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EUROPEAN HEALTH TOURISM INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

htiNEWS

Issue 6 | 2021

Health Destination

ITALY

Digital Transformation

Rika Jean-François

ITB Berlin Medical Tourism Segment

Virtual Events and
How to Make the Most of Them

Science Insights

Prof. Dr. Steckenbauer

Deggendorf Institute of Technology

Constructing Sustainable
Health Tourism Offers

Change Management Fueled by a Global Health Crisis

Experts' Chatroom

one question – five opinions

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Dear Readers,

Corona has had an impact on our entire life, both privately and in business. Together we have started into a new era of health.

Nevertheless, we used this time to restructure, rethink and refresh things we are doing. One example is our HTI News Magazine: We are excited to present this first issue of our updated journal. Anke Spöner and her team of CSI Consulting, our new publishing partner, have worked together with us to refresh the structure, add new columns and change the layout. Our vision? To become the most popular European business magazine within the health tourism sector.

Following the challenges that the travel and tourism sector is facing nowadays, we remain confident that it will continue to be one of the fastest-growing tourism segments in the times to come. Besides demographics and tradition that have a strong impact on the rise of diverse health-related services in Europe, it becomes even more significant when considering post-corona recovery needs of the people.

Enjoy reading the latest news, the most relevant insights and benefit from our valuable HTI network. Let's start the new post-corona journey together!

Yours,
Leila Krešić-Jurić
Managing Director & Partner
HTI PARTNER

About HTI

A network of top professionals and health tourism industry thought leaders from the private and public sector.

HTI is the leading hub for doing health travel and tourism business in Europe that brings together medical, spa and wellness professionals, buyers, service providers, associations and destinations at events and projects supported by prominent European and global organizations. The vision of "Your health tourism industry partner" expresses its commitment to provide excellent service to our clients and partners. Since 2011, HTI enables global stakeholders to stay on top of the trends, to exchange and grow their knowledge and to establish profound industry network generating new business opportunities. It represents a source of education and business intelligence, at the same time serving other industries complementary to travelling for care. The head office is based in Croatia, while all activities are carried out in close collaboration with HTI representatives in Germany, Italy, Russia, Turkey, UAE and GCC, Egypt, Iran, China and the USA. Besides organizing health tourism events and exhibitions, HTI is focused on B2B meetings with buyers, leadership gatherings, educational sessions and social networking, always keeping a personalized approach.



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CONTENTS



12 The New Health & Tourism Awards Champion: Croatia

Photo: Hrvoje Sardar

EVENTS CALENDAR

6 Health Tourism Events

NEWS AND TRENDS

8 Future of Global Health Travel and Medical Tourism

9 New Campaign Rediscover Historic Thermal Towns

10 HTI: Ready for the New European Awards? HTI Turns 10 Years

The First and Only B2B Event for Spa and Wellness Tourism: SPA-CE Experience

11 EMT-Awards 2021 by Bookingsmed

12 The New Health & Tourism Awards Champion: Croatia

16 "Zagorje – Health at Hand" The Unique Tourism Cluster

18 Kvarner Region The Healing Garden of Europe

19 The "Martin Horvat" Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Hospital in Rovinj, Croatia

BULLETIN

20 The Future of Medical Tourism in Europe Local, Climate-friendly and Adapted for COVID-19

THERMAL AND MEDICAL SPA

22 Interview Key Post-Covid Strategies of European Spas

24 Misunderstanding Hot Spring and Thermal Spa Resort

27 The European Historic Thermal Towns Association Presents New Members and Attracts Tourists with an Inspiring Campaign

28 Medical Spas in Poland Therapeutic Treatment Directly from Nature

DESTINATIONS AND REGIONS

30 Italy The Healthy Place to Be

35 Italy Discover the Treasures of Castrocaro Terme

36 Italy Rising Star in Medical Tourism

38 Italy Lucia Magnani Health Clinic

42 Interview Destination Development in Medical Tourism

44 Wiesbaden A Green City Full of Natural Treasures to See and Experience

46 A National Medical Tourism Strategy is Vital for Recharging Germany's Stagnant Medical Tourism Market

AGENCIES AND FACILITATORS

47 Facilitators in Medical Tourism

48 Interview The Role of Facilitators

49 Company Profile BookingsMed The Health Travel Platform Matches European Service Providers with Italian Agencies and Facilitators



30 Italy: The Healthy Place to Be

Photo: iStock.com/isaag74

CLINICS AND HOSPITALS

50 Dental Tourism 3.0 in Croatia

Interview

Key Strategies for Approaching
Future Guests and Patients

51 Oxidative Stress:

The Anti-Program

WELLNESS AND MEDICAL HOTELS

52 Medical Hotels

A Booming Product in the Health Tourism Sector?

HEALTHCARE

56 Telemedicine

A COVID 19 Accelerated Case of Development

58 Benefits of Teleconsultations from a German Perspective

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

60 EU Fundraising in Medical Tourism

62 Health Hotels and a Government Incentive Program

The Development of Health Tourism in Turkey

CONSULTING

64 Digital Transformation

Virtual Fairs and How to Make the Most of Them

65 Powerful Tool

Online Meeting

66 Health Communication

Not All New, But More Customized

70 Health Tourism Marketing

71 Multilingual Patient Care

Lingatel – Personal Interpreter Service

SUSTAINABILITY

72 Science insights

Constructing Sustainable Health Tourism Offers

Q&A

76 Experts' Chatroom:

One Question – Five Opinions
HTI News Magazine Interviews Experts
About Health

NEWS FROM HTI

78 The Latest News

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HEALTH TOURISM EVENTS

September 16 – 17, 2021: Termatalia International Fair – Orense, Spain

September 29 – October 1, 2021: ESPA Congress – Moravske Toplice, Slovenia

November 3 – 5, 2021: EHTTA Thermal Congress – Vichy, France

November 4 – 5, 2021: CIHT Conference – Crikvenica, Croatia

November 7 – 9, 2021: International Health Congress of Islamic Countries – Teheran, Iran

November 25 – 27, 2021: African Medical Tourism Congress – Tunis, Tunisia

December 7, 2021 (TBC): European HTI Summit – Brussels, Belgium

March 9 – 12, 2022: Medical Tourism Pavilion at ITB Berlin – Berlin, Germany

March 24 – 26, 2022: Hestourex Congress & Exhibition – Antalya, Turkey

HTI representatives will be present at all the above mentioned events.

**If you are interested in exhibiting or getting promoted,
HTI will be glad to provide special conditions.**

More information:

www.hticonference.com/health-tourism-events-calendar-2021/

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FUTURE OF GLOBAL HEALTH TRAVEL AND MEDICAL TOURISM

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New normal medical tourism is likely to adopt an enhanced approach to healing going beyond the conventional norms. However attractive the offers may be, proper communication will be key. Empathetic interaction and transparency will be vital in rebuilding patients' confidence in medical tourism.

Author: Dr. Prem Jagyasi, MD & CEO of Dr. Prem and Associates and founder of Dr. Prem Web Magazine Network, Mumbai, India



Photo: Dr. Prem Jagyasi

Dr. Prem Jagyasi

Dr. Prem Jagyasi is a Times Award-Winning Global Speaker and Certified Corporate Trainer.

He has travelled to 65+ countries to deliver keynote speeches and masterclasses. Dr. Prem is also a Certified Chartered Consultant specializing in Medical Tourism, Wellness Tourism, Wellness Resorts and Global Healthcare.

Currently he is MD and CEO of Dr. Prem and Associates.

More at: www.DrPrem.com

How wellness is being integrated into global healthcare

The pandemic has ushered in a major shift in healthcare perception. People are going back to the basics of wellness. Non-communicable chronic diseases that are largely preventable kill 41 million people every year, equivalent to 71% of total global deaths. A large fraction of patients succumbing to COVID-19 suffered from one or more non-communicable chronic diseases. The World Economic Forum reports chronic diseases will cost \$47 trillion by 2030. To check the massive human cost of chronic diseases, global healthcare is shifting towards holistic wellness. Integrating evidence-based wellness practices into conventional medical treatments will be the new normal in the healthcare sector. This approach will be used all the way from prevention to the improvement of disease management, resulting in reduced treatment costs and better quality of life. Integrated medical wellness centers

will proliferate and create personalized outcome-based medical wellness programs, empowering people to have full control of their health and wellbeing.

Global medical tourism on the way to overcoming challenges and creating new opportunities

Post-pandemic medical tourism is likely to see a sharp resurgence, but in a new form. The COVID-19 scare is persistently creating serious roadblocks in medical tourism growth. The world is in the caution mode when it comes to lifting border restrictions and is mandating frequent changes in travel regulations. Global experts feel it might take a couple of years more for medical tourism to get back to pre-pandemic levels.

Pent-up demand for global medical tourism services

A massive backlog of medical treatments is piling up which might take years to complete. The WEF reported possible cancellations of 28 million elective surgeries during the 2020 lockdown. 2020 also witnessed massive cancellations of medical tourism trips. Once travel restrictions get eased, the demand will surge further. With inoculations speeding up, we can expect a significant improvement in activities in the medical tourism circuit.

Roadblocks to opportunities

The immediate challenges of global medical tourism are burnout experienced in the healthcare workforce and heavily strained healthcare systems where much of the resources have been deployed in pandemic management.

Travel sentiment is at an all-time low, and safety remains the top concern. Quarantine regulations also come into play. Undoubtedly, destinations with proven pandemic management strategies will emerge as the winners. Travel-bubble or green travel corridors will most likely ensure risk-free medical travel.

Reorientation in offers

Changes in the perception of healthcare and safety among international patients will greatly influence their decision-making in the coming years. “New normal” medical tourism will add more value to patients’ health and wellbeing. However, cutting-edge treatments, state-of-the-art facilities and affordability won’t suffice. Flexibility in program selection and rescheduling will be key. Telehealth services, freebies and discounts in travel along with cost-sharing options from insurance providers will be worth considering.

Integration of wellness practices

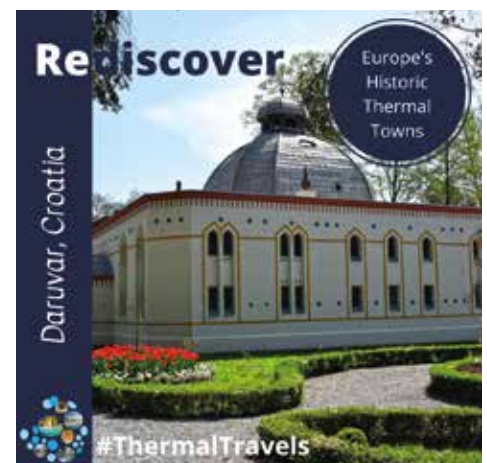
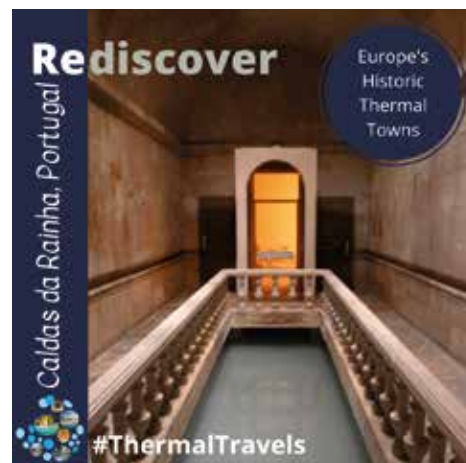
A real obsession with wellness is building up. Integrating curated wellness programs into medical treatments to meet specific health and wellness goals will create added value besides offering delightful experiences.

Long stays where a patient can pursue a wellness program in a reputed health resort will be common in medical tourism. We will also see under-one-roof facilities running medical wellness programs, a trend picking up in leading destination countries. Wellness integration offers a truly holistic approach to wellbeing with proper guidance in nutrition, physical fitness and mental wellness supplemented by supervised complementary treatments.

New Campaign:

Rediscover Historic Thermal Towns

The European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) recently launched its “Rediscover” campaign with the prefix “re.” This invites tourists to take up thermal activities again, to come back to places they may have forgotten and to look at the thermal towns of Europe with new eyes. Using a video clip and a series of stunning images on social media, EHTTA is keen to raise awareness of the potential of Europe’s historic thermal towns to meet the post-pandemic needs of new generations of health and wellness guests.



READY FOR THE NEW EUROPEAN AWARDS?

Curious about the new European HTI Awards? For many years, HTI has been providing leading European institutions, destinations and companies in the health tourism industry aiming to change policies and create more favorable conditions for positioning Europe as the top health tourism region with a dedicated platform including the European HTI-Summit in Brussels and the European HTI News Magazine.

As a next step, the awards will honor distinctive personalities, initiatives and organizations that have contributed to the promotion of Europe as a health tourism destination. Prizes will be offered during the annual European HTI Summit at the European Parliament in Brussels, and the jury will consist of representatives of HTI and European associations.

HTI Awards aims to emphasize the efforts put together by destination management organizations and medical service providers, government officials and the private sector, as well as new trends in the health travel and tourism sector.

The new prizes will reward:

- Bespoke customer service
- Outstanding promotional efforts
- Sustainable initiatives
- Exceptional partnerships
- Inspiring leaders

HTI TURNS 10 YEARS

Graphic: iStock.com/alexdez

This year has a very special meaning for HTI. On HTI's 10th anniversary, we would like to toast to ten HTI Conferences and ten global representatives who have helped us be more active than ever before. Although we can look back on numerous successful side events, exhibitions, summits and virtual events, HTI's real strength lies in its worldwide network and partnerships with organizations and individuals who place great value on doing business with friends and colleagues. Happy birthday HTI!

HTI has introduced two new products just in time for its 10th anniversary: the HTI Network and the HTI Awards! One is the HTI Network, a new members' program for business partners seeking to benefit from a close professional network with special offers and opportunities.

The other is the new HTI Awards program which honors distinctive personalities, initiatives and organizations that have contributed to promoting Europe as a health tourism destination.

More details can be found on page 78.

THE FIRST AND ONLY B2B EVENT FOR SPA AND WELLNESS TOURISM: SPA-CE EXPERIENCE

SPA-CE EXPERIENCE specializes in the promotion of natural and thermal spa resorts and wellness centers in Central Europe as a boutique and unique platform for networking and regional discovery. This year, Moravske Toplice will take place in Terme 3000 from September 28 - 30, 2021. It will be organized as a live event, but with the option of virtual attendance.

The main purpose of the SPA-CE trade show is for the most important providers of spa and wellness services from Central European countries to meet with tour operators, tourist agencies, representatives of insurance companies and other potential buyers of their services. Representatives of international agencies will start by visiting selected Slovenian health resorts, including Terme Laško, Terme Dobrna and Terme Zreče, and will finish at Terme 3000 - Moravske Toplice, where business meetings will also take place on September 30.

SPACE Experience

MEET IN SPAS OF CENTRAL EUROPE

**SPA-CE =
DOING BUSINESS IN
A PERSONAL WAY**

After a year of online and virtual meetings, now it's time to meet live again! SPA-CE is a boutique B2B event offering a different experience. Face-to-face business development is recognized as being the most successful form of building a personal and direct relationship with exhibitors. SPA-CE is a workshop that emphasizes the importance of personal contact. Pre-scheduled meetings between providers and hosted buyers that always put a face to the name of your potential new business partner are the key element of the event!

EMT-AWARDS 2021 BY BOOKINGSMED

Top medical service providers from Albania, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia and the Czech Republic in seven categories were honored at the 5th European Medical Tourism (EMT) conference in Abano Terme, Italy.

As the first event connecting business partners in a live edition in Europe in 2021, the EMT conference took place in Abano Terme near Venice at the end of June. The annual event combines a conference, round tables dealing with market trends and patients and a B2B workshop. Here, Italian and CIS medical travel agents and facilitators have an opportunity to meet representatives of European and Asian medical centers,

rehabilitation centers, medical service providers and wellness centers, among others. World Fine Selections and Taste for you Service have been organizing the European Medical Tourism (EMT) conference since 2016.

For the first time in 2021, the EMT included the World Contest & Awards for Medical Tourism where a jury composed of facilitators, travel agencies and doctors honors the best clinics, thermal centers & medical spas. EMT is organized by World Fine Selections (WFS), the Italian Associations for the Promotion of Medical and Thermal Tourism (AIPMT) and BookingsMed in collaboration with DoctorGeo, Ukraine and with the support of HTI – Health Tourism Industry.



Photo: HTI News Magazine

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Best HI-Tech & Research Group – Italy

MEDICON GROUP

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Dental Clinics

ZOGU I PARE

Best Dental Clinic – Albania

DENTELLI

Best Dental Clinic for Children – Croatia

BAGATIN CLINIC

Most Luxury Dental Clinic – Croatia

RIDENT POLYCLINIC

Best Dental Clinic for Groups – Europe

IVF Clinics

PRONATAL

Best IVF Clinic – Czech Republic

Aesthetic Clinics

POLIDERMA CLINIC

Best Stem Cells Clinic – Europe

Retirement Homes

MEDIGEST

Best Retirement Home – Italy

Thermal Centers & Thermal Programs

V HOTELS

Best Thermal Luxury Group – Abano Terme

LIFE CLASS HOTELS & SPA

Best Thalasso Treatments – Slovenia

ABANORITZ HOTEL TERME

Best Senior Living Program of the Year – Italy

PARK HOTEL TERME

Best Treatment for Fibromyalgia – Italy

HOTEL TERME MILANO

Best Family Management – Abano Terme

Luxury Medical Spa

LUCIA MAGNANI

HEALTH CLINIC

Best Longevity Program – Europe

REGINA ISABELLA RESORT

SPA RESTAURANT

Best Nutrition Program – Italy

PALAZZO DI VARIGNANA

Best Detox Program of the Year – EMO – Italy

HOTEL PREMIERE

Best Thermal Luxury Hotel of the Year – Abano Terme

The New Health & Tourism Awards Champion:

Croatia

An innovative and sustainable medical tourism destination providing highly personalized service and an extraordinary patient experience, yet affordable for European patients and guests. Congratulations to the 2021 ITB and EMT Awards Winner!

Author: Anke Sponer, HTI News Magazine. Photos: Hrvoje Serdar

Since the pandemic started, experts have singled out health tourism as a potential “winner” among diverse tourism segments. International tourism arrivals decreased by more than 70%, but specific calculations indicate that health travel decreased by only 50% while exhibiting a stable and speedy recovery. At the same time, COVID-19 encouraged trends such as a growing demand for open-air and nature-based tourism activities. Wellness is increasingly available to all and not only to wealthy customers while medical services are becoming more and more personalized with less invasive treatments. European medical spas have introduced health prevention supported by natural remedies and balneotherapy as a response to COVID-19.



The 2021 ITB Medical Tourism Destination Award was given to the Croatian National Tourist Board, thus recognizing the country's growth in health tourism.

No doubt that health tourism is taking over a significant market share in the tourism sector worldwide.

In 2019, around 15.5 million foreign tourists – more than triple the Croatian population – visited the country. Of these, about 920,000 came for tourism and health reasons, and 570,000 visited entirely for health-related needs, including one-day health visitors. Moreover, 50% of all tourists have visited Croatia more than three times, with 50% of medical tourists returning for more than six visits. In only a few years, Croatia's promotional efforts have attracted approx. 100,000 new guests motivated by health, thus amounting to more than 250,000 medical visitors per year.



Hvar

According to the global 2019 Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), which included 140 countries, Croatia ranks 5th in tourist service infrastructure, 14th in environmental sustainability and 20th in natural resources. Several Croatian medical facilities have become well-known across Europe for dental services, esthetics, orthopedics, physical rehabilitation, IVF, cardiothoracic treatments and neurosurgery. Likewise, its thermal heritage and natural healing remedies used on a sustainable basis ensure further health tourism development.



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Opatija

It is a well-deserved award for a country that has the island of Hvar as the birthplace of European medical tourism in 1868 and the home country of legendary physician Andrija Štampar, one of the co-founders of the World Health Organization. However, Croatia already began developing health travel in ancient times. Its thermal waters, mineral oils and mugs helped to heal Roman legionaries and emperors. As noted in the 10th century, its potable water was of the highest quality in the Roman Empire. An exciting story includes the Diocletian's Palace in Split constructed in the 3rd century near sulphate springs to cure the emperor's rheumatic pain while enjoying the beauty and natural remedies of the location itself. One of the first wellness & medical spa resorts in the world was born.

The exclusive findings of naphthalene oil successfully cure psoriasis in the Naftalan spa and hospital near Zagreb. Its healing properties were already recorded in the 13th century by the famous world traveler Marco Polo. Aromatherapy turned into a lifestyle that consolidated health tourism on the coast and the islands in the 19th century, notably on Hvar and in the Kvarner region. Here, the



Zagreb

city of Opatija was proclaimed the official health resort of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1889. Currently, the so-called Island of Vitality, Lošinj, heals respiratory problems solely by pure air and natural healing remedies. Thalassotherapy, one of the premium products of Croatian health tourism, is offered by Thalassotherapia Opatija, Thalassotherapia Crikvenica and along the Dalmatian coast.

Croatian thermal spas with water temperatures ranging from 33 to 960 C offer medical rehabilitation for diverse indications. The water is famous for having low radium levels that allow frequent bathing and safe drinking and an almost optimal concentration of 42 minerals in most Croatia's natural springs.

The best-known thermal spas include Krapinske Spa and Stubičke Spa for rheumatic diseases and orthopedic rehabilitation in the Zagorje region. There is also the Daruvarske Spa specializing in sports injuries, infertility and health prevention and the Bizovac Medical Centre offering modern robotic neurorehabilitation.

Today, Croatia is the world leader in organ transplants per capita. It is also home to a state-of-the-art eye clinic group hosting Hollywood celebrities (Svjetlost Eye Clinic, Zagreb), the world's best international aesthetic surgery clinic (Bagatin Clinic, Zagreb) and the first European hospital offering personalized medicine based on pharma-



cogenetics testing (St. Catherine Hospital in Zabok). The country also boasts a world-leading health cluster, the Kvarner Health Cluster, and the School of Medicine established in Zagreb as early as 1917. The city of Daruvar is a member of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association. What is more, the legacy of Croatia to the world includes the concept of quarantine regulation introduced in Dubrovnik to protect the city from the Black Death plague in the 14th century.

At the recently held 5th European Medical Tourism Conference in Abano Terme, Italy, four medical service providers from Croatia also won awards:

Rident Polyclinic from Rijeka (Best Dental Clinic for Groups in Europe), Poliderma Polyclinic from Zagreb (Best Stem Cells Clinic in Europe), Dentelli Polyclinic from Split (Best Clinic for Children in Croatia) and Polyclinic Bagatin from Zagreb (Most Luxury Dental Clinic in Croatia). Each of them provides a particular service to its customers while demonstrating its leadership in professional circles.

No doubt that 2021 has been the year of health tourism for Croatia. Neither is it surprising that this tourism segment is the number one priority in the tourism strategies of many Croatian destinations. With that in mind, the national air carrier Croatia Airlines is developing partnerships with medical service providers and health tourism destinations, aiming to help position Croatia as a year-round health destination.



#Together In Split

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„Zagorje – Health at Hand“ The Unique Tourism Cluster

Health tourism in Hrvatsko zagorje is a perfect combination of professional and quality health service and an excellent offer of gastronomic experiences and tourism services.

Advertorial: Zagorje Tourism Cluster, Croatia

The “Zagorje – Health at Hand” tourism cluster brings together professionals from the medical, tourism, university and other related sectors with the aim of creating and offering distinctive and competitive health tourism services.



