MEDICAL TOURISM IN INDIA: AN ESCALATION FORCE

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ABSTRACT
India was one of the first countries to recognize the potential of medical tourism and today is the leading destination for global medical tourists. In India, medical tourism is a sunrise sector valued at more than $310 million. Already in 2004, India has received 150,000 medical tourists and this number has grown by a whopping 33% by 2008 to 200,000 inbound medical tourists. It is estimated that by the year 2015, India will receive over half a million annual medical tourists annually. The Confederation of Indian Industry expects the sector to grow to US$2 billion by 2012. Medical treatments in some countries like USA and UK has been an expensive affair. To overcome this many patients are looking towards popular medical tourism destinations like India, Singapore, Thailand and many more. India provides medical treatments at a portion of the cost as compared to developed countries with the same expertise and standards in developed countries. India can tap this opportunity and create a sustainable advantage and match the increasing demand. The paper discusses a methodology to achieve this.

There are five key strategic goals that will achieve these objectives and reflect the future of medical tourism in India by 2020:
1. Providing the right service, in the right place and at the right time;
2. Enhancing access to high quality services in majority of the cities;
3. Matching workforce supply to demand for services;
4. Improving co-ordination and delivery of care; and
5. Building a strong foundation for public health.

The paper addresses the integration of these strategic goals and provides means by which the medical services become affordable and make India strategic place for the medical services.

KEY WORDS: India, Medical Refugees, Medical Tourism, Medical Tourism Market, Medical Travel,