get themselves the best possible cure, sometimes at the cost of all their possessions, severing ties with their homeland and even life.

No dearth of technology or information will ever make ill people suffer in their native countries, when there is some remedy to their illnesses available, albeit at a remote foreign location.

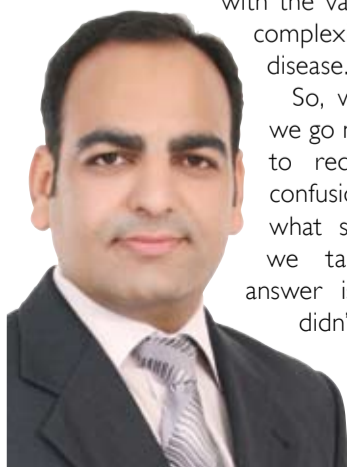
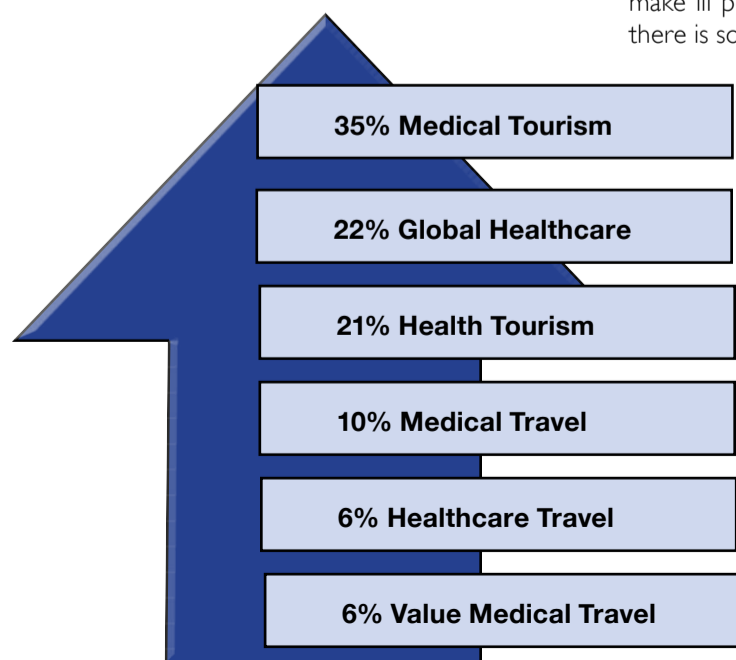
People will still travel to a foreign country to undertake any treatment that exists. And this trend is only likely to grow with the variety and complexity of the disease.

So, where do we go now, how to reduce this confusion, and what steps can we take? The answer is simple: didn't our

grandfathers or mentors tell us that all solutions lie in problems themselves? All answers are in the questions themselves, all we need to do is to unfold the problem and we will have the solution.

At the start of this article, I mentioned that it is not about 'the term' itself, it is about what one *perceives* from 'the term'. The good thing is that the perception could be created. Ask a marketing consultant and he will tell how they have managed to create perceptions that differentiate the product from the actual deliverables of the product. If perception could be created for a product, brand and services; why can't it be created for 'the term'?

Wouldn't it be better if all industry experts and key stakeholders gave rest to their hardline thoughts and came to a conclusion on developing a better perception of already established terms? Re-establishing new terms could be costly, puzzling and risky, while developing perceptions could be the easy way out.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR – DR PREM JAGYASI

A successful entrepreneur and experienced strategic professional, Dr Prem Jagyasi is a renowned Chartered Management, Healthcare Marketing and Medical Tourism Consultant. He has contributed extensively to medical tourism and global healthcare. He is known for his distinctive thinking and approach in medical tourism, and is regarded as a knowledgeable personality in the industry.

He could be contacted at:
 Prem@Jagyasi.com www.DrPrem.com