Photo: archive General hospital Zabok and hospital of croatian veterans

Zagorje is one of those places that take your breath away at first glance. If you stop on one of the hills and look around, you will see more picturesque green hills adorned with medieval castles, countryside houses called “hiže” with vineyards and winding roads. This is only one part of what Zagorje has to offer. As you explore Zagorje further, you will begin to realize that “bregi”, the green Zagorje hills, hide much more than just rich history and nature – they have a powerful healing impact on both your body and your soul.

Thanks to its diversity and quality, Hrvatsko zagorje is attracting an ever increasing number of visitors from Croatia and abroad. In addition to its amazing heritage and beautiful natural surroundings, Zagorje has great health tourism potential, boasting numerous thermal springs, which have

helped it become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Croatia. This fact prompted professionals in the health and tourism sectors to establish the “Zagorje – Health at Hand” cluster with the aim to improve the offering and create distinctive and competitive health tourism services through collaboration, knowledge and skills.

The cluster systematically and actively works on encouraging synergy processes aimed at improving the range and quality of the overall health tourism offering of Hrvatsko Zagorje. This is done by positioning services jointly in the health tourism market in order to increase capacity utilization and strengthen the status of “Zagorje – Fairy Tale at Hand” as a tourist destination.

The cluster currently has 25 members that include public and private institutions from three different segments – health, tourism and science and education.

www.visitzagorje.hr/en/



Terme Tuhelj

Photo: Nino Verdnik

Members of the cluster

- Special Hospital for Medical Rehabilitation Krapinske Toplice
- Special Hospital for Medical Rehabilitation Stubičke Toplice
- General Hospital Zabok and Hospital of Croatian Veterans
- Akromion Special Hospital
- Magdalena Clinic
- St. Catherine Special Hospital
- Polyclinic Boić and Daily Hospital
- Terme Tuhelj
- Hotel Villa Magdalena
- Bluesun Hotel Kaj
- Hotel Terme Jezerčica
- Hotel Matija Gubec
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- Krapina-Zagorje County Community Health Centre
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- Krapina-Zagorje County Institute of Public Health
- Optana 22 d.o.o.
- Vlatka Fuchs-Crčić Specialist Orthodontics Practice
- Zagorje Zub Dental Polyclinic
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THE HEALING GARDEN OF EUROPE

Guided by the motto, "Diversity is beautiful", the Kvarner region is an ideal combination of islands, coastal areas and mountainous hinterland.

Advertorial: Kvarner Health Tourism Cluster, Croatia. Photos: Frank Heuer



KVARNER
HEALTH

The coast, islands and mountains provide a variety of experiences in nature, such as walking, hiking, biking, playing tennis, swimming in the sea, pleasant day trips, sightseeing of historical towns and cultural events. The Kvarner region offers you a particularly beneficial climate – simply inhaling the sea air, aromatic plants and green forests will invigorate your body and mind. As early as the 19th century, famous Kvarner destinations were declared official health resorts of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and it was customary for the nobility of that time to give a "medical referral" for a stay in Kvarner as a therapy for many conditions of the body and mind. Today, these climatic benefits combined with the Mediterranean diet and healthy exercise are called the Kvarner Effect.



The health Riviera

Since the 19th century, Crikvenica's mild and healthy climate, unique microclimate, clean air and sea as well as its favorable insolation and vegetation all help in the prevention of various diseases, rehabilitation, and improvement of the quality of life. The tradition of high-quality health services is successfully

continued in a variety of health facilities today, such as Thalassotherapia Crikvenica with its treatments for respiratory diseases and rehabilitation and Terme Selce, which has successfully combined health and sports programs for over 150 world leading athletes.

For active vacationers

Recognized as a "climate spa" in the 19th century, the island of Lošinj offers more than 200 days of sunshine per year and is well known for its aromatherapy center. Here you can revive your health while hiking, walking or cycling along the 250km long promenades, through beautiful landscapes, to viewpoints and past picturesque harbors and coves.

A mild climate, rich biodiversity, a pleasant atmosphere with more than 1018 species of plants of which are 239 medical plants, and the crystal-clear sea – all perfect ingredients for a health retreat.

Opatija, the longest health tradition in Croatia

The attractive geographic location at the center of the Riviera, lush green scenery and a pleasant climate were some of the main reasons for the quick development of tourism here at the end of the 19th century. The well-maintained public gardens, the illuminated coastal promenade known as the "Lungomare" and the well-kept beaches provide a stunning backdrop for numerous spas, clinics, villas, hotels and the Thalassotherapia Opatija, a center specialized in heart and cardiovascular diseases.

The combination of tradition and modern technology

The City of Rijeka is a city of rich history. Its dynamic history is inscribed with numerous cultural and historical monuments which make it a unique tourist town. Today, Rijeka rises even beyond with its health offer. Rijeka offers several excellent facilities from every field that will be responsible for providing you with the best service. The combination of modernly equipped health care institutions and educated professionals peaks with the dental tourism that is the most award-winning branch of health tourism of this city.

www.kvarnerhealth.com

Post-COVID-19 programs

For people who came down with COVID-19 or for those who come to the Kvarner region for prevention, the Kvarner Health Tourism Cluster members have developed health programs to better balance work and life and stay healthy.

- POST-COVID heart exams
- POST-COVID rehabilitation and prevention
- POST-COVID individualized training
- POST-COVID nutritional counselling
- Rehabilitation programs for chronic and allergic respiratory diseases
- Free-of-charge dental prevention
- Anti-stress programs
- Antiaging programs
- Leisure weekend programs
- Wellness weekend programs

The „Martin Horvat" Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Hospital in Rovinj, Croatia



With 26 rooms in contemporary design, Villa Aurum is a miniature jewel in the crown of the Martin Horvat Special Hospital for Orthopedics and Rehabilitation in Rovinj. Health tourism tradition in the city of Rovinj dates back to 1888.

Advertorial/Photos:

Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Hospital "Martin Horvat" in Rovinj, Croatia



The city's ancestors were well aware of the synergistic health benefits of the abundant sunshine, natural environment and mild Mediterranean climate of this region combined with the crystal clear and clean seawater. It is therefore hardly surprising that an attractive seaside health resort offering osteopathic treatment for the European aristocracy was established in one of the most beautiful spots of Rovinj, the St Pelagius peninsula, during the reign of Archduchess Maria Theresa.

rehabilitation services and the treatment of musculoskeletal system diseases. The facility takes great pride in its private therapeutic beach. It is one of the best equipped in the Adriatic region and faces west, making for a magnificent view of the sun setting over the sea.



Guests can walk along a coastal path all the way to the historical core of Rovinj, the multiple champion of Croatian tourism. Or they can relax body and soul while taking in the scents and tastes of the Adriatic Sea.



The resort's history is reflected in the pavilion-type building complex and the unique architecture displaying distinct contours of the Austro-Hungarian crown that is visible from above. The health complex covering twenty hectares includes a park, a therapeutic sensory garden and numerous walking paths. The centuries-long health resort tradition is well-known, even outside of Europe. The hospital specializes in modern medical

The four-star Villa Aurum offering single and double rooms with a private bathroom equipped for persons with mobility impairment is only 50 meters from the sea. All the rooms are air-conditioned and equipped with SAT TV, Wi-Fi and an emergency switch.. Guests can book a room with breakfast, half board or full board and choose from a large selection of specialized medical services and packages. Parking is available.

Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Hospital "Martin Horvat", Rovinj, Villa Aurum



The Future of Medical Tourism in Europe: **LOCAL, CLIMATE-FRIENDLY AND ADAPTED FOR COVID-19**

The pandemic has induced radical change in both travel as well as the medical sphere. The imbalance between the level of demand for health care services and the rising deficiencies in the availability of help is becoming critical.

Author: Anna Bialk-Wolf, President of Institute for Research and Development of Medical Tourism, Poland

Most countries have had to cope with the collapse of their health care systems and the shortage, and therefore overwork of, practitioners and other medical staff. Many chronic diseases stay untreated. Moreover, long-term complications will continue to strain health care systems in the near future.

Crises of health care systems

The shortcomings of many national health care systems can be seen as one of the most important driving factors of medical tourism. While many governments are attempting to concentrate resources and finances in the battle against covid-19, many patients do not even have opportunities for a medical consultation or proper treatment plan for other severe and debilitating illnesses. This current reality will lead to an increase in the problems and an upsurge in both the number of illnesses and the severity of those cases needing treatment in the future. All these issues indicate that the demand on health care will increase and many patients will be forced to look for alternatives outside their home country.

The near future

Unfortunately, we cannot predict how long the situation resulting from the pandemic of COVID-19 will stay with us. Travel restrictions, social distancing in public spaces, a lack of mass events and the risk of quarantines are the inevitable elements of our reality. New jeopardy is emerging such as the mutation of the virus, which could reduce the effectiveness of vaccinations. Simultaneously, the backlog in untreated health conditions continues to increase where each day of postponement of treatment can significantly impact a patient's health condition.

First, we need a blueprint to further develop medical tourism, considering both restrictions in traveling and undue risks of traveling itself. Even if the current prob-





lems seem to be disappearing and the dangerous situation is improving in a number of regions, problems related to the Corona virus will probably persist for years to come. The present stagnation should teach us the lessons we need to learn for the unknown problems of the future.

The climate crisis is another reason why we need a new approach to medical tourism. Travel is responsible for about 10% of CO₂ emissions worldwide. One must also consider the fact that increasing mobility between otherwise isolated populations often leads to the spreading of diseases and new microbes. Patient travel creates a particularly high risk of infection with pathogens and the spreading of pathogens that are indigenous in the patient's home country of at their destination. We need to set new standards in how we deal with health issues in connection with travel in general and medical tourism specifically and and promote responsible travel. Medical tourism forms part of tourism as a whole. Today there is a very high level of public awareness with regard to health matters. These extend far beyond travel for medical care.

Medical tourism professionals must assume responsibility and admit that there are problems in medical tourism that should be discussed at the international level. Now is the time to do that. We need to be open to new topics regarding medical tourism. Two of them will be discussed below.

Go local

Medical tourism is said to be a global phenomenon that developed locally. Now, more than ever, we should pay more attention to this aspect. Shifting the balance towards local and regional medical tourism provides

numerous advantages, not only for patients, but also for the climate and the environment. Within the European Union, the Directive 2011/24/EU provides patients' rights in cross-border healthcare and provides additional possibilities for staying at a local level. Cultural proximity between medical tourists and the medical staff is easier and more comfortable for both. The lesser cost of traveling in terms of CO₂-emissions, as well as in terms of money, are further advantages of locality. Moreover, cross-border cooperation can improve the use of existing resources and specializations. The patients' need for security is also easier to satisfy if the place of treatment is not far away from home. This avoids the risks associated with travel, including possibility of contracting unknown diseases. The effects on the local community in the destination country should also be considered. Unfortunately, due to the economic factors, very often the local inhabitants do not have access to the same level of medical treatment as medical tourists do and are simultaneously exposed to risks connected with their visit.

New technologies

Fortunately, there are some new technologies enabling contact with doctors despite travel. Telemedicine is an example of a new popular form of doctor-patient interaction. Telemedicine makes it possible to perform treatments without the patient's physical presence, and can partly even achieve more than conventional settings. Consequently, patient mobility is no longer a prerequisite for medical treatment abroad. Telemedicine allows contact with more patients and makes it possible to serve the medical needs of more individuals remotely. The Corona virus

has reduced both public and institutional resistance to telemedicine and has helped increase the acceptance of such technologies. Changing the model of contact with the doctor by the addition of telemedicine can also be seen as the answer to the common challenge connected with the general lack of medicine. The use of new technologies including telemedicine can also reduce CO₂ emissions and the costs of travel, provide a remedy for the shortage of medical staff and reduce the risk of pathogens being imported and exported.

Looking into the future

Changes in the medical tourism system are often driven by technological advances and new requirements regarding safety. Likewise, the importance of including climate issues in the discussion about medical tourism should be also underlined.

Presenting medical tourism as sustainable is preferable in the face of potential problems with public perception. Current crises in many health systems can call attention to inequitable access to medical care. The massive demand for health care can also lead to new tensions and resulting criticism of two-tier medicine, for rich medical tourists on the one hand and the underprivileged local inhabitants on the other hand. Even if medical tourism is not responsible for the shortcomings of health systems and the current situation, there is a risk that medical tourism will end up in the role of a "whipping boy" in many destinations.

New technologies and safety requirements should be regarded as indispensable elements of the future image of medical tourism.

Thus, the guiding postulates of the future of medical tourism are: use telemedicine, go local, think about our planet and act responsibly. Moreover, solutions that are developed and adopted due to the epidemic will constitute an important building block of medical tourism in the future.

KEY POST-COVID STRATEGIES OF EUROPEAN SPAS

HTI Magazine talked to Thierry Dubois, President of the European Spas Association (ESPA). Based on his experience in many areas in health and tourism business, he reveals top tips on how European spas can benefit from the pandemic.

Interview Anke Sponer, HTI News Magazine



Thierry Dubois

President European Spas Association

Since 2016, Thierry Dubois has been the President of the European Spas Association (ESPA), which brings together 20 nations and countries such as China, the United States, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Thailand and Japan with the objective of further developing medical spas.

Thierry is also Vice-President of the French Association for Thermal Research (AFRETH), Vice-President of the French Thermal and Climatic Federation with members working in the field of balneotherapy. He is the President of CNETH, the French association that represents the 110 French thermal baths, for ten years now and Chairman of the Saujon Spa Group Supervisory Board since 2014.

HTI News Magazine:

What strategy do European spas have for the care of post-COVID patients?

Thierry Dubois:

The Corona virus pandemic is a historic time for the revival and recognition of balneotherapy and climate health resorts. This is our firm opinion, and we started communicating that from April 2020 with examples in the areas of respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, obesity, mental health and lifestyle changes in relation to spa treatments and on the basis of medical studies.

<https://www.europeanspas.eu/en/corona-recovery-concept>

www.europeanspas.eu/en/medicine

We use every opportunity and event (ITB, V4 Congress and the Central European Initiative Conference, Medical Tourism Russia, Hestourex, to mention some) to publish this information and opportunities. The medical and economic impacts will be one of the topics at the next ESPA Congress. Moreover, we achieved to be member of task forces at the EU Health Policy. Thus, we are able to generate even more political attention for the European spas. Due to our cooperation with Health Tourism Industry (HTI), we will also emphasize the spas' opportunities during the HTI-Summit in Brussels.

In many ESPA countries, the health authorities have made good progress – or have even proven to be second-line active partners in the public healthcare system, as in Germany, Slovenia and Serbia. Slovakia was the first country to have special COVID-19 recovery programs in five selected medical spas that were financed 100% by the health insurance system. France, Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Serbia and Lithuania are taking similar steps. The new study by CNETH clearly shows that even patients who were forced to postpone the cure in medical spas due to the pandemic suffered seriously and have had to deal with many more health problems.

HTI News Magazine:

How can health tourism benefit from the Recovery and Resilience Facility proposed by the European Commission?

Thierry Dubois:

Here, ESPA has taken a very concrete and successful step with the support of the Tourism Manifesto group with the MULTIPLIER EFFECT- WHY TO INVEST in Tourism proposal (its extensive value chain touches upon multiple subsectors) addressed to the Commissioner of the Internal Market, Mr. Breton. This was also the guideline that our member countries were supposed to present and follow.



Spa Vilnius Druskininkai

Photo: European Spas Association

Power up:

Invest in the strategic objective of enhancing the thematic promotion of “health” within the Europe brand. Health is a megatrend, and thus a highly emotional and passionate element of modern lifestyle and society. European spa towns have always created a desire to be visited – as an important part of European society, heritage, culture, healthcare and tourism.

Invest in comprehensive research on European health tourism that is based on primary data and includes the private sector to accelerate further destination development and the economic impact of health tourism. Reduce tourism seasonality, improve sustainability and labor standards, and help to reduce healthcare costs through prevention measures and by decreasing consumption of pharmaceuticals. Promoting the European health tourism offering represents a clear path towards accelerating social and economic development and combatting seasonality. Health tourism is the proper answer to seasonality and mass tourism. European health resorts can also help reduce public health costs through prevention while improving sustainability and productivity.

Recharge and Refuel:

Invest in promotion and make funding available so that natural remedies based on mineral water and health-promoting landscapes and climates are available to as many citizens and visitors around the world as possible by reducing future expenses in healthcare and social care.

Connect:

European health resorts with natural remedies, such as balneotherapy, and climatic health resorts, as destinations for the prevention and rehabilitation of survivors of COVID-19 require further investments. These are needed in infrastructure to improve public/sustainable transport connections to major cities acting as hubs and sustainable tourism. As a result, they will be positioned to become leaders in Europe as resilient holiday resorts.

We must develop multi-sensor devices and software to connect the public healthcare system and health resorts and monitor health conditions and the positive effects of medical spa treatment through smart technology. This should pursue the goal of connecting and scheduling treatments with specialists and physical activities so that people can age actively and health issues can be detected earlier, thus permitting people to live longer.

HTI News Magazine:

This year, ESPA celebrated its 25th anniversary. What do you think of the association's past achievements? And what are your goals for the future?

Thierry Dubois:

We are very happy with the 25 years of active work for the medical spas in Europe and with the way we have brought together all the countries of Europe in the area of natural remedies. We are very unhappy and a little disappointed about the fact that medical spas are part of the healthcare system, to the effect that help for so many COVID-19 survivors and operations were impacted negatively by the lockdown regulations. We must find a way to separate HEALTH TRAVEL from general tourism and promote it against any restrictions, so that it will not in any way be linked to general non-travel hysteria.

The fundamental new idea: It is better to travel to a safe health resort and balneotherapy center than to stay home.

We must clearly advocate the idea that, in these times of general collapse in the public health arena, taking care of one's medical condition in a top-of-the-line European medical spas is actually the only intelligent decision for many patients.

MISUNDERSTANDING HOT SPRING AND THERMAL SPA RESORT

Photo: © Sherif Hassan

Wellness tourism destination – why most people get it wrong

Author: Sherif Hassan, MD, International Healthcare Consultant, Washington DC, USA

With luxury wellness retreats booming, I often ask this question: Which of these wellness tourism destinations would you choose as your favorite?

1. **Luxury hotel**
2. **Mountainside resort**
3. **Seaside resort**
4. **Thermal spa/hot spring resort**

I am not shocked when an overwhelming majority of the responses are based on their favorite scenery and activities in the surroundings, to the effect that they choose seaside, mountainside or the luxury hotel. Only a small minority gives the correct answer: “thermal spa/hot spring.” These respondents are usually tourism professionals or retired. The general public does not expect a thermal spa/hot spring to offer luxury accommodations. Nor are they aware that the resort can be found in all kinds of surroundings, from the seaside, mountainside, lakeside to in a forest, desert, a village, town or even a large city.

As a functional medicine physician, of course, I would say that nothing surpasses the benefits of thermal spring water.

The thermal spa/hot spring resort is the point where the four corners of luxury, wellness, history and culture meet.

Most of us have heard about the benefits of hot spring water, which include detoxification of the body, relaxation, improved circulation and cell oxygenation, better sleep, weight loss, arthritis pain alleviation or resolution, stronger immunity, enhanced wound healing and elimination of viral and bacterial infections.

Fortunately, there are only a few conditions that do not permit a visitor to dip into thermal spring water, such as pregnancy, liver, kidney, or circulation disorders, anemia, congestive heart failure, a recent stroke or heart attack, a high fever, extreme hypertension, malignant tumors and cancerous conditions, as well as bleeding disorders. This is because hot temperatures cause a body fluid shift that may prove hazardous in these conditions. As a precaution, visitors should not bathe in hot spring water if they are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

At first glance, the benefits listed above result from the various minerals in the spring water, its pH value and the high temperature, which viruses and bacteria do not tolerate, thus ridding the body of infection.

But there is another crucial element: archaea, the third domain of life. The first domain is eukaryotes (single and multiple real cells), which refers to plants, animals and creatures, include humans like us. The second domain is bacteria.

Archaea are ancient organisms – their name in Greek literally means “ancient things.” Archaea have inhabited the earth for nearly 4 billion of its 4.6 billion years of existence, possibly making them the oldest form of life. Initially identified in extreme environments, they are currently recognized as organisms ubiquitously present in most, if not all, microbiomes associated with eukaryotic hosts. Research in recent years has clearly shown that (i) archaea are part of the microbiomes associated with plants, animals and humans, (ii) form biofilms and (iii) interact and activate the human immune system. They have the amazing ability to turn inorganic material into organic matter, like turning metal into meat.

The capital of thermal pleasures



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We have at least ten times as many microbiome cells in our body as any other type of cell.

Microbiomes

1. boost the immune system
2. prevent and slow down the progression of cancer cells
3. control blood pressure
4. protect the body from toxins
5. control metabolism and the storage of nutrients
6. influence mental health
7. promote healthy skin
8. decrease inflammation
9. produce antimicrobials
10. maintain tissue integrity

Archaea thrive in the most extreme environments on earth, such as sulfuric hot springs near volcanoes or deep-sea hydrothermal corridors that reach 236 degrees Fahrenheit under enormous pressure. In these inhospitable conditions, archaea survive and eat some bizarre substances that barely qualify as food, ranging from iron and sulfur to toxic compounds.

An astonishing finding in a study was that the diversity of archaea across large temperature gradients in three hot springs from Yellowstone National Park in California, USA and Iceland showed that specific archaea that inhabit niches at different temperatures are the same across hot springs separated by thousands of kilometers.



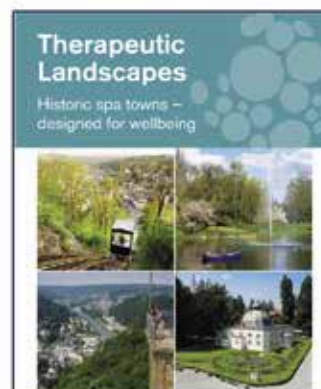
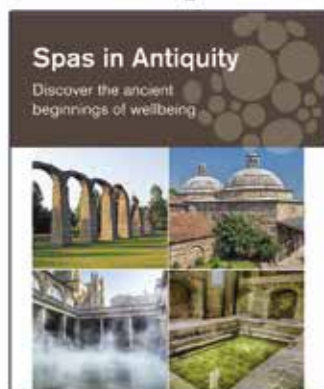
Due to their amazing robustness, some researchers have postulated rather extreme theories about archaea, even claiming that these astonishing critters may be flying around on comets or living on other planets, maybe even in the soils on Mars, where they are waiting to be discovered by our astronauts.

In conclusion, as wellness seekers await further scientific and biological research and discoveries, it seems that they are best off choosing thermal spring waters to bathe in and drink in their quest for enhanced health.

Looking for inspiration for itineraries and tours? EHTTA represents places of wellbeing, culture, heritage & health.

Rediscover

Europe's Historic Thermal Towns



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Historic
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Cultural route
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COE/COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The European Historic Thermal Towns Association Presents New Members and Attracts Tourists with an Inspiring Campaign

Author: Simone Zagrodnik, Executive Director, EHTTA

EHTTA is a membership organization representing nearly 50 members in 18 countries, founded in 2009 by six European towns, Acqui Terme (Italy), Bath (UK), Ourense (Spain), Salsomaggiore Terme (Italy), Spa (Belgium) and Vichy (France). EHTTA's first major achievement was to be certified as a cultural route of the Council of Europe in 2010 – one of 45 cultural routes of the Council of Europe.

New members

Bad Ems and Bad Kissingen have become its newest members, along with nine towns of the Great Spas of Europe, a transnational serial nomination to UNESCO.

The Historic Thermal Towns of Europe have a long tradition of welcoming people – from monarchs, aristocrats and celebrities to ordinary people wanting a break or to improve their health. These towns, built around thermal sources of water are fascinating places, full of history, culture and romance, all heightened by the magic and mystery of the healing springs at their core.

EHTTA's President José Manuel Baltar Blanco, recently said:

"I have believed ever since the start of the pandemic that thermal towns will and should be an essential part of our recovery in Europe. We are experienced in welcoming and looking after people from all walks of life. People are drawn to our towns, for the waters and for their healthy lifestyle that feeds body, mind and spirit. We all need that thermal lifestyle more than ever, to help us recover, and to strengthen our ability to cope with any new challenges that come along.

We believe that thermal towns can provide a solution that people are searching for, and we invite those people to reassess what they think they know about our towns, and to rediscover their charm, their historic roots, their stunning thermal architecture and the health-giving thermal waters."

As people emerge from the pandemic, with a new set of priorities for themselves, their families and the planet, many of them want more from a vacation than they did before. They are seeking less crowded places with a more restful pace of life, access to nature

and exercise in green spaces, and good food and drink – ideally locally produced. They are also looking for activities that provide stimulation as well as recovery for the whole family. And they are looking for wellness facilities and treatments with high standards of hygiene. How they get there is also important, so in the European Year of Rail, it is good to know that many of our historic thermal towns have great rail connections. As some of the earliest tourism destinations in Europe, this long history of welcome means that historic thermal towns are well placed to provide an experience like no other.

The Rediscover campaign

The world has changed, but Europe's thermal towns remain poised to share the gift of healing and are perfectly formed to meet the needs of people who look at their lives and their leisure time differently now. Europe's historic thermal towns are ready to be rediscovered as the ideal destinations for health, wellbeing, culture, heritage, and sustainability, all in one perfect package. See the Rediscover Campaign video at www.ehtta.eu.

The Rediscover campaign with the prefix "re" asks people to:

- Restore ... your health and wellbeing
- Recharge ... your batteries
- Revitalise ... your tastebuds
- Revive ... your joie de vivre
- Renew ... your sense of wonder
- Recover ... your peace of mind
- Reignite ... your passion
- Retrace ... Roman footsteps
- Reawaken ... your senses
- Rebuild ... your strength
- Reinvent ... yourself
- Reconnect ... to nature
- Restart ... your thermal journey and
- Rediscover ... Europe's Historic Thermal Towns

Medical Spas in Poland:

THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT DIRECTLY FROM NATURE

Polish spas are highly regulated to ensure the highest levels of environmental protection and maintain and protect the purity of the natural resources so vital for medical treatments.

Author: Anna Bialk-Wolf, President of Institute for Research and Development of Medical Tourism, Poland

Numerous towns and villages in Poland are bestowed with the official designation of “medical spa”. These health resorts, over 45 in number, offer medically supervised treatments derived from nature and based on natural resources such as mineral waters, peloids (mud or clay) or medical gases. Most Polish spas are situated in especially beautiful regions abundant in natural assets such as national parks and nature reserves. To protect the beauty and aesthetics of the green areas, there are strict limitations concerning

building codes and limiting commercial and industrial activity.

Polish spas have a rich history going back to the 13th century, when the first thermal springs were discovered in Cieplice. Beginning in the 19th century balneology was established as a scientific field of research. Balneology is derived from traditional medicine and focuses on the healing properties of mineral and medical water, peloids (therapeutic mud, medicinal clay, silt), healing

gases and the climate. It is used in treatment, rehabilitation, prevention and diagnostics. Many medical spas such as Szczawnica, Ciechocinek, Naleczow, Busko-Zdroj, Solec, Krzeszowice and Swoszowice have a long tradition in spa treatment. This legacy continues, and the medical spas of today are evolving into multifunctional health, tourism, recreation and cultural centers, offers a wide range of attractions for different kinds of health-conscious tourists.



Mineral water-pump room in Szczawno-Zdrój, Lower Silesia

The most popular treatments offered in spas are balneotherapy, peloidotherapy, climatotherapy, hydrotherapy and kinesiotherapy, although a wide range of diseases and medical conditions can also be treated in Polish spas. Officially designated spas generally specialize in specific treatments from a particular medical field such as orthopedics, neurology, rheumatology, cardiology, pulmonology or dermatology. This focus on a medical discipline allows the spas to be specialized centers, offers tailor-made treatment for a patient's health issues.

The scenic mountains in southern Poland and the Baltic seaside in the north serve as the natural settings for most of the Polish medical spas. Likewise, the majority are located in small rural towns in the countryside. However, there are some special exceptions; three official spas in Konstancin-Jeziorna, Sopot and Swoszowice are located near larger population centers, while the spa in Wieliczka is situated in a truly unique location inside an underground mining pit.



Park in Cieplice, Edward Pavilion, Jelenia Góra, Lower Silesia

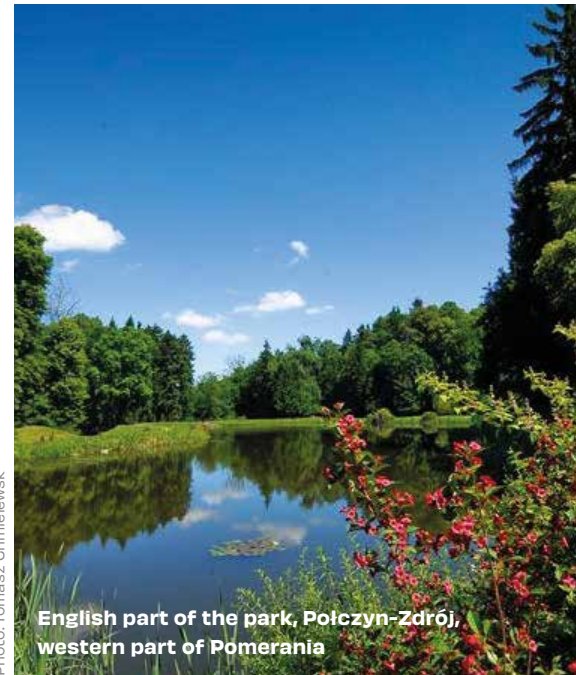
Photo: Association Health Resort Communities, Poland (SGURP)

A widely used product in peloidotherapy and fangoththerapy is mud or clay, which is 100% natural and procured from swamp vegetation. It is the result of natural and long-term biological and geological processes that make use of microorganisms and water. The aptly named "black gold" possesses valuable healing abilities such as anti-inflammatory, bacteriostatic and bactericidal properties. It is especially recommended to relieve back pain and rheumatic pain, but also to reduce cellulite or regenerate epidermis. The mud is applied within compresses, wraps and baths. A special heat procedure that warms the mud to temperatures of about 45 degrees C facilitates maximum penetration of the most valuable mud components into the skin. Geothermal water from deep inside the earth containing an abundance of therapeutic chemical elements is the hallmark for nine officially designated spas in Poland. When it reaches the surface, the water has a minimum temperature of 20° C. Curative mineral waters, including brines, sorrels, sulfide waters and radon waters are particularly beneficial for the health. Depending on the content and concentration of the minerals, these natural mineral waters possess a variety of therapeutic applications. The most widely enjoyed treatments are aimed at improving cardiovascular function of the heart, eliminating joint and muscle pain and relieving rheumatic pain.

Officially designated medical spas offer unique infrastructure such as spa hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, parks, sanatoriums, arena theaters, pump rooms, bathhouses and caves. Many also offer recreation facilities, bike paths and outdoor gyms providing the optimal setting for various sports activities. To complement health and medical treatments, many spas also feature their own cosmetics based on natural ingredients. Beauty salons and health clinics offer comprehensive diagnostics tools and procedures for all aspects of health, wellness and beauty.



Photo: Association Health Resort Communities, Poland (SGURP)



English part of the park, Potczyn-Zdrój, western part of Pomerania

Photo: Tomasz Chmielewski

ITALY

The Healthy Place to Be

Multiple destinations are seeking new discoveries through new offers, adjustments with regard to target group and new opportunities. Building on its long history of thermal baths, Italy has established a wide range of health tourism offers.

Author: Anke Sponer, HTI News Magazine



Photo: iStock.com/fotoluk1993

A thousand-year tradition

There are countless facilities for wellness and health with a long tradition of pampering the body and mind in most diverse ways. All over Italy, from the north to the south, there are spas famous for healing and beauty cures. Wellness vacationers have the choice between the mountain regions in the Italian Alps, the landscape of central Italy characterized by rolling hills and cypresses, or the southern Italian regions with their Mediterranean flair.

Terme di Saturnia, Tuscany

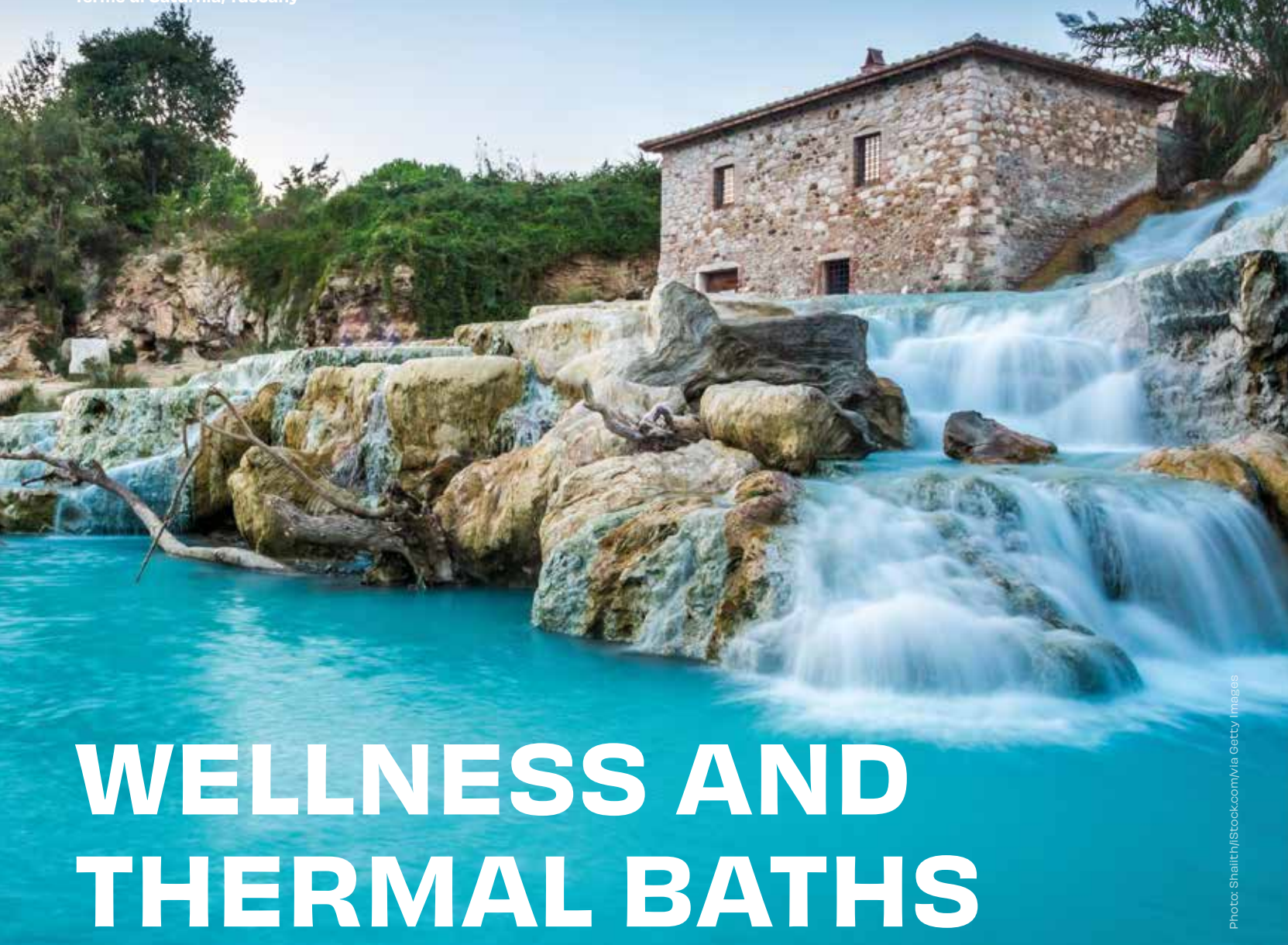


Photo: Shalithy/Stock.com/Via Getty Images

WELLNESS AND THERMAL BATHS

Guests can experience holistic wellbeing at a wide variety of thermal resorts throughout Italy. Individual treatments, deceleration while relaxing in picturesque landscapes, exercise in the fresh air of the mountains or the sea and authentic specialties of the local cuisine complete the offer.

Natural tubs and natural saunas

Many ancient thermal baths have preserved their original fascination over the centuries: natural saunas and grottos hidden in the vegetation with iron-rich steam, suitable for strengthening the body and caring for the skin. Traditional spas, as appreciated by the ancient Romans, are plentiful in Italy. Even today, you can enjoy the water from the thermal springs in the same natural tubs

that were known in ancient times, such as in **Saturnia in Tuscany** (www.visittuscany.com/en/theme/spa-and-wellness) or on **Ischia in the Gulf of Naples**. In addition, there are thermal gardens and wellness centers offering proven cures and innovative treatments alike.



Val d'Orcia, Tuscany

Photo: Shalithy/istock.com/Via Getty Images



Euganean Hills, Padua

Photo: istock.com/Lutea Lorenzelli

Medieval bath tradition

The medieval thermal town of **Bagno Vignoni**, whose piazza is adorned by an ancient thermal pool, is located in the middle of **Val d'Orcia**, a UNESCO World Heritage. The Etruscans, and later the Romans, already recognized the healing properties of water. In the Middle Ages, the tiny spa town with a renowned bathing tradition was located on the important pilgrimage route of “Via Francigena”. Medici Prince Lorenzo the Magnificent, St. Catherine and Pope Pius II visited the famous bath at the piazza of **Bagno Vignoni** (www.terredisiena.it/en/).

Extensive thermal offers

The **Terme Euganee** thermal baths in the province of **Padua** are located in the **Euganean Hills** of the Veneto region, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and offer the hottest springs in the world (87 degrees).

This is where **Abano Montegrotto**, one of the most famous thermal resorts in Italy, is located (www.visitabanomontegrotto.com/en/). In the **Aosta Valley**, you can relax in the warm water with a view of the impressive Alpine panorama and the majestic **Mont Blanc** (www.lovevda.it/en/wellness).

The **Pré-Saint-Didier spa**, with restored 19th-century architectural elements, offers chromotherapy and aromatherapy treatments in addition to hydromassages of varying intensity, relaxation tubs with underwater music, themed saunas and aromatherapy steam baths. The natural springs of **Pré-Saint-Didier** spring from a grotto below the **Verney waterfall** and were already known for their healing properties in Roman times.

The thermal bath of **Saint-Vincent** (www.termedisaintvincent.com), on the other hand, is appreciated for the balancing and regulating effect of its spring water on the stomach, for which a drinking cure is available.

Umbria (www.umbriabenessere.eu/en/), another region with an extensive thermal offer, is especially known for its tranquility, originality and breathtaking scenery. The small central Italian region is considered the “green heart of Italy” and is best known for its excellent cuisine, unspoiled nature and secluded hamlets.



Abano Terme, Padua

Photo: istock.com/Rimbalzino



Vulcano, Aeolian Island

Photo: iStock.com/Felvio Vallehart



Fango mud treatment

Photo: iStock.com/GregoryBlister

Fango mud treatments in the south

Southern Italy also boasts numerous thermal resorts with springs and fango mud: the island of **Ischia** is famous as a thermal resort beyond the borders of Italy and has 103 thermal springs whose different compositions cure various ailments. Tropical thermal gardens in the open air with various thermal water pools are true oases of wellness. In the

Apulian town of **Santa Cesarea Terme**, sea caves with sulfurous springs provide relaxation, and on the **Aeolian island** of Vulcano, visitors can lie down in the very warm sea mud, which is good for the skin, bones and respiratory organs.

About ENIT

The Italian National Tourist Board, ENIT, is subordinated to the Italian Ministry of Tourism in carrying out its work. With its headquarters in Rome and 28 offices worldwide, it is the national tourism agency responsible for the international promotion of Italy as a tourist destination. ENIT implements numerous initiatives to promote tourism in cooperation with the Italian regions and in collaboration with institutions, tour operators, private and public partners, press representatives and travel bloggers.

www.enit.it
www.italia.it



Ischia Island

Photo: iStock.com/ivdaPhotography



Photo: ermess - Stock.AdoB.com

DISCOVER THE TREASURES OF CASTROCARO TERME

In the heart of the Tuscan-Romagna Apennines visitors can choose from a wide selection of activities, ranging from cultural to nature tourism.

Author: Anke Sponer, HTI News Magazine

Castrocaro Terme

The medieval fortress overlooking the town is one of the oldest in Italy. Legend has it that the panoramic view from the fortress was the inspiration for the background landscape of Leonardo Da Vinci's iconic painting of Mona Lisa.

Wine Culture

This region offers an impressive variety of local products – from wines to olive oil. The Sangiovese's grapes are the main component of internationally acclaimed wines such as Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. The olive oil from Brisighella protected by the "DOP" (Protected Designation of Origin) label is produced according to the circular economy principles and is renowned for its organoleptic characteristics.

Excellent Cuisine

Also famous in this region are the countless varieties of fresh pasta, such as tagliatelle al ragù (better known as "spaghetti bolognese"), cappelletti, strozzapreti, passatelli, pasta lorda, monfettini and lasagne – each of them to be matched with a specific sauce. The Adriatic Sea boasts its own typical fish species, such as the fatty fish, the slipper lobster, the mussels from Cervia, the sea bream and many more. Another interesting attraction is Casa Artusi. A center of gastronomic culture, this restaurant was founded in the name of the gastronimist Pellegrino Artusi, the Forlimpopoli-born, acknowledged father of modern cookery.

Guests can also take advantage of the proximity of historic towns, such as Forlì (10 km), Ravenna, famous for its Byzantine mosaics (40 km) or Bologna (70 km), the capital city



Photo: iStock.com/jenai, Damielko

of the Emilia-Romagna region. San Marino is only an hour away. For those looking for sea and beaches, the top near destinations are Cervia and Milano Marittima (40km) or Rimini (70km).

This year, moreover, the land of Romagna hosts the festival dedicated to the great poet Dante on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of his death. Not everyone knows that the poet found refuge in nearby Forlì.

Italy:

RISING STAR IN MEDICAL TOURISM

Medical tourism in Italy seems to be growing exponentially.

The ingredients for winning the challenge of “health tourism” are all there.

Author: Mariaantonieta Princivalle, founder and CEO BookingsMed, Italy

The **major reason for medical travel** is the search for better treatments at lower rates, or for treatments not provided in the country of residence. This includes preventive treatments, such as check-ups, second opinions, prevention or rehabilitation in specialized thermal centers, trips in search of a more attractive appearance (cosmetic surgery), or even purifying and detoxifying therapies for those with difficult work rhythms. Up to now, Italy has been attracting tourists with its artistic and natural treasures. Soon, foreign citizens may be breathing new life into the Italian economy by combining the excellence of “made in Italy” healthcare with sea water, mountains and cities of art. At the same time, **Italian hospitals rank high in Europe**, having been honored by the prestigious Joint Commission International, which certifies compliance with 368 standards of safety and quality of care.

Medical tourism in Italy was made possible by the health Schengen Visa, which was created several years ago as a result of a European directive allowing citizens of the 28 EU countries to be treated in other EU states. This has led to a “hunt” for tourism with very high stakes. According to estimates of the OCPS-SDA Bocconi Observatory, the revenues generated by health tourism already amount to 12 billion euros in Europe. Italy now has 17% of that share, equal to 2 billion EUR.

Patients’ insights

According to Paola Russo (ANSA, 2016), only 5,000 foreign patients choose to be treated in Italy compared to 200,000 Italian patients who go abroad for treatment. **Italians travel abroad** for dental care, cosmetic and restorative surgery, hair transplantation and spas. In contrast, **patients come to Italy** seeking treatment in highly specialized fields, such as neurology, cardiac surgery, oncology, bariatric surgery, orthopedics, diagnostics and check-ups. **Patients come mostly from** Arab countries, Switzerland, Russia and Albania, and they spend between 20,000 and 70,000 euros for treatments and interventions. There are additional tourist costs, such as hotel costs, shopping and sightseeing. The Rizzoli of Bologna, Niguarda of Milan and the City of Health of Turin have taken initial steps. They have a common **strategy** that includes interpreting and translation services (e.g., medical records are provided in the patient’s language), nursing staff that is available 24/7, shuttle services to and from the airport, hotel rooms for relatives, special arrangements with hotels and satellite TV in the room. That is how Italy plans to conquer the growing market of health globetrotters.

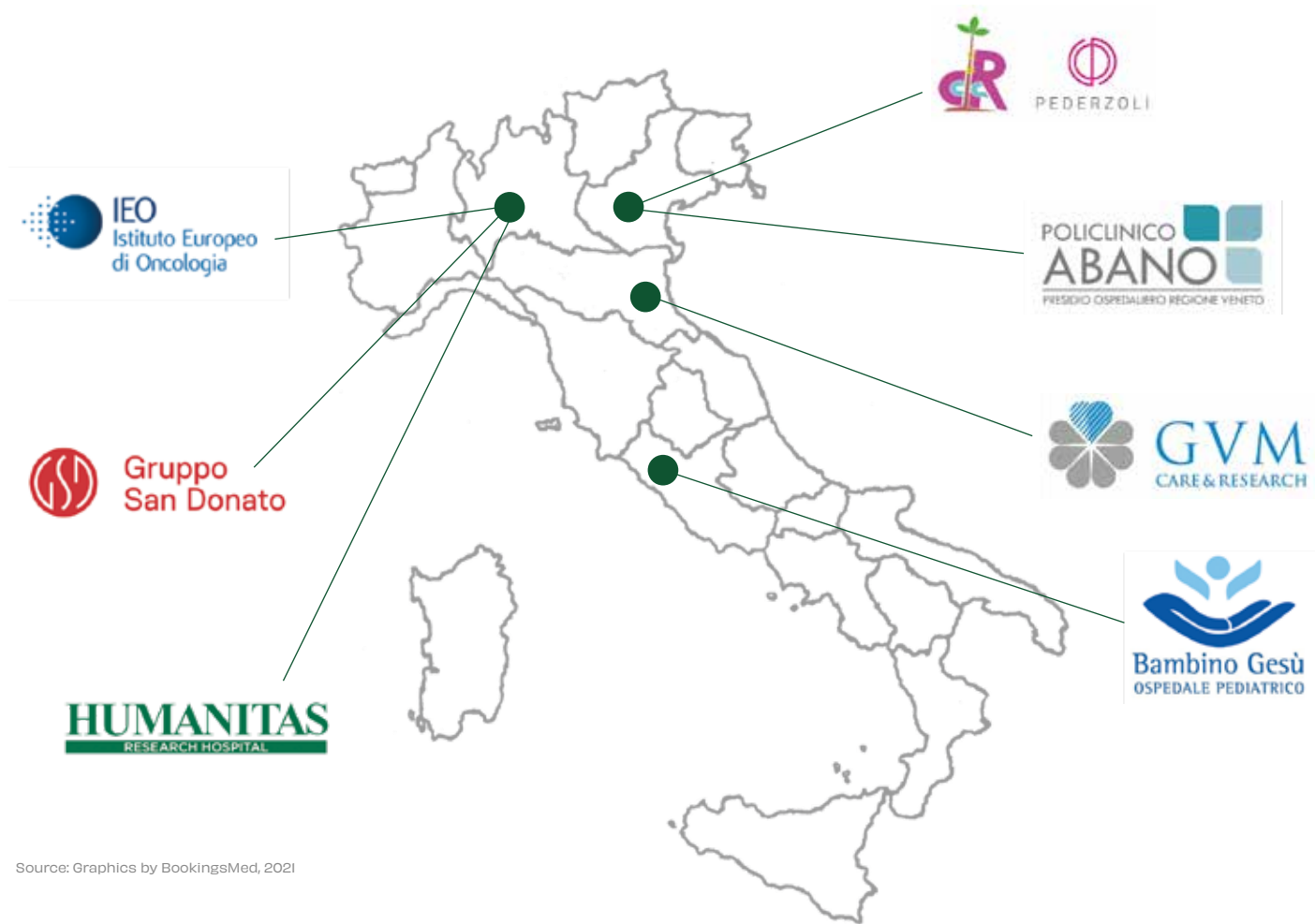
Healthcare system

The Italian healthcare system is based on universal access to healthcare. That means that all Italian citizens, whether covered by insurance or not, have the right to be treated free of charge. The recognition by the WHO (World Health Organization) is important, as it considers the Italian National Health System to be one of the best in the world with regard to the quality of the medical services guaranteed, the variety of public and private facilities with highly specialized departments and numerous other elements recognized worldwide. Another authoritative source, Bloomberg, positions Italy at the top of excellence in Europe, opening the doors to incoming medical tourism for highly specialized treatments.

Spa market

According to the Federterme 2017 report and data from the Global Wellness Institute, Italy is among the top ten European countries in terms of spa turnover with 4,000 companies and an income of 2.6 billion euros. The spas in Italy recorded 8,000,000 room nights in 153 thermal towns and 321 spas. The greatest concentration was recorded in Campania and Veneto (153 municipalities and 65,000 employees). Turnover reached 747 million euros in 2017, with additional 3 billion euros in related areas such as accommodations, trade and related services.

The leaders in medical care in Italy



Source: Graphics by BookingsMed, 2021

„Made in Italy“ healthcare: Italians live longer and healthier

DALE, Disability-Adjusted Life Expectancy, or life expectancy free from disability, healthy life expectancy, is the primary measure of health used by the 2000 World Health Report. DALE belongs to the family of health expectations and represents the number of years an individual can expect to live in what may be defined as a state of “full health”. It is a synthetic index of life expectancy. In simplified form: Figures are obtained by subtracting the number of years spent on average with a disability (Disability Life Expectancy – DLE) from the total number of years of life expectancy (Life Expectancy -LE). **DALE = LE – DLE**

In the DALE ranking, we find Italy in the 6th place, after Japan, Australia, France, Sweden and Spain, and just before Greece (7th place). As mentioned, the DALE estimate is based on life expect-

tancy at birth (LE) – the average number of years of life of a person belonging to a given population. Italians are long-lived, that is a well-known fact. This longevity depends on lifestyle, diet, environmental factors and other variables that are outside the health system itself.

But how long do Italians really live? According to the OECD, life expectancy at birth in Italy exceeds 83 years, three years more than the OECD average – which is 80 years – while in China it is 76.5 years (OECD Health Statistics: Health Status 2019). According to the C.I.A. (C.I.A. World Factbook, 2019), the expectation of a Chinese is 76 years, that of an Italian is 82.

Furthermore, according to the Bloomberg 2017 Healthiest Country Index, Italy ranks first as the number one nation for healthcare efficiency in the world.

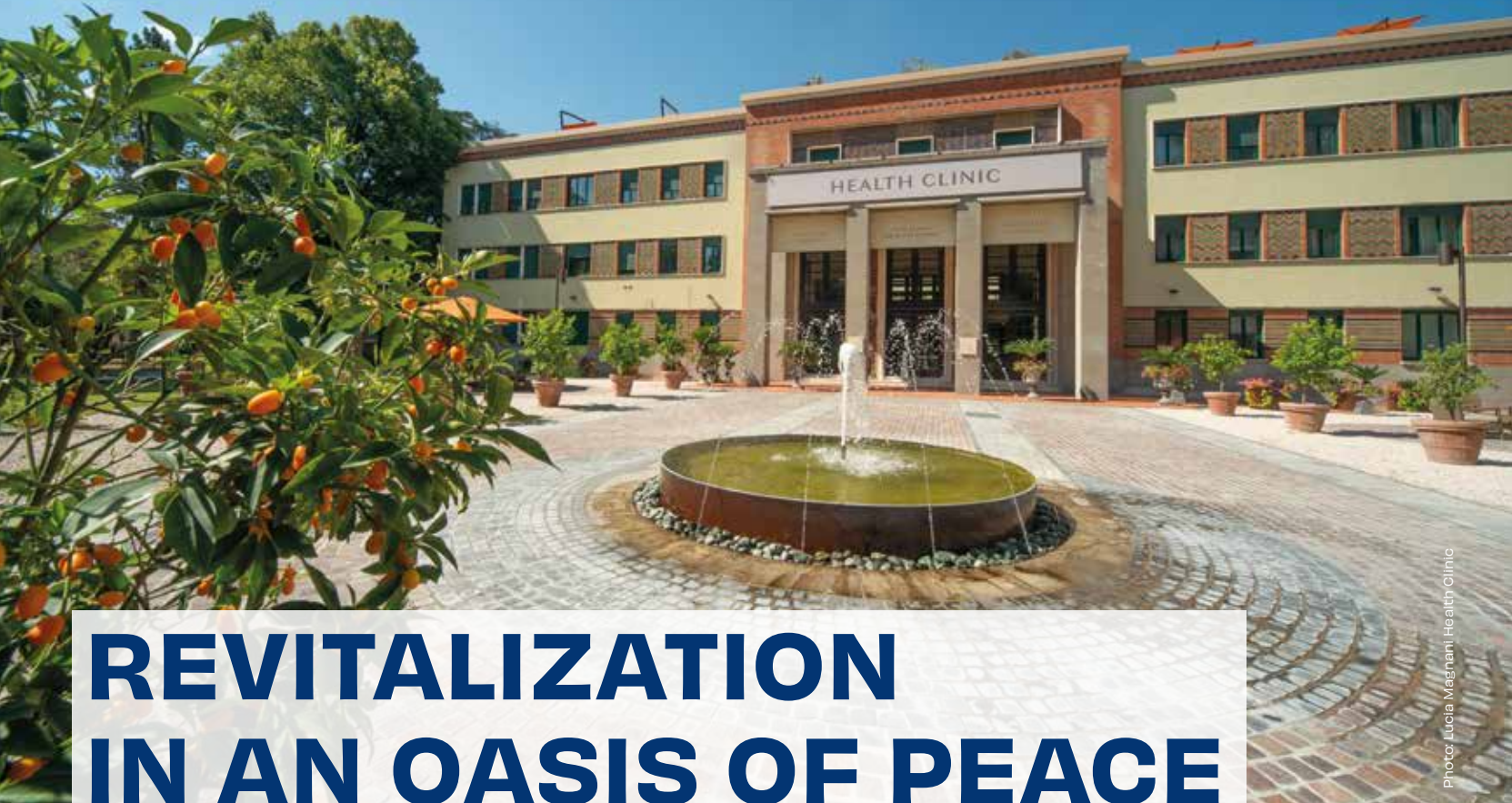


Photo: Lucia Magnani Health Clinic

REVITALIZATION IN AN OASIS OF PEACE

Immersed in a beautiful Déco setting, the Lucia Magnani Health Clinic is the perfect place for guests to revitalize themselves through the innovative health and wellness programs developed by Dr. Lucia Magnani over many years of an avant-garde research on aging and psycho-physical balance.

Advertorial: Lucia Magnani Health Clinic, Italy

The Clinic is located in Castrocaro, an enchanting medieval village in the heart of the Tuscan-Romagna Apennines, surrounded by an 8-hectare monumental park where nature shows all its beauty. The place has been famous for the anti-inflammatory and regenerative properties of its clays and thermal waters since ancient times. This year, Castrocaro has submitted a proposal for the clinic to be considered on inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List. This would enhance the reputation as a unique resort for those who want to embark on the path of rebirth with the LongLife Formula®.

The transformation programs

At the health clinic, the daily routine is marked by programs that assist guests in

achieving inner and outer transformation with sessions dedicated to a physical awakening. These sessions include treatments in the salsobromiodic and sulphurous waters of Castrocaro and regenerative ozone therapies aimed to strengthen the immune system. But there are many pampering moments as well, memorable sensory experiences and oriental holistic practices leading to mental relaxation and restful sleep.

Relief from work performance stress, aging, and immune vulnerability, plus post-operative recovery and psycho-physical balance are at the heart of the project. With programs lasting one to two weeks, but also starting from 3 days, guests are accompanied in their experience by LongLife Angels, personal concierges, who take care of every need and desire.

LongLife Formula®

Thanks to a deep knowledge of biochemistry, a long experience in the management of complex health structures and her extraordinary intuition, Dr. Magnani has devised the innovative LongLife Formula® method which



combines prevention, awareness and self-cure. A highly qualified medical staff assist guests in creating a tailor-made program, starting from treatments and nutrition to physical activity. The clean, weight loss, evergreen, relax, energy, sport, re-start, smoke, voice programs aim to enhance the longevity and quality of life of both women and men.

“In this difficult year, in which the pandemic has negatively impacted our pisco-physical balance, I wanted to focus on the value of happiness which is a fundamental pillar of wellbeing. With my team of researchers and nutritionists, I created the Happiness Route program, consistent with the LongLife Formula® philosophy, to accompany our guests in the rediscovery of positive emotions,” says Dr. Lucia Magnani, founder and CEO of Health Clinic LongLife Formula. *“Through a personalized approach, based on early identification and correction of risk factors, the ideal condition is reached to redefine one’s emotional health, which is necessary for a restart.”*

Dr. Magnani has formulated in her Happiness Route a program, based on scientific studies, that counteracts the effects of fear and restlessness, anxiety and depression during and after health emergencies. Since a group of hormones and neurotransmitters, in particular serotonin, dopamine, oxytocin and endorphins, chemically regulate nerve impulses sent to receptors on neuronal endings, the hormonal mechanism used by Dr. Magnani arouses a variety of emotional

states related to pleasure: good mood, empathy, excitement, happiness, euphoria, and pain tolerance.

Food for wellbeing

Dr. Magnani’s project is one of change and renewal of the individual lifestyle in the context of good nutrition, movement and proper rest. Thanks to the collaboration of a team of nutritionists, the Clinic’s LongLife restaurant takes care of its guests by offering dishes carefully made with local products with extraordinary antioxidant and anti-aging. Without giving up on flavors and without having to cope with the typical diet limitations, the kitchen gathers ingredients that are friendly to health and wellbeing. Cooking methods such as vacuum-packed at low temperatures are favored, and salt is replaced by spices that make the dishes equally tasty.

The food program is the result of extensive research in the field of nutraceuticals, that is the science that combines nutrition and pharmaceuticals and involves the intake of targeted supplements to counteract oxidative stress. The LongLife philosophy also has given rise to a line of high quality foods and supplements that contain a rich antioxidant power and that, if taken regularly, promote the slowdown of cellular aging, helping the functionality of the immune system.

Green thermal water

There are many ways for guests at the clinic to build health-affirming movement into their lives. By entering the pools, guests discover the underground world of salsobromiodic and sulphurous waters with a typical green color. There they enjoy the large outdoor thermal pool where they experience scenic and immersive relaxation. Guests also benefit from the properties of naturally maturing therapeutic mud, which is typical of Castrocaro. The importance of thermal waters is reinterpreted here through laboratory research and is enriched by revolutionary and avant-garde methods.

Besides the LongLife Formula® programs, the center is also recognized for its aesthetic medicine and sophisticated beauty treatments, designed to ensure maximum effectiveness and long duration. To intensify the pleasure of the wellness and beauty programs of the health spa, guests can experience, as singles or couples, the intimate and regenerating atmosphere of the Hammam Suites.

Historical Grand Hotel

What makes the Health Clinic experience especially memorable is the setting of the Grand Hotel Castrocaro that houses the wellness center. The building, recently renovated, is an excellent example of 1930s architecture that still retains the prestigious Déco style details.

The Celebration Hall, embellished with designer ceramics, glass and crystals, represents the maximum expression of the refined creativity of Tito Chini, one of the greatest exponents of the artistic and cultural panorama of the Novecento Italiano.

Between contemporary luxury and the charm of the past, the hotel is immersed in the peace of a large park planted with sequoias, holm oaks and centuries-old trees, dating back to the era in which the Grand Hotel was designed.

The elegance and size of the rooms, the large tubs and the comfortable shower spaces offer an extraordinary stay experience; the use of exclusive mattresses guarantees guests an invigorating rest. In the rooms of the Grand Hotel and those of the Health Clinic, all the anti-COVID safety protocols are carried out with scrupulous attention to ensure an unforgettable stay in safety and relaxation.



Photo: Lucia Magnani Health Clinic

CHANGE YOUR LIFESTYLE WITH THE LONG LIFE FORMULA METHOD

Long Life Formula® is a scientific wellness and prevention method to promote a healthy lifestyle: it offers seven profiles, all based on an oxidative stress test and an in-depth top medical check up

- **Blood chemistry and oxidative stress tests** to assess the state of health and aging of cells.
- **Posture education** correcting poor posture and aligning the spine to reach a healthy and elegant bearing.
- **Top level medical check-up** including lab tests, basic electrocardiogram, ultrasound tests and colour Doppler echocardiography and a visit with a physician.
- **Fitness assessment** and definition of a specific and personalised physical activity programme prescribed by medical staff and carried out with expert personal trainers.
- **Physiatric and Spa assessment** to identify the most suitable Spa and physiotherapy treatments in salso-bromo-iodic water.
- **Definition of beauty and wellness treatments**, combined with the use of highly technological electromedical equipment, specifically for the treatment of wrinkles and firming of tissues.
- **Nutritional assessment** and prescription of a personalised nutrition plan.

REACH YOUR GOALS WITH THE 7 PROFILES LONG LIFE FORMULA

- **WEIGHTLOSS** *I'd like to lose weight*
- **CLEAN** *I lead a disorderly life, I'd like to detoxify*
- **EVERGREEN** *I'd like to be younger*
- **ENERGY** *I'd like to be more active*
- **RESTART** *I've just undergone surgery, I'd like to restart my lifestyle*
- **SPORT** *I'd like to get better results from my trainings*
- **RELAX** *I'm stressed, I'd like to relax and sleep well*



INFO AND BOOKING

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LUCIA MAGNANI
HEALTH CLINIC

LONG LIFE
— FORMULA —

*An advanced society is able to
combine health and well-being in
the pursuit of a better future*

Lucia Magnani



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT IN MEDICAL TOURISM

HTI News Magazine talked to Christian El-Khoury about how to benefit from professional development strategies.

Interview: Anke Sponer, HTI News Magazine



Photo: Christian El-Khoury

Christian El-Khoury

Head of Consulting, MESO
International Patient Service GmbH

HTI News Magazine:

Do we really need a professional destination development in medical tourism?

Christian El-Khoury:

Destination development in the context of tourism is defined as the strategic planning and advancement of geographically defined areas to support the evolution of desirable destinations for travelers.

One of the many lessons learned during our extensive experience in the industry is that quality medical services alone are not sufficient to draw international patients to a hospital and region.

An intertwined network of stakeholders from various sectors, i.e., healthcare, hospitality, mobility services, leisure providers, retailers and gastronomy is essential to success. Likewise, joint operation towards a mutually agreed goal gives your city or municipality a competitive edge over other health tourism destinations.

HTI News Magazine:

What about marketing and products?

Christian El-Khoury:

“We don’t need marketing and tourism development. We are a great hospital.”

This is something I hear quite regularly. However, it could not be further from the truth. While a few hospitals around the globe do indeed so benefit from their expertise that their reputation alone leads to high demand without promoting activities, this is far from the

rule. Few hospitals around the world manage to attract international patients without being part of a larger destination building strategy. The few that do have outstanding medical expertise, a history of excellence, and in most cases are the only option for certain types of treatment. Being at the forefront of medical innovations is of course a useful tool to attract foreign patients.

However, this is the exception as most hospitals do not have proprietary and exclusive treatment techniques that serve as what are known as USP (Unique Selling Point) or UVP (Unique Value Point).

Other hospitals that seek to be active in medical tourism need to work with what’s around them. This includes the region itself, tourism stakeholders, and yes, even other hospitals. It is far more enticing for patients to travel to a destination where multiple ailments can be taken care of if needed. At the same time, they want to be assured that their environment will be welcoming and supporting. This should



Photo: iStock.com/popba

be mirrored in other tourism stakeholders understanding why people are traveling to the region and not just treating them as tourists, but medical travelers.

In terms of operational measures, this can translate into mutual participation in the services offered to travelers. There should not be a hard separation between the hotel stay and hospital arrangements, but rather close coordination. There are successful examples of cooperative integration of clinical services with hotels and resorts. For sure this doesn't apply for every medical specialty. I am not talking about having cardio-thoracic surgery next to the ballroom. But offering supporting activities like medicine deliveries, pick-ups and appointment reminders can add to the patient and guest experience.

It's a given that all this can be offered to the patient but should be requested by him. It also puts a higher demand on privacy solutions across all participants, adhering to governing laws.

HTI News Magazine:

OK, destination development is mandatory, but where shall we start from?

Christian El-Khoury:

Let us get back to the big picture. Tasked with projects of destination development, we always start with a thorough stakeholder analysis. What services are available, and who is willing to participate to what degree?



Experience has shown that not all stakeholders are willing and able to participate in the common effort.

The stakeholder analysis identifies the parties who should participate in the strategy. Based on that analysis, we usually suggest the formation of a committee that includes the parties integral to the decision-making process. This also assures that nothing gets agreed upon that the stakeholders can't implement. This committee also allows us to structure finances transparently, thus making things easier in matters where financial contributions are required.

With the extensive data of the stakeholder analysis at our disposal, we begin to identify USPs/UVPs. If there aren't any factors that stand out, this usually is the time where we begin to craft them. The result of that work lays the groundwork and basis for the entire strategy. It is the reason why people choose your destination and hospitals over another destination. It also will be the most important building block for branding and marketing. I would like to elaborate further on it, but it is of such individual nature, that I could only describe it in abstracts, which would be of little benefit.

Concerning the issue whether the initiator should be a region or municipality: We usually get engaged during traditional tourism development projects as the responsible party for the medical and health tourism sector. If the project is initiated by a network of hospitals and health care providers, we also tap experts in the tourism industry to form an all-around attractive package.

HTI News Magazine:

Competition versus collaboration: Where are the benefits?

Christian El-Khoury:

Independently of who initiated the project, we always emphasize the need for collaboration to reach the common goal, within the

framework that is created. Having all relevant stakeholders work towards the common goal and investing their efforts into one channel yields higher recognition and presents a unified message that captures travelers' attention.

A single hospital trying to attract international patients on its own will not have the same success as a network working together, combining their range of services and building upon them with the help of the nonmedical participants.

One of the most common concerns expressed is that hospitals will have to compete within the region and are, frankly speaking, afraid that patients will choose another hospital over theirs.

There are multiple ways to approach this concern with the main point being: Competition is good. If the legal infrastructure offers a framework to support ethical competition (which in the medical service industry is not always a given), good. If not, the committee should set rules, which is advisable either way. Medical requests can be passed to all fitting providers, which in turn send in their cost estimations and a description of how they plan to handle the case. This can then be presented to travelers.

Your final recommendation?

“ Not every destination can or should be a medical travel destination. There is a trend to promote every city on the globe as a medical travel destination if they have half of a clinic and English-speaking personnel. This is not in any way meant to sound derogatory, but promoting run-of-the-mill destinations as medical travel hubs, whether or not they have the capacity to be one, does not serve anyone, least of all patients.

Many destinations offer special medical services and health-related advantages. If they do – and only then – they should promote themselves accordingly. ”



WIESBADEN

a green city full of natural treasures to see and experience

Author: Claudia Meyer, Wiesbaden Congress & Marketing GmbH, Germany

The Hessian state capital of Wiesbaden not only fascinates. It also inspires. With an abundance of centrally located parks and green spaces, the city invites relaxation. Short distances and an overall well-connectedness to nature facilitate the combination of leisure activities, shopping, sightseeing and cultural indulgence. Relish in the mild and good-natured atmosphere that exudes Mediterranean flare. The multifaceted richness of the city derives from its scenic historical architecture. And hidden beneath the magnificent landscape are interesting and exciting stories waiting to be uncovered. Whether meandering at your own pace or via guided tours, Wiesbaden is best experienced on foot.

Centrally located – easily accessible

Wiesbaden, the Hessian state capital, lies in the heart of Germany in the middle of the

Rhine-Main region and is the gateway to the Rheingau region and Taunus mountains. The city has an outstanding infrastructure and is well connected by both *Autobahn* highways and high – speed rail. The Frankfurt international airport is merely 20 minutes away by car.

The feel-good city of pure refreshment. Restorative. Pleasant.

Virtually no other city in Germany offers more nature than Wiesbaden. Forests, historical green spaces, avenues and nature preserves lie intertwined in a green network that make up the “green lung” of Wiesbaden. Both residents and visitors enjoy the use of the numerous parks and green spaces for health, fitness and wellness. For example, those so desiring may start their nature adventures directly from their hotel in the inner city by simply putting on their hiking boots and walking out the door. Well-known options such as the “Rheinsteig”, the premier hiking path of the Rhine trail system, the “Jubiläums” hiking loop are all perfect opportunities to discover Wiesbaden via the region’s numerous well marked hiking routes. Whether for a round of golf or a leisurely bike ride along the Rhine River or through the forests, Wiesbaden offers the optimum nature experience in an urban setting.

Wiesbaden’s water and fresh air also contrib-

ute significantly to enhancing the wellbeing and health of visitors in the city of Wiesbaden. The city boasts 26 natural hot springs for its thermal baths, and the richness of the water resources of the city is unique. The springs flow under the inner city today as they have for over 200,000 years. The source lies 2000 meters below the surface and provides one of the hottest thermal water sources in Europe with a temperature of 67 degrees C. Legend has it that, when they erected their first castle in Mainz, the Romans brought their horses to the “other” side of the Rhine to rest and graze. However, the Roman horses did not graze, but instead bathed leisurely in the hot Rhine wetlands. This is how the Romans discovered the hot springs and then developed the other side of the Rhine into their “bathing city.” This is how Wiesbaden was named: from “Wies” for meadow and “baden” for bath = Wiesbaden or “meadow for bathing”!

Not only did the Romans appreciate the holy warmth of the water, the Roman women also used the rust-colored sediments and minerals to dye their hair. Today you can seek relaxation, the possibility to simply slow down and a sense of well being in either the Kaiser-Friedrich baths of the inner city (modeled after the ancient Roman sweating baths) or the thermal baths of Aukamm Valley nestled in a green oasis. Both spas are fed by natural hot springs within the city.



Thermal Spa, Wiesbaden

Photo: Team-Brennweite

Goethe, Jawlensky, Wagner and a blue Lobster...

The names of world-famous artists are deeply intertwined in the story of Hesse's capital city of Wiesbaden that today are part of the city's multifaceted cultural foundation. Richard Wagner authored his opera, "The Master-Singers of Nuremberg", in the city, and the city was the muse and inspiration for the poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who also enjoyed the local Riesling wine and the view of the Rhine River. Fjodor Dostojewski gambled away his fortune in the casinos of Wiesbaden casinos later, leading to the worldrenowned work of literature, "The Gambler." The painter, Alexej von Jawlensky, resided in Wiesbaden for 20 years until his death in 1941. The Wiesbaden Museum houses over 90 renowned works of Expressionist art as well as the special exhibit of the blue lobster. The city is likewise not lacking in the contemporary arts with abundant options such as theaters, festivals, music and dance,

literature and film and visual arts.

The Rhine District – dream destination for pleasure and leisure activities

The Rhine District and its Riesling wines are not only nationally renowned, but have also become increasingly popular as an insider tip among international visitors. But what distinguishes the Rhine District from other wine regions and makes it so unique to wine connoisseurs?

The Rhine District's reputation derives from its physical geography. Here, the thousandkilometer section of the Rhine River makes a turn in an east-west direction to go around the Rhine mountain range. In addition to the abundant warmth of the sunshine from south-facing slopes required for succulent grapes, the vineyards of Riesling grapes also receive rays of the sun reflected from the surface of the Rhine River, further providing

optimum growing conditions. No other wine region in the world boasts a higher percentage of Riesling grapes, the king of the grapevine, than the Rhine District. But the Rhine District offers much more – especially for those who prefer an active experience. The high concentration of attractions and world-famous culture of this part of the Rhine is unparalleled. Here, you will actually experience the well-known places otherwise seen only in pictures: the hidden sandbars and meandering riverbanks of the Rhine River, the mixed orchards encircled by wild trees; vineyards, Madonnas in the never-ending glow of the vineyard grapes; ancient forests full of romantic places and breath-taking views (which one will never want to leave), as well as traditional wineries and taverns, medieval towns and small authentic wine villages. Fittingly, the Upper Middle Rhine Valley with its numerous wellpreserved cultural history has been bestowed the designation of UNESCO World Heritage.

Wiesbaden

More to discover.

100 Years of Jawlensky in Museum Wiesbaden from 17 September 2021 – 27 March 2022

A hundred years ago – in June 1921 –, Alexej von Jawlensky (1864–1941) spontaneously decided to take up residence in Wiesbaden. The 111 works in the museum's collection, which outline his entire oeuvre from early expressive heads to serial work, will be on show for the first time in its entirety.

Look forward to:

- ▶ one night's stay in a hotel of the selected category, incl. breakfast
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Alexej von Jawlensky among his friends, c. 1924



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A NATIONAL MEDICAL TOURISM STRATEGY IS VITAL FOR RECHARGING GERMANY'S STAGNANT MEDICAL TOURISM MARKET

An integrated and wide-reaching effort to create a common destination development strategy will help German providers solidify and grow their prospects in medical tourism and return to the success of the past.

Author: Christian El-Khoury, Head of Consulting, MESC International Patient Service GmbH, Germany

Of the roughly 250,000 foreign patients treated in German hospitals and medical institutions every year, it is estimated that 40-45% of the patients are so-called “medical tourists,” meaning people who have traveled primarily for treatment. The majority of medical tourists come from the immediate neighboring European neighbors, followed by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC or Arab States) and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS or post-Soviet states).

Medical tourism to Germany in its present form has existed for a long time. As early as the 1970s, heads of foreign states, governmental officials and other prominent personalities visited Germany to receive medical attention. This does not take into account Germany's major role in spa travel, which dates back centuries.

The typology of medical tourists allows various conclusions about the motivation to travel abroad. There are various occasions to travel to another country for an examination or treatment. In contrast to other destinations, Germany fulfills the complete range of incentives, from lower prices and health promoting spa facilities to the highest level of competence in the area of complicated procedures. Medical tourism can be considered a confirmation of the quality and competence of the German health system. With annual sales of up to € 1,2 billion, this mark of quality is well paid for. This figure only represents the services provided by clinics and doctors

and does not include associated indirect revenue from the regular tourist industry, hotels, gastronomy, cities and retail. For the German healthcare system, revenue from foreign patients is extremely attractive: On the one hand, these revenues do not fall within planned budgeting, which means that these funds can be used more flexibly. On the other hand, foreign cases are often billed outside the stringent remuneration model of DRG (Diagnosis Related Groups) and GOÄ (German Medical Fee Index).

However, in recent years the number of medical tourists has stagnated and, in some cases, even dropped. One major issue we observe is the lack of international activities on behalf of the relevant stakeholders. In the past, hospitals participated in local destination development activities, jointly with city marketing agencies, hotels and retail groups. There was also a much larger offer of similar activities. I vividly remember a strong German presence at trade fairs and exhibitions, some of which we helped organize ourselves. German medical providers, municipalities, service providers and other relevant stakeholders promoted their destinations and themselves with combined forces, presenting an entire infrastructure of services, support and connectivity. Nowadays, hospitals mostly go it alone, relying heavily on internet advertising instead of personal outreach. While there is nothing wrong with using the Internet and social media to promote international hospital activities, in the current competitive

international market it simply does not suffice. Like any other industry, medical tourism requires a personal connection.

If Germany aims to remain competitive in the medical tourism industry, there must be a concerted effort to represent the destinations accordingly. This demands a national or regional approach. While a national approach is a stronger communicator in terms of unity, regional strategies offer options to display more stakeholders and represent the diverse offers as well as local specialties, factoring in geographical aspects such as health promoting environments. Whether national or regional, the focus should be on combining strengths and showing prospective travelers that they do not have to rely on just one hospital, but rather can draw on an entire infrastructure and support system. Time and time again, an integrated and cooperative effort has been shown to be the most effective approach in promoting medical tourism destinations. One renowned hospital is not enough for a medical tourism destination. However, collaboration in the area of infrastructure, defining strategies and operational steps across a destination solidifies its position and allows it to be promoted among the target destinations. This undertaking will involve a lot of work, knowledge and stakeholder coordination and isn't by any stretch of the imagination an easy task. But Germany has successfully mastered similar challenges before with great success.

FACILITATORS IN MEDICAL TOURISM

Added value for medical facilities and patients in the international medical services market

Author: Ivan Rendulić, CEO, RexRea, Ivana Kolar, CEO, Julius Rose, Croatia

Medical tourism is a global industry that achieves double-digit exponential growth every year. It is a relatively young tourism segment, but an increasing number of countries throughout the world are becoming active in this field year by year. As a result, medical care providers will be forced to address international patients to increase their revenue. By offering their services to patients in foreign markets, medical providers can provide patients with a larger selection of services and destinations, as well as different price segments. Whereas this situation is certainly an advantage for the patients, it complicates the decision of which country to choose. It also poses a problem for the medical provider, as it increases the costs of increasing visibility in the market, especially if a country is not well-known in the global medical tourism market.

Added value of the medical tourism facilitator

Medical tourism facilitators have a special role to play. The facilitator is an agent who acts as a link between a medical provider, i.e., a medical facility offering its services on a foreign market, and the end user, i.e., the patient who is looking for a medical service outside their own country. They can be considered intermediaries, but the term medical facilitator is common in health tourism. Facilitators are often called “buyers” as well and have a special role in the development of health and medical tourism destinations. The facilitator is an active participant in the medical tourism market who, with his or her knowledge and experience, creates added value in the process of promoting and selling medical tourism services. Facilitators are not necessarily doctors, but rather are often

people who are familiar with the medical services offered in certain countries and have the expertise needed to promote and sell the same service, or to attract patients from abroad for treatment.

Who requires the services of medical facilitators?

Facilitators exist simply because they are needed by key stakeholders in the medical tourism market. Very often, each of the stakeholders wants to focus strictly on their own business, thus creating a gap in which patients need support. Ultimately, facilitators help both patients and clinics to better address many challenges, such as negotiating terms of collaboration, management and owner expectations, fast-growing competition, cultural and other communication challenges, foreign language skills, political and economic impacts, high costs of recruiting staff with international experience, etc. After all, the more complex the industry, the more highly developed mediation services must be, and the more important they become.

How do medical facilitators make money?

Medical tourism facilitators charge their services on the basis of three main models:

1. Fixed consultancy fee: the medical facilitator charges the patient a fixed fee for their services, with this fee being the same, regardless of the actual costs of the treatment.
2. Commission-based fee: the facilitator receives a fixed percentage of the costs of the treatment.

3. Package-based fee: The patient is reimbursed for the total costs of the trip, including the costs of treatment and any additional services provided (e.g., transportation, translation or transfers).

Is a medical tourism facilitator just an additional cost?

Facilitators provide patients with their expertise in market research by finding the medical facility which provides the service best meeting the requirements and needs of the individual patient. They act as a single point of communication between the patient and the medical facility to help find answers to any questions that the patient might have about any aspect of the medical trip. In this way, they facilitate the patient's selection process and remove any obstacles to the patient's arrival for treatment in a foreign country.

From the perspective of medical providers, the facilitator is a very important stakeholder, because they provide visibility to the patients and often act as a promotional channel and a lead generator. In addition, they facilitate communication with the patients, because they themselves are very well acquainted with the treatment process and can usually answer some of the patient's questions without contacting the medical facility. In addition, the facilitator can help organize additional services that the patient needs, which are outside the medical provider's range of services, thus allowing the medical facility to focus exclusively on the treatment itself.

Regardless of all the expertise in the fields of medicine and tourism and international contacts and access to potential clients, the medical facilitator is not all-mighty. A high standard of quality of products and services offered by medical service providers and their ability to perform the required preparation and marketing are key prerequisites for market success. Involving facilitators is necessary for the long-term and systematic development of the industry. Therefore, the

role of facilitators must be defined legally to enable medical tourism providers to rely as much as possible on their partners in their sales and marketing activities.

Unfortunately, medical facilitation is not regulated at all. There are no entry barriers, which leads to reduced trust in this type of service. Professional certificates are useful, because they provide insight into the scope

of the facilitator's business and indicate how to resolve disputes. It is crucial to regulate the business and predefine the "rules of the game" (e.g., charging clinics or patients commissions).

Nevertheless, the greatest value of a facilitator in medical tourism is building the trust between the patient and the destination that the patient is travelling to.

HTI News Magazine talked to Dr. Sophie Chung, CEO Qunomedical, Germany, about the role of facilitators.



Photo: Dr. Sophie Chung

Dr. Sophie Chung

Dr. Sophie Chung is the CEO and co-founder of Qunomedical, a global platform for elective medical procedures with the objective to fundamentally transform how patients access and experience healthcare.

Prior to founding Qunomedical in 2015, Sophie served as Director of Healthcare Strategy at Zocdoc, a healthcare technology startup focused on doctor discovery and

appointment booking in New York. She also held a position as project manager for McKinsey & Company's Healthcare Practice in Berlin where she worked with clients in the hospital, health insurance and pharmaceutical industries. After earning her MD degree from the Medical University of Vienna in 2008, Sophie gained first-hand experience in treating patients as a doctor in Australia, and subsequently through an NGO in Cambodia.

HTI News Magazine:

Qunomedical is an excellent example of a digital health startup replacing the role of classical medical facilitators by using technology. What else makes it so different and successful?

Dr. Sophie Chung:

We put patients first. We do that by taking on the patient's perspective and developing an end-to-end solution to suit their individual needs and expectations. We use the latest state-of-the-art technology to create an unparalleled patient experience across over 200

treatment categories. At the same time, we act as sustainable growth partners for the doctors and hospitals we work with. We enable them to keep pace with digitalization, so they can provide their patients with the personalized online treatment they need. This way, we bring patients and doctors closer together through technology and an awesome product.

HTI News Magazine:

Medical facilitation is not regulated, and transparency is a significant challenge. What do you consider to be the major challenges to medical facilitation in the future?

Dr. Sophie Chung:

The main challenge has always been to build trust with the patient, and this will continue to hold true in the future. There are many great doctors who provide excellent medical care out there, but unfortunately, we also see doctors who couldn't care less about quality. Our goal at Qunomedical is to instill trust in the whole industry and create more transparency so patients can develop trust and be empowered to make informed decisions.

The interview was conducted by Anke Spöner, HTI News Magazine

Company Profile: BookingsMed

The Health Travel Platform matches European Service Providers with Italian Agencies and Facilitators

Author: Anke Sponer, HTI News Magazine

The project was born in 2012 when Mariaantonieta Princivalle and her team established their first companies, Itineris Veneto and Incoming To Italy, a DMC based in Veneto Region near Venice. They immediately realized that the world was changing and dis-intermediating. At the same time, they were convinced that tourism cannot exist without professional travel agents. They therefore set about traveling around the world to understand what the market was lacking.

Next, Mariaantonieta Princivalle and her partners decided to specialize in the fields of experience tourism and medical tourism. They created a marketplace to help protect the business growth of travel agencies, advising them to become specialized consultants. In the following years, they set up the EMT European Medical Tourism Workshop B2B workshop & Conference, the Destination Italy road show and three web platforms. These are World Fine Selections, World Fine Selections Events and BookingsMed.com. While living in close contact with operators for many months, they recognized the need to create an environment in which the flow of information between supply and demand is instantaneous, simple and transparent. This prompted them to establish a network providing weekly online and offline training for all the members.

Their daily relationship with their partners and foreign correspondents keeps them continuously updated, ensuring a global overview of market trends, current trends and news throughout the world.

Mariaantonieta Princivalle's businesses are currently experiencing exponential growth and are thus seeking facilitators, clinics and rehabilitation centers worldwide that meet the requirements requested by their contacts. These are presented to their network of travel agents in the BP Med & Care catalog.

The project is increasingly focusing on B2B and aims to grow its business in the B2C sector starting 2023, where the participating companies expect to become more visible as a result of their B2B network.

They can look forward to a very important, powerful and effective marketing campaign with the catalog being distributed online to clinics, spas, travel agencies, medical agencies, pharmacies, specialists and doctors all over the world.

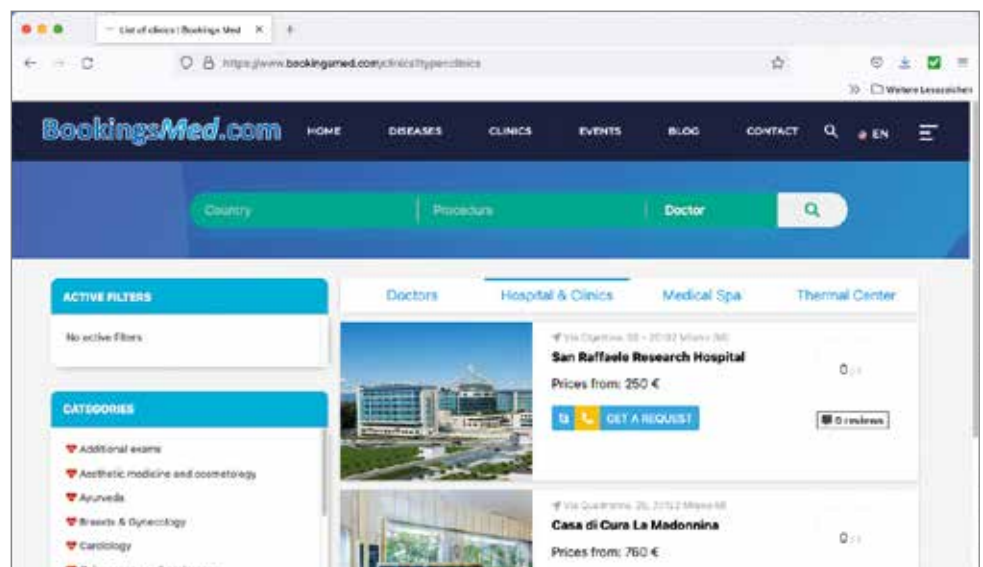


Mariaantonieta Princivalle
Founder & CEO
BookingsMed, Italy

Mariaantonieta Princivalle is co-founder of World Fine Selections, an Italian tour operator and events organizer in luxury and health travel. She is president of the Italian Association for the Promotion of Medical and Thermal Tourism (AIPTM) and organizer of the European Medical Tourism workshop (EMT) in Italy.

Mariaantonieta is an expert in marketing strategy, brand management and digital solutions.

www.bookingsmed.com



DENTAL TOURISM 3.0 IN CROATIA

Consumer centricity is one of the omnipresent buzz words nowadays. What strategies help to apply this approach to dental tourism?

Author: Anke Sponer, HTI News Magazine



The dental tourism market in Croatia is one of the most robust and stable health tourism segments in the country, with more than 80.000 patients recorded in 2019. However, in 2020 the largest dental clinics showed a decrease in revenues by 30% and 75% in profits. Most of the dental clinics are relatively small compared to European clinics. Yet, many small clinics perform well and provide outstanding service to their clients. Partly due to the COVID-19 challenges, dental tourism is heading towards a new era. It needs innovation and a different market approach to succeed in the 3.0 scenario.

Many of us remember visiting the dentist with fear, and we can only imagine the nightmare for those traveling abroad to heal a dental problem or get a more attractive smile. Today, we need to evoke positive feelings in dental travelers by putting them in a vacation mood and ensuring that they enjoy the foreign country with new experiences and beautiful places to stay while meeting friendly people and expert dentists. At the same time, though, we need to remember that savings are what drive most customers to visit a dentist abroad.

HTI News Magazine talked to Paško Karlo, Managing Director of the Dentelli Dental Clinic in Split, Croatia, how to meet patients' expectations and approach them appropriately.



What are your key strategies for approaching future guests and patients?

“*The patients expect nothing less than excellent service and value for money. Each customer should be treated like royalty from the first contact to the end of the visit. We must also bear in mind that we have to accomplish the same work that would take two weeks for a local client in only three to four days when treating a foreign patient. For us at Dentelli, all this means:*

We transparently demonstrate our expertise and provide visuals of previous dentistry cases.

We gladly address every client's doubts and concerns by e-mail or video call.

We explain the treatment in detail: what to expect, the individual steps, possible hidden costs and risks.

We prefer to communicate openly and honestly, thus preventing potential future complications. We also organize the clients' arrival and accommodation.

We do our best to make our clients feel safe and protected while undergoing medical treatment in a foreign country

The first impression truly matters, so we give careful consideration to who welcomes our guests and drives them to their hotel.

It's important to choose a hotel that is not noisy and that offers comfort and a high level of quality when it comes to the extra service needed after surgery (e.g., patients may need ice after an implantation or other surgery).

We take time to listen to patients' wishes and worries, and we make sure they do not experience pain, fear or discomfort.

We simply aim to be the perfect host.”

Oxidative Stress:

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Advertorial: Lucia Magnani Health Clinic, Italy

Science and human wellbeing meet in the heart of the Romagna Region in Castrocaro, to offer a real experience of rebirth at the Lucia Magnani Health Clinic. Regenerating programs were developed by Dr. Lucia Magnani over many years of avant-garde research on health, aging and psycho-physical balance. Thanks to a deep knowledge of biochemistry, extensive experience in the management of complex health structures and her extraordinary intuition, Dr. Magnani has devised an innovative method that combines prevention, awareness and self-care with the pleasure of a gentle cuddle: the LongLife Formula®.

Programs of aesthetic medicine and wellness treatments use the extraordinary therapeutic properties of the Castrocaro thermal waters and clays.

Using the most innovative non-invasive procedures, the team of highly specialized doctors of the clinic has defined a program to slow aging and correct facial, skin and body imperfections. The clinic offers fillers of hyaluronic acid and boasts an advanced laser center. It is also recognized for its excellence with minimally invasive procedures such as the thread lift, which through a mechanical action elevates and repositions the relaxed skin of the face through mechanical action.

Lucia Magnani Health Clinic is a cutting-edge center for body care and regeneration, which allows guests to rediscover their beauty and start living again. Once the program is



Photo: castrocaro_magnani

completed, guests continue to feel the sensation of wellbeing at home thanks, to the advice of the medical staff and anti-aging cosmetics formulated on the basis of scientific studies. In the rooms of the Grand Hotel and those of the Health Clinic, all the anti-COVID safety protocols are strictly followed to ensure an unforgettable safe and relaxing stay.

MEDICAL HOTELS – A BOOMING PRODUCT IN THE HEALTH TOURISM SECTOR?

Medical travel has been a subject of numerous discussions, yet it is not entirely accepted by tourism or healthcare professionals. However, carefully tailored and differentiated health offers are key to attracting guests successfully.

Author: Prof. Dr. Kai Illing, Professor at universities in Graz and Bremen, and CEO of TDC Consulting, Austria



Photo: Prof. Dr. Kai Illing

Prof. Dr. Kai Illing

Kai is a health tourism expert with over 30 years' of experience in international development projects for clinics, medical hotels and health resorts. His professional focus on business administration enables him to observe the global market developments from the perspective of someone who wants to reconcile patient's and guests' need for healing with companies' goal of increasing profits. He is a member of the Advisory Board at the German Medical Wellness Association, Associate Professor at the University of Applied Sciences in Graz, and Study Director for Health Tourism at Apollon University in Bremen, Germany.

Like many symbiotic products and services worldwide, medical travel targets particular market segments, requiring substantial expertise and a holistic approach. Unlike general tourism, health travel is trust-based and not a “one-size-fits-all” product.

The most important task is to tailor specific services to the individual needs of healthcare customers. This tailoring is often fulfilled by medical hotels which play a role in pre-care or after-care. Consequently, in 2021, one of the leading global health tourism destinations, Turkey, therefore made a strategic decision to enable the conversion of hotels into medical and health hotels.

Main characteristics of medical hotels

- They are surrounded by nature, offering a pleasant atmosphere and provide medically functional, yet less pampered, accommodations.
- They offer mostly non-invasive diagnostics, primary and secondary prevention using Western medicine and naturopathy with the goal of improving both health and wellbeing.
- Patients stay voluntarily or come with doctor's prescription, depending on whether they are healthy or sick.
- Consequently, there is a large number of resident physicians, and the facility is profit-oriented.

Types of medical hotels

One type of medical hotel targets patients whose stays are paid by their health insurance. These facilities are relatively modest and the target group is generally older and in fragile health. The therapeutic focus is on natural remedies, and care is primarily about “repairing” the health status. Another type of medical hotel markets to self-payers with facilities that are more hotel-like and luxurious. Patients are a bit younger and in better health, and there is a broader choice of therapies aimed at “optimizing” their health.

In general, medical hotels appeal to guests who are wealthy, suffer from lifestyle diseases, belong to the age group of 40 to 60 years, hold a highly responsible position in their company, and tend to be self-payers.

The therapeutic focus of medical hotels is placed on

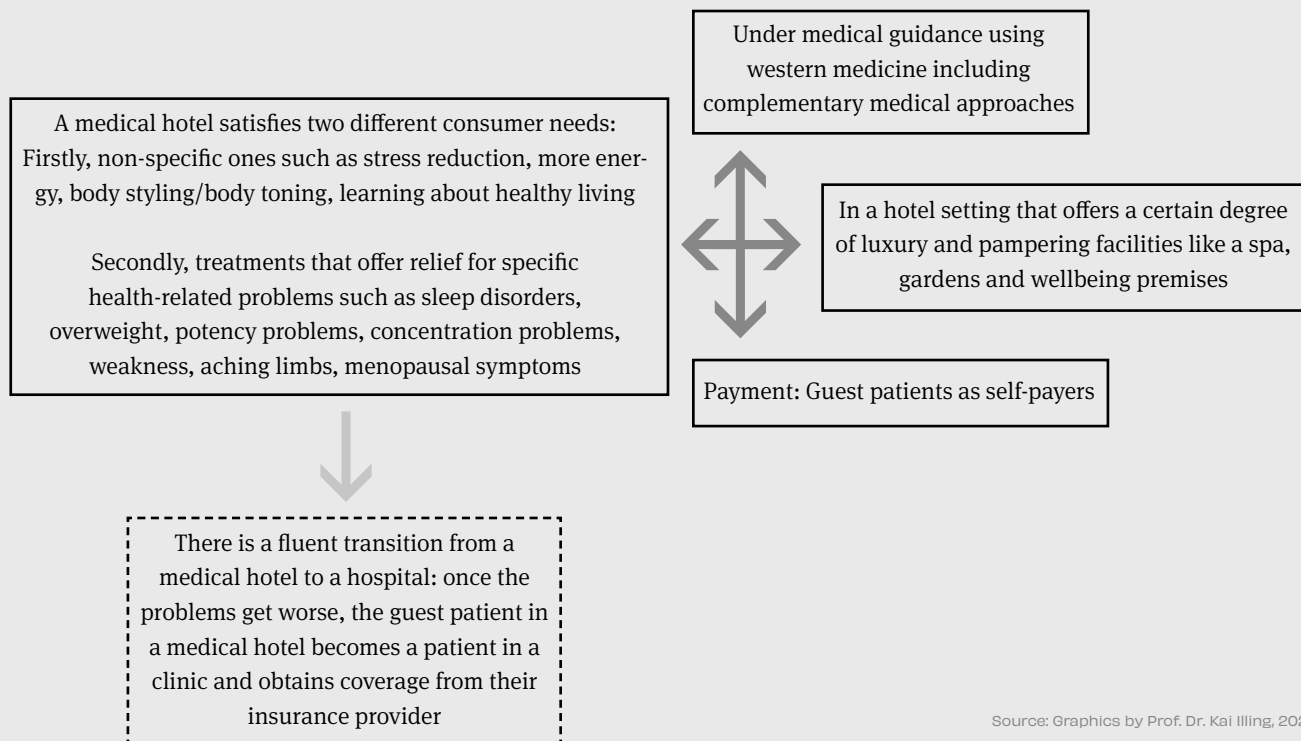
- general problems (menopausal problems, decreasing libido, aging, back pain)
- non-specific needs (energy, invigoration, better performance)

A Role of Medical Hotels in Medical Travel

The following chart can explain the contribution of medical hotels to medical travel:



What a medical hotel stands for can best be shown by the following chart, with the four upper boxes representing the core elements:



Source: Graphics by Prof. Dr. Kai Illing, 2021

MEDICAL SPAS VS. BEAUTY SPAS

Many hotels that call themselves medical hotels have medical guests, but they also attract standard wellness guests who look for beauty care and relaxation treatments. Medical hotels sometimes offer two different spas: one consisting of bath-

ing pools and cosmetic services and another one offering medical services. These companies believe that different spas better separate different target groups. It is understood that medical guests need more discretion and care than regular spa-goers.

Hotel					
Beauty Spa					Medical Spa
Sauna	Fitness	Pool	Relaxation	Treatments (only beauty treatments and caressing massages)	Treatments (with a strong medical focus)
				Delimitation: Mere beauty services are being offered by the beauty spa. Skin-related treatments with a dermatological impact are provided in the medical spa. Relaxation massages are offered in the beauty spa, but those that focus on a clear health related problem are performed by the medically trained therapists in the medical department.	
All areas can be opened for outside day guests if in agreement with the overall strategy of the hotel					Can be opened for outside day guests if in agreement with the overall strategy of the hotel

Source: Graphics by Prof. Dr. Kai Illing, 2021

MEDICAL HOTELS VS. CLINICS

Medical hotels play their role in pre-care or after-care, but guests can also use them without any relation to clinical care. The differences between medical hotels and clinics can be described as a continuum that creates new types of businesses

depending on the service design and the integrated degree of medical elements. There are five main differences between these two health-related types of business:

Medical hotels	Clinics
Non-invasive, preventive, relaxing care, outdoor activities	Invasive care, surgery, ICU, rehabilitation, indoor activities
Strong focus on complementary medicine	Strong focus on Western medicine and surgery
Luxurious facilities, spa, highly emotional design	Clinical style, low emotional, medical ambiance
Often located in a nature-based landscape	Often located in a busy urban location
Staff provides highly personalized care	Staff provides less personalized care

Source: Graphics by Prof. Dr. Kai Illing, 2021

WELLNESS HOTELS VS. MEDICAL HOTELS

Wellness hotels focus on pampering guests who, on average, take, three treatments per day/overnight. The cost of the therapeutic staff totals around 40% of revenues while the spa department costs are about 15% of the total hotel revenue.

Medical hotel guests also average three treatments per day. Although resident medical staff receive higher salaries, staff costs are relatively lower than at wellness hotels. Staff costs amount to less than 40% of all expenses, and costs at medical spas go up to 35% of total hotel and treatments revenues.

Examples of noteworthy medical hotels in Europe

One of the most famous medical hotel chains in Central Europe is **Lanserhof**, based in Austria, which claims to be Europe's leading health center with a focus on regenerative and preventive medicine. The main hotel in Lans and others in Germany and Great Britain are always located in natural surroundings not far from large interconnected urban areas. Lanserhof's medical roots go back to the Austrian doctor, Franz Xaver Mayr, who introduced detoxification of the body with a special diet to cleanse the intestines. This procedure was promoted as a natural fountain of youth and as a means of regulating various health-related disorders. The diet is still part of the medical concept, but many additional procedures help patients achieve a higher level of energy and balance and also strengthen the immune system. Lanserhof combines luxurious hotels and high-end medical treatments with a highly integrative and complementary approach to health. These include non-invasive medical procedures, sports, and cosmetics, offered in the form of packages and single treatments on diagnostics and primary and secondary prevention.

Another medical hotel, **Das Sieben**, also based in Austria, belongs to a chain of special clinics that focus on health in primary and secondary healthcare, with acceptance of health insurance. Its target group is broad since it grants access to non-health-related wellness customers and MICE (Mice Incentives Conferences Events) groups. The

“Siebenmed” medical concept promotes regeneration, strengthening and relaxation while using natural remedies such as mud packs. It offers medical procedures of this kind at affordable prices. This position seems to work well, considering that the hotel has positioned itself successfully in the Central European medical hotel market.

Other great examples is **Lefay resorts** in Italy, with one resort at Lago di Garda and another newly opened one in the Dolomiti region. They offer a sustainable tourism experience, accompanied by stunning nature and views, a holistic approach to health, non-invasive Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) treatments, organic food, and organic cosmetics lines, all in a luxurious setting. In addition, there is a set of ethical principles that all the members of the staff must comply with. The entire hotel system endorses the powerful vision of its owners.

Many medical hotels combine medical and wellness treatments, indicating that both medical and wellbeing issues are essential.

One such well-known hotel is the **SHA Clinic**, based in Spain, near Alicante (SHA means light in Japanese). It is one of the leading medical spas in Europe that continually embraces new technologies, designs, and treatments capable of luring many wealthy foreign guests, including Americans. It also has a macrobiotic concept with a holistic approach, merging natural therapies with the latest non-invasive Western medical treatments. Designed by a famous architect, the SHA Clinic offers a clean and a modern design and is located in a hilly landscape with stunning views of the Mediterranean.



TELEMEDICINE – A COVID-19 ACCELERATED CASE OF DEVELOPMENT

Top reasons why telemedicine does not work

Author: Sherif Hassan, MD, International Healthcare Consultant, Washington DC, USA



Telemedicine, the remote diagnosis and treatment of patients by means of telecommunications technology, is a major component of Digital Health.

Although telemedicine is a word that we are familiar with today, it is widely misunderstood by patients, simply because they did not try it out prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The factors that might be responsible for the underutilization of telemedicine by the public are:

1. It might seem complicated, as the patients are often not very IT literate.
2. Patients may have the misconception that it is expensive, because they assume that it is mandatory to purchase a top-of-the-line mobile device.
3. A fear that telemedicine might adversely affect the quality of care provided and will lead to a fractured relationship with their healthcare providers.

4. Concerns about privacy and possible data leakage or illicit access to their personal medical, financial and demographic data.

Interestingly, an overwhelming number of persons who have tried telehealth were so well satisfied with it that they would like to continue using this service in the future.

It is a different story with the younger generation which is more accustomed to using modern technology. This community viewed the convenience of health evaluations and safety as appealing factors, especially with a view to the lockdown situation and social distancing regulations. These have prompted

them to embrace telemedicine. Users of telemedicine appreciate that they can avoid unnecessary exposure and are able to schedule a same-day appointment or urgent appointment more easily.



Photo: iStock.com/Geber86

At the same time, there are challenges facing healthcare providers that still need to be resolved by governments, payers, insurers and technology providers, which are dealt with in the following:

1. Reimbursement

Getting reimbursed for telemedicine services was problematic for physicians and other healthcare providers in the pre-COVID era. Reimbursement for telephone-only medical consultations was nonexistent. Thus governments, insurers and payers have opted to treat

telemedicine consultations as if they were conducted in a medical practice. Some payers have tried to encourage their clients to use telemedical services by paying for part of the patient's deductible.

2. Lack of integration

If your electronic health records (EHR) system does not coordinate with the platform you are using to provide telemedicine services, it will probably complicate your workflow when processing records.

There was a rapid development of apps that can be integrated into many EHR systems so that healthcare providers can record their established workflow and ensure that the patients' virtual visits are properly documented and updated.

3. Lack of sufficient data for care continuity

Lack of platform integration can also interrupt continuity of care. If a patient receives telemedicine services from one service provider, but chooses another provider or specialist for their next e-visit, the second physician may not have all the information needed for a proper diagnosis. Multiple software programs have been developed to resolve this issue and close the gap in care.

4. Service awareness

Very often, patients are not even aware that telemedicine is available to them. Some major companies like Amazon and Walmart have been doing excellent work in raising awareness of telemedicine among their employees. Insurance companies have been overzealous in advertising the availability of such services to their clients.

5. Patients' lack of technical skills

When patients do not understand how to use telemedicine services, this can lead to a reluctance to use them, thus impairing accessibility. Using a no-download platform where patients can simply click on a link and then see their healthcare provider has been gaining ground quite rapidly due to improved user experience.

6. Expensive technology

Physicians, hospitals and clinics may be concerned about the expenses of telemedicine. The options of bundled services and flat fees along with the spreading popularity of telemedicine should cause expenses to progressively decrease.

7. Privacy concerns

Telemedicine services may be convenient, but they can also provide a gateway to security and privacy issue, while patient data is being accessed via the Internet. The new relevant government guidelines are very strict and require the information gathered by a telemedicine service to be encrypted and every step of the communication with the patient to be secure.

The overall perception of healthcare providers and users, as well as that of other stakeholders, is that telemedicine has unquestionably fostered improved quality of medical care and enhanced the patient experience. The use of wearables and medical devices has led to greater insight into the patient's health status and has paved the way for efficient remote patient monitoring with the help of an enormous selection of appropriate products.

Consumers are now aware that a physical examination is not needed every time you go to the doctor's office.

In conclusion, telemedicine is not only here to stay, but rather will prevail and play a dominant role in the future health care market.



Photo: iStock.com/ipopba

BENEFITS OF TELECONSULTATIONS FROM A GERMAN PERSPECTIVE

Five factors to revive medical tourism

Author: Christian El-Khoury, Head of Consulting, MESC International Patient Service GmbH, Germany

There is no question, medical tourism has taken a dive. The Sars-CoV-2 pandemic has led to restrictions in travel and severe selectivity in hospital operations. There have been numerous suggestions for remedying the situation that medical tourism destinations and hospital providers currently find themselves in. While proposals for measures to curb the damage incurred have been made, little to nothing has been done so far to resume treating international patients.

All this does not mean that hospitals cannot continue to provide value. The potential positive effects of personal and direct outreach to former and current patients in the short and

long term are nothing new. Maintaining a direct line of communication and letting patients know they can count on your ongoing support is always important. However, these measures need to be developed further, and that is where teleconsultations for international patients comes in.

The issues confronting hospitals and patients must be identified and solutions to those issues found. How to maintain medical tourism and cross-border-healthcare activities despite lockdowns and travel restrictions is probably the biggest industry challenge now facing the market.

The lockdowns and travel restrictions cannot be undone, so that a way out of the dilemma must be found. This way can be provided by teleconsultations.

Offering selected digital health services that provide value to the patient is the way to go. There are plenty of patients who once visited a facility and want to return, but are unable to do so due to travel restrictions and regulations. Likewise, there are teams of experts available at the facility who are unable to travel to the patient. Teleconsultations can do the traveling for both the patient and the experts, thus bringing the two together.

This is not the only benefit for international patients and hospitals that can be provided by teleconsultations. Below is a condensed version of an overview of the potential benefits.

While there is no shortage of digital health offers out there, the challenge is how to tailor them to patients' needs.

Telemedicine efforts should aim to achieve continuous provision of value and support, respond to short-term requests and assess cases that cannot be postponed. Offering peace of mind goes a long way, especially in these trying times. It is not about replacing traditional medical tourism; it is about bridging the gap.

Hospitals and medical tourism facilitators need to start off by auditing their medical tourism activities, unless they are already doing so on an ongoing basis. The information that should be extracted includes the most sought after medical treatments, specialists, follow-up routines and challenges. The prospective changes in the doctor-patient exchange resulting from teleconsultation should also be included. All the information thus gained then flows into strategic planning.

One should bear in mind that the technology selected for the teleconsultations will directly impact the strategy and processes that must be implemented. There is plenty out there, so the goal is to find the technology that best suits the organization.

Benefits of Teleconsultations from a German Perspective

1	Avoidance of unnecessary travel	Many of the concerns international patients have can be addressed without a physical examination. Often it is only a consultation or a second opinion based on existing findings and images that the patient is seeking. The patient is thus spared a costly stay abroad.
2	Cost savings for patients and institutions	A telemedical consultation with a doctor is much cheaper than the costs of travel and on-site medical examinations. If a physical examination is necessary, the prior consultation allows targeted planning of the patient's stay, which in turn leads to cost savings.
3	Relief for the local healthcare system	German hospitals and medical centers are generally not overburdened by foreign patients. Nevertheless, operations within these facilities can benefit if international patients have already had a consultation before arrival. This way, treatment plans can be thought through more meticulously. In addition, the patient may be spared unnecessary examinations, which increases confidence in the German health care system.
4	Support of foreign healthcare systems	Often, patients who come to Germany for medical treatment can be treated in their home country without complications. Collaboration between German specialists and foreign clinics can reduce the risk of complications while increasing trust in foreign healthcare systems.
5	Better access translates into more opportunities	One might think that local operators would lose revenue from the treatment of foreign patients if they took advantage of telemedical services. However, this is not the case. And, ultimately, all those involved should strive to put the patients' interests before financial or other irrelevant considerations. Furthermore, the consequences of better access to medical service providers will lead to an increased demand for the providers.

Source: Christian El-Khoury, 2021

EU FUNDRAISING IN MEDICAL TOURISM

In all 27 EU countries, the European Union supports projects and programs in areas such as regional and urban development, employment and social inclusion, agriculture and rural development, maritime development and fisheries and research and innovation. Health programs are also eligible for funding.

Author: Tom Dedek, EU-Fundraiser, Diversity Tourism GmbH, Germany

In the current financing period, which began this year and ends in 2027, a total of EUR 1,074 billion, including special COVID-19 aid of EUR 750 billion, is available.

Most of the funding is in the form of grants, e.g., money provided to companies for specific purposes. There are also promotional loans, which usually offer more favorable terms than loans from the local bank. If collateral is missing, guarantee banks can step in and guarantee a loan.

The EU Commission provide grants directly to public or private organizations and legal entities, such as institutes of higher learning, companies, interest groups

and NGOs. The financial support is made available for research and development, education, environmental protection, consumer protection, information society, energy and transport projects, as well as EU external assistance. Individuals may also receive funding in exceptional cases.

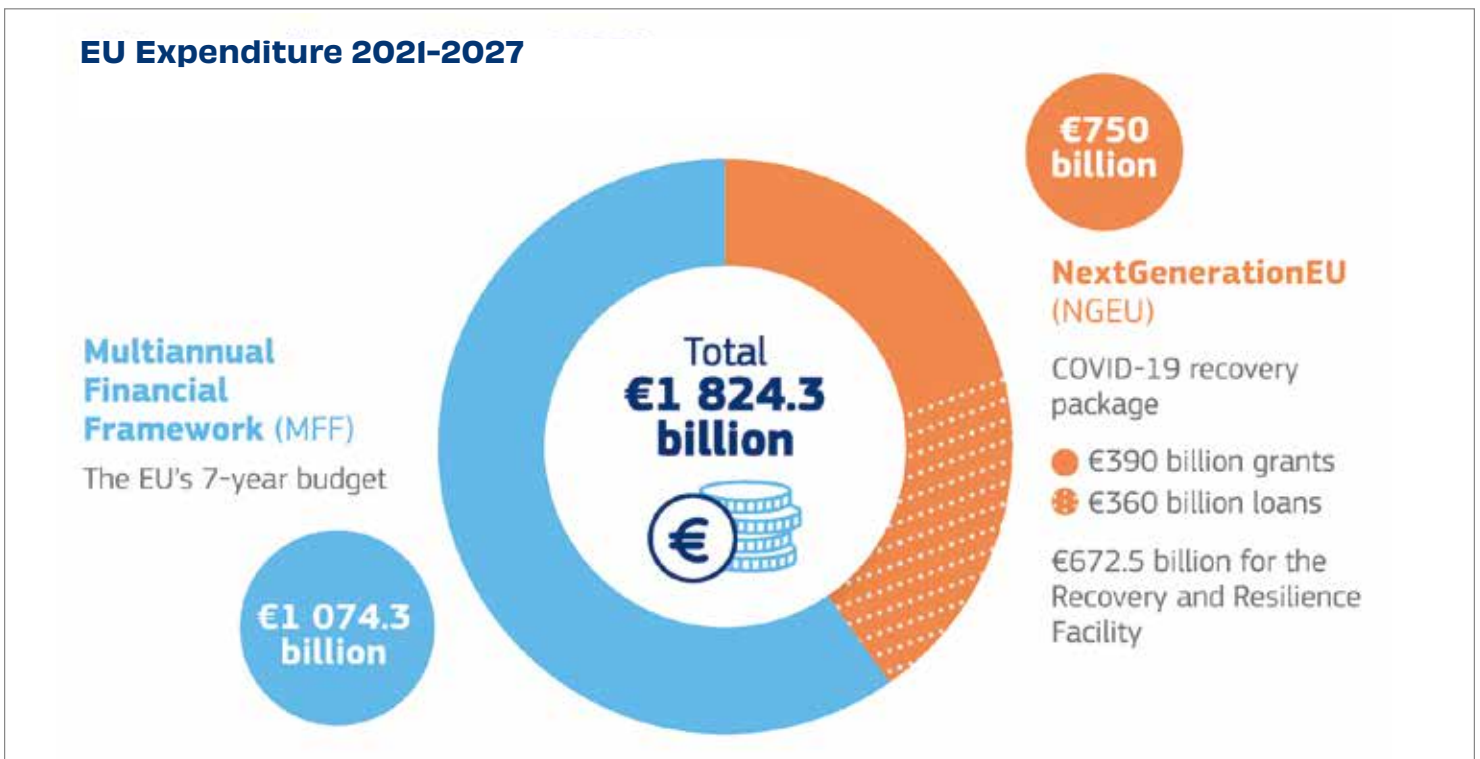
This may include, for example, conferences and training opportunities at the European level, the development of digital services by tourism service providers, the marketing of cross-border regions in the EU or the promotion of development with non-EU markets such as China.

In the area of medical tourism, the EU's regional policy seeks to reduce inequalities between different regions in Europe.

This is done through funding for specific projects, healthcare infrastructure, e-health, health coverage and health promotion programs. The EU's health program co-finances projects aimed at improving human health and helping countries in the EU develop innovative and sustainable healthcare systems. The EU's 2020 Horizon program for research and innovation provides funding for a number of health-related projects.

Since the application procedure is very complex, additional training is usually required for the application and processing processes.





Source: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021

About Diversity Tourism GmbH

Based in Munich, Germany, Diversity Tourism has been the Medical Tourism advisor for ITB Berlin since 2016 and became an official qualified EU fundraiser in 2020.

It is thus able to support medical tourism companies, clinics, service agencies, tourist boards and other organizations working in the medical tourism sector in applying

and implementing EU funding (in the EU and third countries).

www.diversitytourism.com



Health Hotels and a Government Incentive Program:

The Development of Health Tourism in Turkey

Many necessary steps based on a rapid assessment of infrastructure and including targeted regulations are being taken to ensure that Turkey does not miss an opportunity in the field of health tourism. This unique opportunity is attracting the attention of domestic companies as well as of foreign investors with an interest in tourism, health and health tourism.

Author: Anmet Girgin, CEO and founder M2 HTC, Turkey

Health tourism is a growing market segment despite the worldwide economic recession and inflation. Although the tourism sector has been declining, the health tourism sector continues to expand. Health is the core element of this sector, while tourism serves as the vehicle to transport it.

The number of health tourists in Turkey exceeded 140,000 in 2003 and raised to 650,000 in 2019, despite the rapid onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This development, which is boosted by state Incentives, is attracting both Turkish and foreign investors. The “health hotel” is one of the incentives and is attracting the attention of foreign investors, as it enables them to acquire a health facility abroad. Turkey can build further on its experience in the field of silver tourism. The coast of the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea, the warm climate, spas, sports, history and national Turkish cuisine draw foreigners of all ages to Turkey.

Health hotels: Turkey’s new trend

The legislation in force in Turkey applying to spas has led to a new concept, that of a “health hotel”. Tourists can receive health care while staying at a resort, allowing them to combine a vacation with medical treatment or rehabilitation. These facilities are licensed by the Ministry of Health and legally permitted to provide health services, thus the designation as “health hotels”.

These specialized hotels can offer a wide range of services, from physical therapy and rehabilitation to applications in complementary or alternative medicine, in addition to standard hospitality services. This way, guests do not have to leave the hotel and travel to a medical facility for treatment, thus avoiding additional time and costs and making for a more relaxed treatment experience. In Turkey, this is a completely new concept that is spreading rapidly and, at the same time, providing the country with a new product in the tourism and health sectors.

Certified facilities and the government incentive program

International accreditation is another issue of topical interest in the tourism industry in Turkey. The quality accreditation system has expanded beyond state hospitals and larger private hospitals and is gaining foothold in all hospitals, health facilities and hospital-ity businesses. International accreditation organizations such as TÜV Rheinland, EuropeSpa, AACI, GHA, WellHotel, which offer the highest quality standards for health and accommodation facilities in various industries, have begun providing services in the Turkish market through cooperation with M2 HTC.

This makes it easier for health tourists to select the best facility for their needs. Based on this system, potential customers only need to check the accreditation certificates of the facility they plan to go to. Accreditation also acts as a marketing factor that health hotels can use to supplement their marketing activities. This is beneficial in international markets, where they have a competitive advantage compared to other facilities that are not certified.



The incentives provided by the Turkish government are one of the reasons for the favorable development of Turkish companies in the health tourism sector. Government support for international promotion and trade fairs is available to Turkish health and hospitality facilities to a much greater extent than was previously possible. Due to the wide range of incentives and the fact that there is a reimbursement of up to 50-70%, companies have an opportunity to significantly strengthen their position in the international market.

The currently available government incentives include cost coverage for:

- Accreditation fees
- Consulting fees
- Attendance fees for international fairs
- Costs of materials prepared for use at international fairs
- Expenditures on digital infrastructure,
- Printed advertising and other promotional expenses outside of Turkey
- Advertising in the media outside of Turkey
- Advertising in the social media
- Membership fees for international health portals

Hestourex Fair

One of the world's largest trade fairs, the Hestourex Fair focusing on health, tourism and sports, is of great importance to businesses in the health tourism sector in addition to national tourism fairs. The Hestourex Fair is coordinated by the Turkish government and has been taking place since 2017. The fair was first conceived by an NGO known as the Alanya Health Tourism Association (ALSTUD) that anticipated the need for this new combined field early on. In 2019, the Hestourex Fair created a huge remarkable platform for B2B meetings by hosting 5,211 buyers from 165 different countries. The next one will take place March 24th – 26th, 2022.

Benefits offered by Turkish health tourism facilities:

The primary factors driving people to travel to another country to meet their health needs are a lack of availability of treatment or high costs of treatment in their country of residence. Turkey has the following advantages as a health tourism destination:

- Central location between Europe, Asia and Africa
- Well developed tourist infrastructure

- Establish popularity
- State-of-the-art medical technology and a professional workforce
- Health and accommodation facilities to cater to all income levels
- Availability of multilingual services
- Resilience in adapting to new trends and needs
- A robust healthcare system that has kept pace with demand during the COVID-19 pandemic

About M2 HTC

M2 Health Travel Consulting (M2 HTC) facilitates market entry for organizations with international accreditation and supports local industry partners in obtaining support from the government incentive program. In collaboration with its international service partners, M2HTC manages the entire process from a health hotel concept and financial planning to marketing targeted at potential guests.

Digital Transformation:

VIRTUAL FAIRS AND HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEM

Not only ITB has proven how the transformation from a physical fair into a hybrid virtual event can be carried out successfully. HTI magazine talked to Rika Jean-Francois about the challenges and roadblocks.

Author: Rika Jean-François,
Commissioner CSR (ITB Corporate Social Responsibility),
Head of Medical Tourism Segment, Germany



Photo: Rika Jean-François

Rika Jean-François

In March 2020, ITB Berlin, the world's largest travel trade show, was the first international event of our industry that had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. In 2021, the pandemic was still ongoing, so that Messe Berlin had to organize an all-digital ITB NOW, a virtual expo and convention that also included a Medical Tourism component.

Even though ITB NOW can be counted a success when considering the circumstances, we definitely see the need for personal en-

counters. Sales people are not satisfied with purely digital events – exhibitor research has shown clearly that meeting business partners personally is key. Travelling to in-person events might be time-consuming, costly and environmentally questionable, but people long to expand existing friendships, generate new business partnerships and brainstorm over a cup of coffee – this is where relationships are made, trust is developed and deals are sealed. A handshake cannot be replaced.

It seems nearly impossible to digitally replicate the one-on-one feeling of networking of onsite events, even though various online tools are there to facilitate it. Digital solutions need to be supplementary to the live experience; those who cannot travel to ITB should be able to attend remotely. Thus ITB 2022 will be a hybrid event happening live in Berlin from March 9 – 13, complimented by digital services and business days.

Our focus will be to create even more impact for business, live + 365/24/7 online through our website www.itb.com.

Especially educational trade show modules are expected to benefit from a greater digital component, as they can attract a wider audience. Extended trade show hours and extended days are also a big advantage. Once the connection has been made offline, one-to-one engagement can continue effectively online. Trade shows might develop into smaller events, but with an even more targeted audience; mass events will become phase-out models.

Actually, the transition of trade shows to becoming more digital was long overdue – from now on, it will be the new standard and an integral part of organizational strategy. Exhibitors are also expected to work on the virtual feel of their products, so that attendants will turn into participants and “experience” them.

This presents all of us with an opportunity to transform, innovate and learn. Technology can also push scientific progress to address our most urgent environmental problems and improve living conditions: We need to establish binding environmental policies and regulations for the meeting industry. Let's use the opportunity to combine the best of two worlds and make meetings a success for all of us!

Powerful Tool:

ONLINE MEETING

We get closer to each other, establish a higher connection and focus on the person on the screen.

Anke Sponer, HTI News Magazine talked to Leila Krešić-Jurić, Managing Director, HTI Partner, about the major impact of virtual events.

HTI News Magazine:

What are your key learnings for future online meetings?

Leila Krešić-Jurić:

Online meetings are not only a must-have today, but they are here to stay. Networking efficiency is much higher than at live fairs, even though participants are missing getting together in live versions.

HTI organized its first virtual session shortly after the pandemic started as part of the new event set up for the South-East European market. It was simply a panel with international medical travel professionals whose aim was to provide positive examples and ideas for coping with business challenges during the pandemic. It was followed by almost 400 virtual participants who were

very active on the chat, and it was a very special experience given the particular moment.

We plan to keep going virtual but without forgetting the importance of live events such as the European HTI Summit that will be offered again in the European Parliament.

HTI News Magazine:

Do you see any special advantages/ disadvantages of virtual conferences?

Leila Krešić-Jurić:

Never before in my professional career could I have so many high-quality and focused meetings like I had in the recent months. Once virtual attendees are talking face-to-face to someone for the first time, there is no room to hide. All persons involved are here because they wanted to be, and they want to take away

the best from the meeting. People tend to be more open, focus on each others' expectations, listen more carefully, and express themselves more precisely. If listeners do not understand, they ask to get a clearer explanation. There are no huge interferences unless kids are running around, but even that becomes acceptable, and people tend to understand. Nevertheless, people need close contact with people, and I guess that the future will bring the best of both virtual and in-person communication. Human-kind has been doing so forever.

HTI News Magazine:

Any new features of what we have to consider for medical tourism?

Leila Krešić-Jurić:

Digitalization and a sustainable approach to products and services in health travel are not new, but now these issues have been recognized as major components in the sector. Digital tools are becoming almost a prerequisite for sourcing international patients. We learned that if an idea is not digitally presented, it doesn't exist. Thus, without virtual conferencing, trade shows will be indicating little regard for the environment and will be saying good-bye to the marketplace. So, virtual meetings are a truly long-time model for businesses.



HEALTH COMMUNICATION: NOT ALL NEW, BUT MORE CUSTOMIZED

Targeted and modular communication with patients, guests and business partners has become a key success driver for clinics, medical hotels and health destinations over the past years. The pandemic has radically changed consumer habits, technical processes and buying behavior, making it even more important to consider the digital competence and needs of patients in order to communicate more effectively. What role does the subject of health play in tourism? Shall we address them as guests or patients? Here are some insights from a German perspective.

Author: Anke Sponer, General Manager of CSI Consultancy for Sustainable Initiatives, Germany



Anke Sponer

"Host guests, not patients.
Be emotional, not rational.
Sell tourism products, not
medical devices."

The importance of transparency, trust and sense of security has increased tremendously in business-to-consumer communication in the course of the pandemic. Flexible booking terms, free-of-charge cancellation and strict hygiene standards have become the top three drivers of competitive (health) tourism offers. To achieve cost-efficient and effective communication, one must reconsider content, tools, channels, target groups, timing and positioning of existing marketing and press activities to boost relevance along the guest's or patient's journey. Four key learnings should be reflected in the communication strategy, with these always starting from a research-based evaluation of the respective market:

I. Analyze the digital maturity of your target markets so you can leverage the digital competence of your patients

Digitization has changed the health treatment options and the channels available for medical consultations. COVID-19 has also boosted the digital potential of patients, which can easily be tapped by spreading content to influencers, opinion leaders and multipliers such as doctors, insurance companies and online health platforms. Why is that recommended?

Multiple search options

The continuing growth of online health search can be utilized in health communication. Based on current research data, 2/3 (66%) of German consumers search online for health-related information (9. EPatient survey, 2020). They browse using a large variety of digital sources, mainly health platforms, followed by webpages and apps of clinics, doctors' web platforms, but also by using non-health channels like special-interest magazines, and webpages and apps of mass media (Bitkom/ Bayerische Telemed Allianz, 2017).

Patients use multiple channels to search for health apps: Almost half search them themselves, 14% get recommendations from advertisements. Pharmacies and hospitals

are less important (under 5%). Over a period of six months during the pandemic, doctors, families and friends lost influence (doctors: 10% vs 14%, families and friends: 18% vs 22%), whereas insurance companies gained in relevance (23% vs. 13%) (10. EPatient survey, 2020 EPatient survey Q1 2021). Today 3 of 4 smartphone owners use fitness or health apps (Bitkom research, 7/2020).

As regards analog patients, offline channels have increased slightly in relevance: 15% of those got information about health topics via mass media, 18% received recommendations from insurance companies and 12% from doctors. Pharmacies are also less important compared to the search for health apps (9. EPatient survey, 2020).

Changed relationship

Patients tend to research information prior to a medical consultation more often, resulting in a change in the doctor-patient relationship. Even though most doctors have noticed that patients may be uncertain due to web research (90%), 67% of the doctors feel stressed by pre-informed patients, while 42% of doctors appreciated these informed patients. A total of 62% of doctors treat patients with self-diagnosis (Bitkom/Hartmann-bund research, 2021).

Recommendation: In view of these results, doctors should proactively try to attract patients by providing own web or mobile content such as tutorials about specific diseases. This can help reassure patients, avoid misinformation and, at the same time, create demand.

Untapped e-health potential

More than other industries, health tourism providers may benefit from enhanced digital opportunities such as e-health offers and patient retention programs. It is reasonable to implement digital communication prior to a medical treatment to reassure the guests and accompany them via video consultations or chats after the treatment. COVID-19-related fears concerning travel restrictions and hygiene conditions, in particular, can be answered through these communication channels to avoid cancellations and to attract new

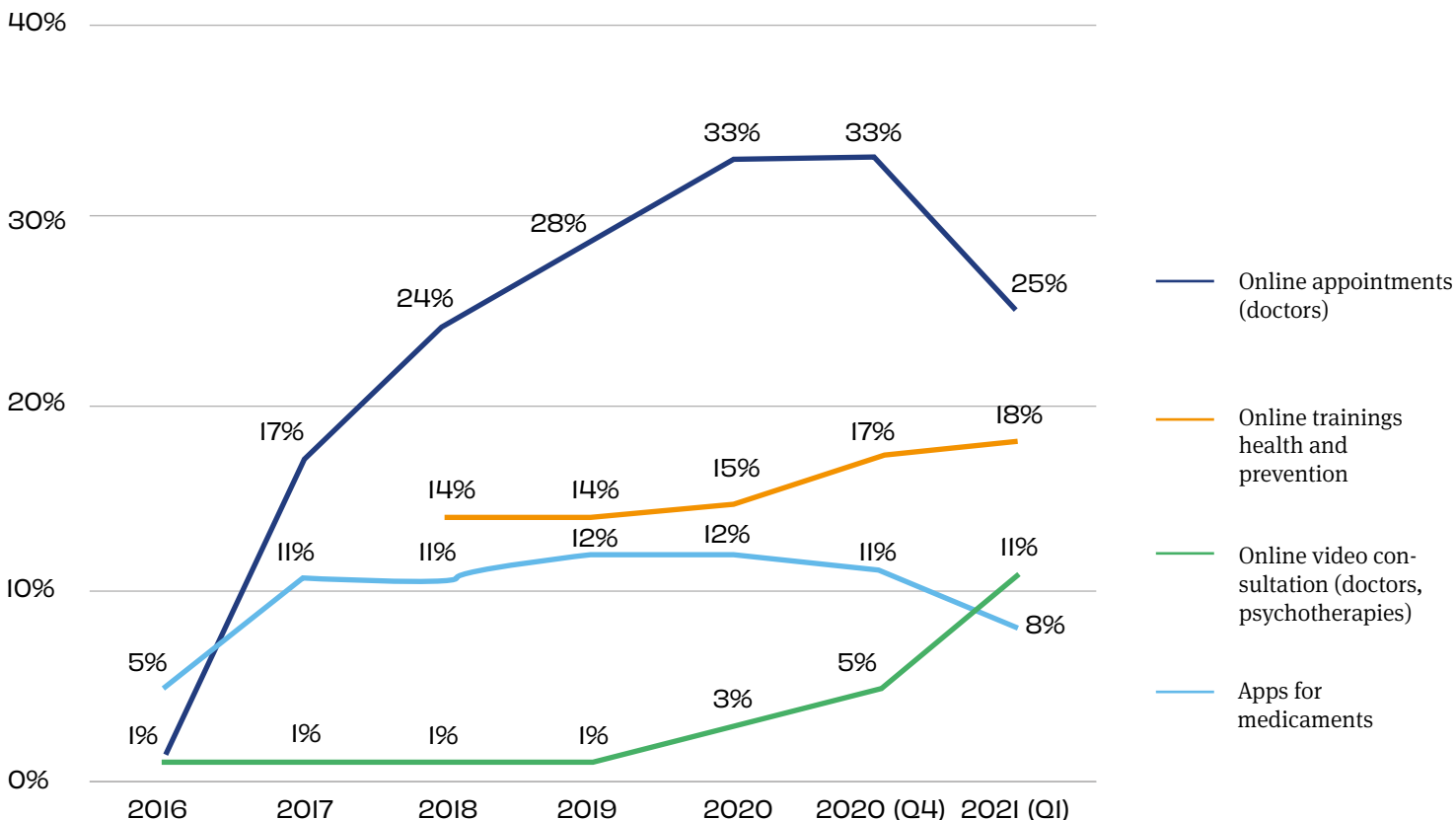
patients. 65% of patients feel better informed and have become more familiar through digital health offers (Bitkom research, 7/2020), but only 5% of them have received an offer for remote therapy offer so far. 76% would like to receive offers from insurance companies, 59% from doctors and 23% from pharmacies (9. EPatient survey, 2020).

While avoidance of a COVID-19 infection was mentioned as the top reason for using a video consultation in 2020 (85%), only 70% mentioned that as a reason in 2021. Over the same period of time, the advantage of a fast consultation via video increased from 54% to 61% in 2021 (Bitkom research, 7/2020). Obviously, COVID-19 has initiated a new trend. However, there is a large gap between patients' expectations and the corresponding video consultations, even though both, patients and doctors, experienced them

favorably. 46% of patients were interested in a video consultation, but only 14% used one (Bitkom research 2/2021). Nearly all of the patients who had a video consultation found it to be a positive experience (96%). 58% of doctors also appreciated this form of communication (Bitkom research 7/2021, Bitkom/Hartmannbund, 2/2021). The data relating to online consultations shows 4 to 5 times more users among patients with university degrees than those without (10. EPatient survey, 2020)

In contrast, doctors' appointments were booked online less frequently, probably due to greater on-site restrictions and because doctors' offices had shorter opening hours (EPatient survey, Q1 2021). Thus it is recommended to address patients according to their digital competence, accompany them throughout the treatment process and keep them engaged.

Development of e-health services in Germany



Source: EPatient Survey Q1, n=5112, EPatient Analytics, 2021

2. Strengthen your positioning by adapting your portfolio to the new demand

The pandemic situation has led to an enhanced demand and new health products. Accordingly, the positioning of health providers should be reconsidered, so that health offers, target groups and company capabilities must be adapted. The perspectives can be differentiated based on the Four-Dimension-Model (Sponer, A., 2021):

The **age dimension:** Health offers and communication channels are differentiated according to age to attract potential patients and guests.

The **life dimension:** Positioning is adapted to the respective target-groups and structured in clusters such as social environment, size of family or stage of life.

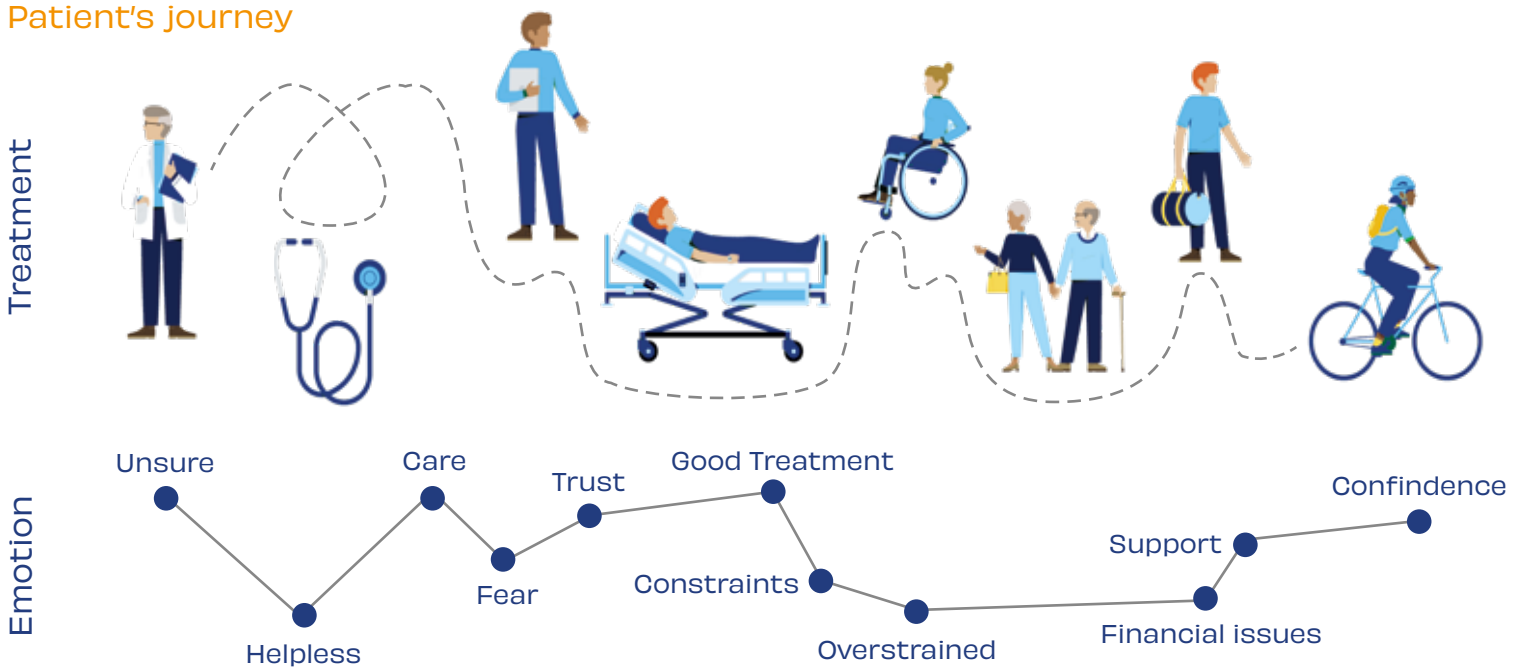
The **indication dimension:** Here, it is imperative to develop precisely what the health offers are about: e.g., chronic or acute indications, medical treatments, wellness packages or specific post-COVID recovery programs such as mental health treatments.

The **season and location dimension:** This considers seasonal diseases, tourist travel times and consumers' work loads to successfully approach health-conscious guests.

3. Mind the patient's journey by reacting quickly and adapting your strategies

Both digital and offline channels should be used along the patient's or guest's journey to boost relevance at the patients' touch points. Based these touch points, the content should be adapted to the multiple communication channels and tools such as newsletters, video tutorials, public relations, webinars, apps and websites. These, in turn, should always be aligned to travel times and disease seasons.

Patient's journey



Source: CSI Consulting based on AOK Bayern – Die Gesundheitskasse, AOK Mein Leben – Die elektronische Gesundheitsakte der AOK, 2021

About CSI CONSULTING

As a one-stop shop for marketing and communication services, CSI combines strategic consulting and implementation of the planned activities for its clients. This makes it possible to open regional markets within Europe to both suppliers and buyers. CSI also publishes HTI News

Magazine and initiates own projects such as a health tourism B2C magazine. The company's over-all focus is on the health care business, the medical and wellness tourism sector and destination marketing. Founder and General Manager Anke Sponer has a degree in business administration and hotel management. She is active in task

groups in health care, marketing and international business associations. Prior to CSI, she ran Aviareps Tourism Germany, headed the German Marketing and Press Department of Disneyland Resort Paris and worked for a radio station, a TV station and a publishing house.

www.csi.com.de

4. Get off the beaten path by changing over to tailor-made communication

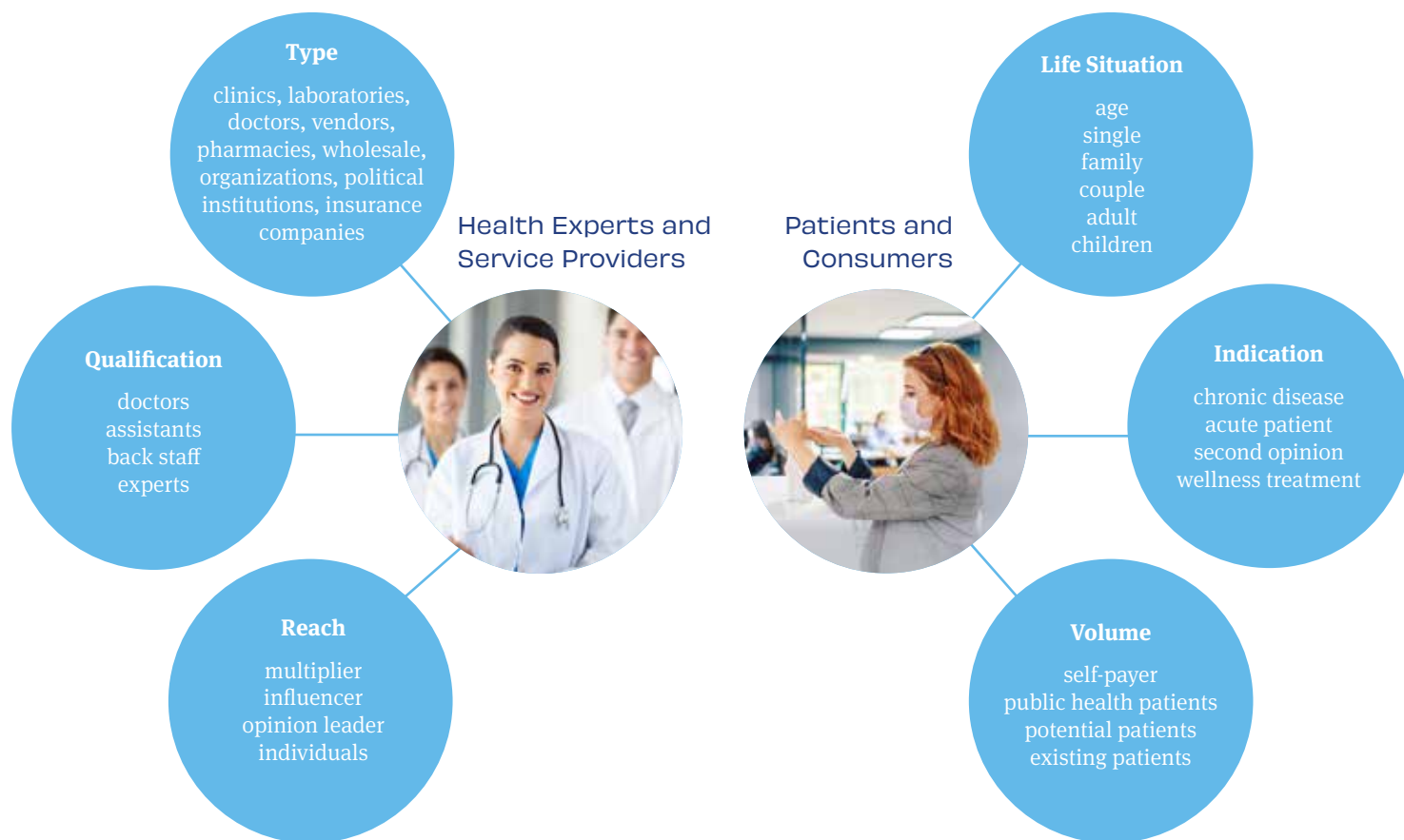
In addition to the distinction often made between patient communication and business communication, contents must be adapted more precisely and target groups must be defined more specifically. Thus, response and relevance increase. The content portfolio varies from classic tools such as advertisements, patient dialogues like interactive tutorials

or blogs, press and influencer relations to on-site activities such as hygiene and service trainings.

Bespoke communication based on qualifications and influence (e.g., doctors, laboratories, pharmacies and political institutions) may be more effective when addressing health service partners and health experts. Communication with patients and guests can be differentiated according to life situation

(e.g., age, single, family, couple), indication (e.g., chronic disease, acute patient, second opinion, wellness treatment) and volume (e.g., self-payer or public health patients, new or existing patient). Urgency and local flexibility determine the frequency and use of health offers. More customer and patient centricity in communication will lead to more long-term relationships.

Tailor-made health communication: Differentiated content and specified target-groups



Source: Sponer, A., Health Communication, CSI Consulting, 2021.
 Photos: (left) michaeljung- stock.adobe.com, (right) iStock.com/Phynart Studio

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HEALTH TOURISM MARKETING

Since the Covid pandemic has halted almost every form of travel, businesses tied to leisure, healthcare, hospitality, wellness and spa destinations are in urgent need of finding ways in which they can relaunch their businesses.

Author: László Puczkó, CEO and Co-Founder Health Tourism Worldwide, Hungary



When could there be a more relevant time to talk about the relationship between health and travel than during a pandemic?

Tourism, travel, and vacations have always been about relaxation, regeneration, escape or indulgence, and we recognize that related activities contribute to the general wellbeing of travelers. Still, it is important to recognize that health tourism connects traveling with the additional benefits of healing, health, wellness, wellbeing and spirituality.

When people travel for the primary purpose of receiving treatments and services to help improve their health and wellbeing, this is “health tourism.” One may travel for medical purposes, i.e., to cure a certain illness, disease or indication. Others visit plastic surgeons and dental clinics in order to improve their looks and self-image. Travelers look for traditional local resource-based treatments and healing approaches, such as Ayurveda or hot springs and healing muds. They seek relaxation, pampering or escape at wellness and spa resorts, or spiritual guidance at holistic retreats.

Current studies by the Wellness Tourism Association, Health Tourism Worldwide and International Medical Tourism Journal indicate a bright future for well-defined, health-improving services and destinations.

More service providers and destinations are seeking to expand or begin the search for health tourism markets. It needs to be stressed that the global markets for health tourism are complex and varied. There is no “one-size-fits-all” formula for success. Developing and improving marketing effectiveness in health tourism depends on careful planning, research and persistence.

The concepts of health and wellbeing are varied, from medical interventions to holistic and spiritual services and rituals. Business catering to this wide spectrum of needs range from clinics and hospitals to lifestyle escapes and retreats. Health tourism includes all activities and services intended to improve the wellbeing of the travelers. Although all travelers can benefit from health-related services, like visiting a thermal/hot spring bath or spa, these travelers are not health tourists. They are tourists who purchase health services.

Questions remain. Of the myriad options in treatments and facilities, which one should businesses choose to be successful? How can businesses merge healthcare marketing and hospitality marketing? How shall a destination organization establish, nurture and market its assets and businesses in health tourism?



Book tip

The Marketing Handbook of Health Tourism provides businesses and destinations with the guidance that facilitates their efforts

to come out of the pandemic era with competitive and value-oriented products and marketing. The case studies help readers understand what is available. The exercises highlight the most important questions and solutions to potential problems. As one of the co-authors, László Puczkó, the co-founder of Health Tourism Worldwide states: *“Health tourism is not a new phenomenon, more like it is rather ancient! Chinese emperors, Indian maharajas, Roman emperors or Greek warrior all traveled for health purposes. What is different is where we go and what kind of services and treatments we seek.”*

As Irving Stackpole of Stackpole & Associates stresses, *“Health tourism is a set of regional markets for specific types of services, so focusing is extremely important. The Handbook describes how to do this, with case studies and exercises to help cement the foundations of success in any region or market.”*

Marketing Handbook for Health Tourism, László Puczkó, Irving Stackpole, 2021

Multilingual Patient Care:

LINGATEL – PERSONAL INTERPRETER SERVICE

A custom-made and simple solution for overcoming language barriers with the LingaTel Personal Interpreter service, for health tourism service providers. Individualized and available 24/7 in any language at any location.

Advertorial: Tamara Matthäi, LingaTel, Germany

Patients' communication in their native language provides a high level of security and increases trust from the very beginning. Offering a professional service that guarantees that a qualified interpreter on demand be at a patient's disposal within 60 seconds on the phone is an added value for every provider in the health tourism industry.

LingaTel's Personal Interpreter Service provides access to specially trained interpreters, available at any time and from anywhere simply by telephone. This Personal Interpreter can be used by the health tourism service provider, as well as by the patients and their relatives. The Personal Interpreter is available for the languages and times configured beforehand.

Once configured, the procedure is simple:

Dial the phone number of the corresponding language to reach your Personal Interpreter.

- Enter your individual PIN code.
- Continue the call via your phone loudspeaker or a three-party conference call.

LingaTel Personal Interpreter – fast – individualized – simple regardless of location.



Photo: iStock.com/jscythier5

LingaTel 

PERSONAL INTERPRETER SERVICE

MULTILINGUAL PATIENT CARE

Custom-made and simple solution for overcoming language barriers with the LingaTel Personal Interpreter service, for health tourism service providers.

Regardless of location, individualized, available 24/7 in any language.

www.lingatel.de/en/



Science Insights:

CONSTRUCTING SUSTAINABLE HEALTH TOURISM OFFERS

Cost driver or promising business model? Prof. Dr. Steckenbauer shares science based insights into how health tourism offers can be developed sustainably.

Author: Prof. Dr. Georg Christian Steckenbauer, Dean of the European Campus and Professor for Economy in Tourism Management, Deggendorf Institute of Technology, Germany



Photo: Prof. Dr. Georg Christian Steckenbauer

Prof. Dr. Georg Christian Steckenbauer

Sustainability and spas – a tricky alliance

Sustainability has become a trendy and widely used term. This is both good and problematic: good because it shows the enormous importance that this term has gained in public perception in recent years; problematic because it reduces an important concept to a mere buzzword. Yet this – very smart and proven – concept, if taken seriously, not only ensures the preservation of our ecological resources but can be an important key to economic success, especially in times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

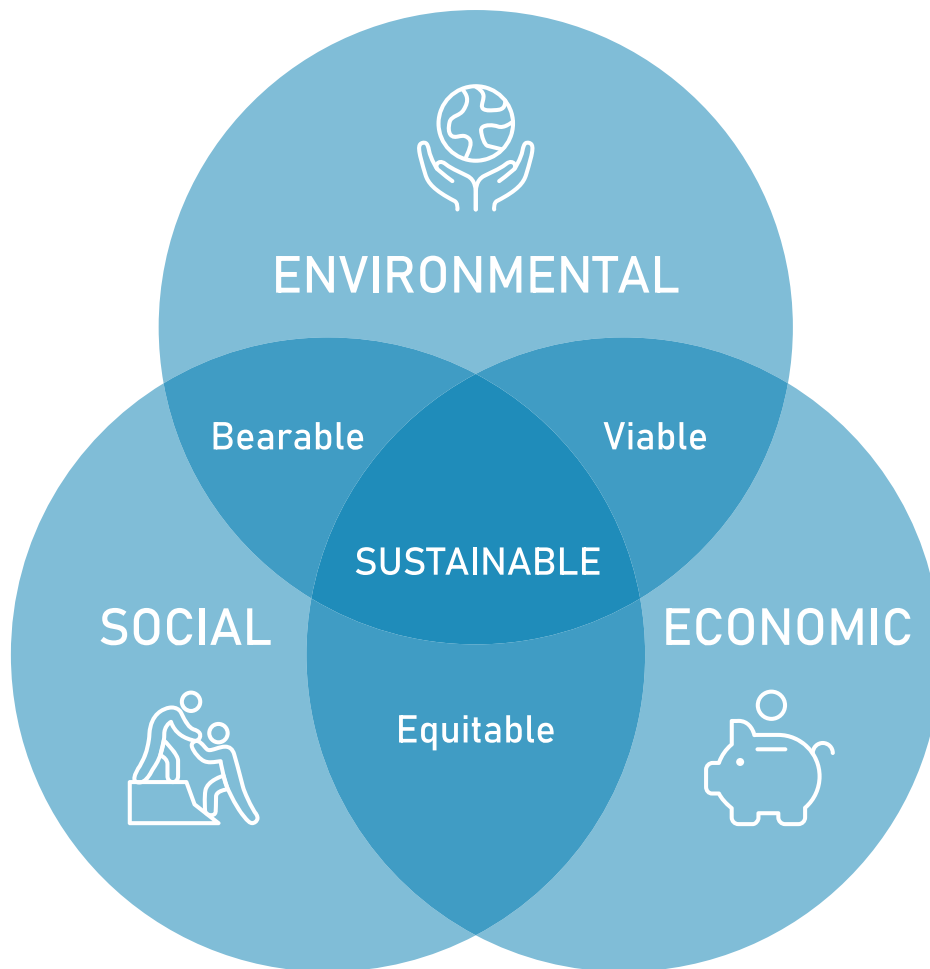
In the field of health tourism, the consequent application of sustainability principles is crucial for long-term success: Health tourism providers very typically use natural resources for applications that are intended to promote the health and wellbeing of their guests.

With this comes the responsibility to handle these natural resources with care, but also the huge opportunity to generate substantial economic benefits for companies and regions through viable business concepts. Thus, the concept of sustainability, which is often seen as an expense factor and a cost driver, can become a success driver. However, this requires that we understand sustainability for what it is – a business model.

Understanding sustainability as a business concept

The principle of sustainability is generally considered to have originated just over 300 years ago. In response to the enormous demand for wood and the lack of reforestation, Hans Carl von Carlowitz, mining administrator in Saxony, recognized the increasing destruction of the forests and the resulting problems for mining. Consequently, in 1713 he postulated the principle of forest sustainability, i.e., that the forest should be used “continuously” and “sustainably” (Carlowitz and Hamberger, 2013). Precisely in order to use it profitably over a long period of time, thereby creating a stable economic basis for the country.

Of course, we have developed and adapted this principle in the last 300 years, particularly since the 1980s, when the increasing exploitation and ruthless destruction of the natural resources of our planet and the accompanying social inequality became undeniable. In 1987, the United Nations reacted by adopting the so-called “Brundtland Report” (actually “Our Common Future”; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1982), which postulates the triad of ecology-economy-society, and thus formulates an equilibrium model of sustainability.



Graphic: iStock.com/Marl_O

This model is the commonly accepted basis for other models, such as the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 (United Nations, <https://sdgs.un.org/>). Finally, in 2017, the United Nations declared the “International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.”

And this is where we close the circle – and can see the reason for this brief historical excursion: Sustainability means much more than mere conservation of nature. Rather, sustainability requires us to use natural resources for economic benefits, but to do so responsibly in a way that generates financial value that leads to social wellbeing, good infrastructure, jobs, fair incomes and social participation. And in such a way that these resources can be used in a “continuously and persistently”.

Health tourism can be a beacon within the tourism industry in terms of sustainable management of natural resources.

Biophilia – use of natural resources as a boost for spa products

Humans are by nature attracted to and feel connected to nature. This is by no means just a romantic notion or reverie, but a fact supported by scientific studies. For example, Edward O. Wilson (1984) states that, in the evolutionary process, humans have developed an “affinity of people for the many forms of life and for habitats and ecosystems.”

This innate affinity of humans for nature is more relevant for health tourism than in any other tourism sector or product: products

that follow the ideas of biophilic design meet an inherent human need for nature. In particular, in modern lifestyles that otherwise distance people from nature in everyday life, the desire for “real” experiences in pristine nature is increasing. Much of the boom in tourism offers in the past few years derives from “natural” or “original” offers, even if they are often staged or fake. Alienation from nature can also lead to psychological problems, particularly in children, such as the aptly named “nature deficit disorder”, as described by the well-known American author Richard Louv (2005).

Integrating Nature into Health Tourism Offers

Health tourism offers can sustainably use nature in three ways:

Nature as a precious, effective and sustainable healing resource

Natural resources are the basis of numerous offers in health tourism: Various spa traditions have been developed based on the use of natural resources for the care and maintenance of health with many typical and well-known terms: thermal and mineral waters; seawater; Kneippism, hydrotherapy and the Healing Water Movement; sauna clay; high altitudes; forests; etc. In the distant and near past such natural resources were often recognized as treasures, and their use was connected with medical indications. In recent years, we have been able to observe a renaissance of such nature-based healing methods.

However, many health tourism providers struggle to sell nature-based offers on the tourism markets. Although there are several reasons, lack of consumer demand for nature-based offers is not one: there is sufficient demand, which will probably grow in view of the current pandemic especially for the treatment of common lifestyle-related problems (stress, sleep problems, back pain, etc.)

The primary reason is that many offers do not meet the requirements of contemporary tourist products. It is not that the natural resources and their positive effect on human health have changed in recent decades, but rather the very lifestyle of people, their values and attitudes and their expectations of how they envision a health vacation: not as the classic and often strict regiment of treatment in an otherwise spartan environment with little service and luxury, but as a total tourist experience with service at the highest level.

It is not solely the rational proof of health effects based on medical evidence that determines the actual purchasing decision. Instead emotions are ultimately decisive. Medical evidence of the health effect is of course relevant and distinguishes the serious offer from those that simply claim to have a positive effect.

Health tourism offers do not have to convince the customer rationally, they have to seduce based on their touristic quality, their appeal to lust for life and the joy of living, while at the same time giving certainty by medical evidence to do something beneficial for one's health. This distinguishes health tourism offers from mere therapy. The demand for offers tailored to these needs means that successful health tourism offers

should be created out of both medical competence and expertise in tourism products. The close cooperation between the medical profession and tourism developers is crucial for success! We provide a detailed analysis of examples of how such processes can be successfully designed, for example in Steckenbauer et al. (2018).

Contemporary health tourism offers, especially in the post-COVID world of health-consciousness, will help alleviate the health consequences for many who are directly or indirectly affected. For health tourism providers it is a big responsibility while at the same time an enormous opportunity to launch serious offers and up-to-date presentations of products on the market that are medically proven and attractive to tourists.



Nature as space for health experiences

Natural environments have always been used as settings by tourism providers: The “beautiful landscape” is literally a synonym for the quintessential tourist quality of a (rural) tourism destination, no matter if it is directed towards hiking, biking or other outdoor activities.

Natural areas are considered “healthy” or beneficial to health if they are perceived as “untouched” or “pristine.” Natural areas are valued and sought after for their positive effects on the body, mind and spirit. A study by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment provides clear results here (BM für Umwelt, 2016).

In recent years, the boom of “forest bathing” in particular shows that these properties are also attributed to spending time in forests. Even if scientifically reliable findings on the direct health effects of the forest on humans are still quite sparse, it is undisputed that spending time in nature stimulates health-promoting behavior; a natural environment promotes exercise and ensures “digital detox,” in addition to positive effects such as lower fine dust pollution or a favorable and pleasant microclimate (cf. Schuh and Immich, 2019).



Photo: iStock, Multiphoto

But most importantly, natural spaces, as long as they are perceived as “natural” (which in reality requires spatial planning and intensive care) are perfect tourist experience spaces that leave strong and lasting impressions due to their effect on all the senses. In short, moving in an attractive natural space and knowing that you are doing something positive for your health leads to intense and sustainable tourist experiences.

Thus, it is essential to frame nature much more than before as an experience space in health tourism offers and actively highlight it. The goal is for guests have intense nature experiences that are unique and thus help build a profile.

Evidence-based spa design – nature as an effective design element

A third aspect of using natural resources sustainably in health tourism offers must also be added: Evidence-based Design considers the positive effects of architecture on people, for example by using natural light and colors to create views complementing psychological findings or controlling and optimizing the supply of fresh air. Biophilic design focuses – as the name indicates – on integrating nature and the positive effects on people into architecture (Kellert et al., 2008).

Especially in healthcare facilities, this insight is a milestone: Buildings are thus no longer just places where healing can take place, but are important elements that can actively contribute to the healing process. New certifications for healthcare facilities have been introduced in many places to formally recognize these properties.



Photo: iStock, Franka

It is surprising that this topic is not yet more strongly anchored in the area of the health tourism facilities, as it perfectly combines the topics of health effectiveness and tourism staging. Doing so would provide strong differentiation and a unique selling position in the (health) tourism markets!

Nature and natural resources can be used sustainably in health tourism in many ways: as a resource with a healing effect on the body, mind and spirit; as a space for positive health experiences; and as a design element in our infrastructures.

In health tourism, nature is thus much more than a mere backdrop: It is both a space for experience and a therapeutic resource. This is a unique opportunity to developing attractive offers that are whole-heartedly committed to the concept of sustainability as a guiding principle and success factor!

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Five Examples of Positive Activities:
Change Management Fueled by a Global Health Crisis

Which positive and unexpected changes in your company have happened due to the pandemic?



Csilla Mezösi
Secretary General of
European Spas Association

1. In some countries, spas have been able to position themselves as the second line for combating corona recovery and have proven to be provide effective support for the overcrowded hospitals.
2. Many members reacted quickly by offering specialized rehabilitation programs with a focus on specific health issues (respiratory and cardiovascular, mental health) for patients who had recovered from COVID-19.
3. Through the exchange of information among our members, we provide very useful information for negotiation with the National Ministry of Health. Many member countries have incorporated examples from other countries and, consequently, have improved the care for their domestic patients.

4. Regarding the EU Recovery and Resilience Plan , ESPA has developed proposals in response to inquiries from the ESPA member states that detail ways for integrating health tourism and balneotherapy successfully in the EU recovery Plan.
5. In many online conferences, as well as at ITB 2021, EU Health Policy Platform and on our own website (www.europeanspas.eu/en/corona-recovery-concept), ESPA will be available to discuss this important topic through the creation of a new specialization for Post-COVID Treatment.



Lutz Lungwitz
President of German
Medical Wellness Association

In evaluating this very difficult time for all of us, the German Medical Wellness Association has seen the following positive results:

1. We are increasingly revising our offers and making them more targeted.

2. The topic of medical wellness, health, and rehabilitation has achieved an unexpectedly high level of popularity, with the topic of health being addressed most often.
3. New partners, who concentrate on intensive medical topics and prepare them for the end consumer, have been engaged.
4. A trend away from the “feel-good spa” towards the “medical wellness spa/health spa” in hotels and other facilities can be observed.
5. In the future, hotels & resorts will focus more on quality and sophisticated treatments and intensify contacts with health insurance companies. Post-COVID is becoming an issue in the hotel industry.

Despite all the problems that the past months have brought us, I personally feel that the concept of medical wellness and the services of the German Medical Wellness Association will receive increasing attention.

The number of “Medical Wellness Hotels & Resorts”, including the renovation of existing facilities in some countries will increase. Countries that focus on on tourism and have sufficient natural resources, such as thermal water, are investing more in the future in this field.

The guest will be happy – Health is becoming a focus of the hotel industry!



Christian El-Khoury
Head of Consulting of MESCI
International Patient Service GmbH

The pandemic definitely took a toll on the industry, which of course is something we also felt. But I can confidently report that we were already in a strong position, which allowed us to easily adapt. The office and working location situation is probably a good example. A couple of years back, long before the pandemic, we decided to enable blanket remote operations and only operate from a back office, and in most cases empowered our staff to operate completely from home. And for the few colleagues who still preferred the office, the remote infrastructure for COVID was set up in a day, as we were already providing it to most of them.

Another positive change is our ability to partake in many events since these have been shifted online. While I am a big fan of traveling to conferences and meeting clients overseas in person, the large adaption of online conferences and meet-ups enabled us to participate in events that might otherwise conflict time-wise. Now it is possible to effectively be at two events at once, which wasn't before.

The greatest thing however was to see how all my colleagues pulled together, supporting each other in every way.

We are grateful to be able to draw some positives from a globally rather dire situation. Witnessing how our company morale stayed positive and resilient in the face of challenges and the broad support our organization provided for each other not only professionally but even where it concerns our private lives has brought us together, prepared for a bright and positive future.

- 1 Members of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA), live in different countries, so meeting online is normal for us. We always love being together, especially at General Assemblies. In 2020 we were able to move online quickly, and this has saved time, money and our carbon footprint.
- 2 With the new platforms made necessary by the pandemic, we have developed new campaigns and activities, and have met more people through online events and exhibitions.
- 3 New online tours and programmes have been part a welcome part of our members' responses to the pandemic, but virtual access can never fully make up for the closure of the thermal establishments and the delays in opening them again.



Nataša Rubeša, BSc
CFO & Board Member of
Polyclinic Rident Ltd.

Nothing is more significant in creating bonds between teammates than a common enemy, and the coronavirus struggle is a perfect example. Though these are very tough times, I may say that nothing unexpected has happened, and one positive has been management's extra time to implement our plans:



José Manuel Baltar Blanco
President of EHTTA

- 4 Trends suggest that people are seeking just what our towns offer: smaller, less crowded places; activities and exercise in the countryside; medical and wellbeing treatments. This message is at the heart of our new Rediscover campaign.
- 5 In my own province of Ourense, we thanked those who looked after us during the pandemic by providing a special edition of the thermal program for key workers.

1. Internal communication improvements – all digital
2. Small group briefings
3. More time for internal training – new technologies
4. Bigger office space and waiting rooms
5. New sterilization process

We have used this time to improve our digital patient management platform to further digitalize our internal communication, and we have gone fully digital with photography and scanning procedures. We have had more time to organize internal workshops and reach a higher level of cooperation and understanding between our departments and teams.

THE LATEST NEWS

Curious about meeting health travel & tourism professionals from all over the world, establishing new partnerships and creating business opportunities? Check out the benefits and join the HTI Network!

Looking for networking opportunities?

Today networking seems even more critical than in pre-COVID times. People are keen to meet and greet peers and create alliances. Professional references are more relevant than before, and personal recommendations are becoming decisive. With this in mind, HTI recently launched a new membership

program for business partners wanting to benefit from a close and known professional network: HTI Network.

It is all about networking and communication, with benefits including subscriptions to HTI products, invitations to attend HTI

events, opportunities to speak at HTI events and publish articles in HTI's digital news and printed magazine, introductions to HTI partners, providers, and buyers, consulting sessions with HTI representatives and discounts on HTI products and services. Curious about becoming a member?

Find out more at <https://www.hticonference.com/hti-network/>

Looking for qualified buyers?

The HTI started the European Buyers Initiative (EBI) in 2016 as a hosted buyer program that aims to gather top health tourism buyers and connect them with medical service providers. It is also a platform where challenges that are unique to European medical facilitation can be addressed jointly. Today, EBI includes more than 1,500 qualified

buyers from all continents interested in doing business with European service providers and attending study trips. In addition, the HTI database contains over 10,000 qualified international agents and facilitators of different specializations. A free-of-charge membership at EBI provides

full coverage of conference passes for HTI events and other benefits. It is open to buyers from all health tourism segments, including tour operators, travel agents, facilitators, medical doctors who refer patients abroad, health insurance companies and employer healthcare benefits providers.

Welcome to HTI on air!

The HTI Conference is celebrating its 10th anniversary! The brand, established in 2011 as a meeting point of experts in various health tourism segments, will have its

„birthday party” as a virtual event called HTI on Air. This will be an opportunity for former and present colleagues, partners and members eager to meet, exchange experiences,

views, and plans to celebrate ... just like any other birthday party. Isn't that the real value of any network?

The event will take place in October 2021.

For more information about the agenda and speakers, stay tuned at <https://www.hticonference.com/>

If you would like to join „HTI on Air” and you have not been part of the HTI Network until now, you still have time to apply for membership at <https://www.hticonference.com/hti-network/>

HTI Services



Conference & Expo



European Buyers Initiative



Digital News



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Magazine



European HTI Summit



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