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## **CONCEPTUAL PRINCIPLES OF FORMING TOURIST PRODUCT QUALITY IN FIELD OF MEDICAL TOURISM**

**Abstract.** *The main factors determining the quality of the tourist product in the field of medical tourism are determined. The quality of health care provision in the field of medical tourism is a multi-component criterion, which is defined on two levels: the quality of the structure and quality of the process. The quality of the structure characterizes the conditions for the provision of medical care, and the quality of technology assesses the process of providing medical care and acts as a direct component of the quality of tourist product in the field of medical tourism.*

**Key words:** *quality, medical tourism, quality of medical care*

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to the World Health Organization, medical tourism has the prospect of becoming one of the most promising sectors in the world economy and will have a significant impact on the health of the population. According to estimates from

various international associations, revenues from medical tourism ranged from \$ 10.5 billion in 2012 to \$ 32 billion in 2019 and will continue exponential growth to \$ 3 trillion in 2025 [1].

The main means of achieving competitiveness of medical tourism is the quality of a comprehensive tourist product.

Since the field of medical tourism belongs to one of the types of tourism, it seems appropriate to use the basic concepts of the quality of tourist product.

The quality of a tourist product is a set of properties of travel services, processes and service conditions aimed at meeting the identified or predicted needs of service users regarding all components of a tourist product. The main criteria for the quality of a comprehensive tourist service areas follows: the quality of hotel services; quality of food services; quality of transport services; quality of tourist excursion service; quality of information provision, quality and range of specific services [2].

In the system of medical tourism, the quality of medical care takes the first place. To determine a single quality criterion, The International Healthcare Research Center evaluates the development of medical tourism around the world based on the multi-component Medical Tourism Index (MTI). The concept of this indicator is based on the statement that the development of medical tourism in the country is possible only on condition of a certain level of the external environment of the medical tourism destination: the general state of the country's economy, security of stay and image, favorable cultural aspects, including a proper linguistic environment for the patient, their representatives and accompanying people [3].

The structure of the MTI includes three sub-indices that make it possible to evaluate the development of medical tourism in the country. Among them, the leading place is taken by the sub-index of quality. This sub-index assesses the quality of care such as doctor's expertise, healthcare standards, or medical equipment. It also assesses the reputation of doctors or hospital as well as internationalization of staff and accreditation of facility. Finally, it also considers the overall patient experience such as friendliness of staff and doctors.

The quality assurance system for medical care is multicomponent, and can be classified into two levels: the quality of the structure and the quality of the process.

The quality of the structure is a component of the quality of medical care that describes conditions for its delivery and is defined on two levels. The first level of quality is the level of the health care institution as a whole: material and technical base, staffing, organization of work, medical service. The conditions for the provision of medical care in the institution can be assessed by the health care institution itself, the health care authority, and the entities that pay for the medical services provided. The most complete evaluation is carried out in the process of licensing and accreditation of healthcare facilities.

When calculating the sub-index of the quality of medical tourism, as a rule, , they take into account the presence of an international accreditation certificate at the health care institution issued by leading organizations, such as the Joint Commission International (JCI), USA; The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards, Australia; Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation, Canada; Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited, Australia; Irish Health Services Accreditation Board now HIQA, Ireland; Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa,

South Africa; Taiwan Joint Commission on Healthcare Accreditation, Taiwan; Quality Improvement Council, Australia; CHKS Healthcare Accreditation Quality Unit, UK. JCI accreditation is considered to be the "gold standard" for assessing the work of healthcare facilities around the world. The basis for accreditation programs is the standards that are developed and constantly updated by the international working group.

Accreditation organizations evaluate the activities of the institution according to the following main groups of standards: organization of self-improvement processes; management activities; general and medical ethics standards; quality and professionalism of medical staff; organization of document circulation; prevention and registration of infectious complications; system for reviewing patients' complaints and compensation for their losses. According to JCI, the work of a health care institution is estimated at 197 basic standards, 368 general standards and 1032 additional indicators [4].

The second level of the quality assurance system for medical care is the level of each health care provider, i.e., an assessment of the professional quality of medical training. The assessment procedure means passing exams and credits after completion of the appropriate form of postgraduate training, as well as the certification of medical personnel.

The World Health Organization notes that in determining the quality of medical care for a particular patient, the four main components must be taken into account: doctor's qualifications, optimal use of resources, risk for patients, patient satisfaction with medical care. The mechanism of quality assurance of medical services comprises the components that provide the quality of medical care and services for patient at healthcare facilities, the quality of goods and equipment.

The system of medical care quality includes, as a separate direction, the quality of technology. The quality of technology is a component of the quality of medical care that describes the process of providing medical care. The quality of technology determines the algorithm of medical care from the moment of diagnosis to the end of treatment and characterizes how optimal the complex of treatment and diagnostic measures for the particular patient was. It is assumed that the volume of executed manipulations should be not less, and not bigger than optimal, and the sequence of their execution is strictly maintained. If more money has been spent on the treatment of the patient than it is necessary, such assistance will not be qualitative, even after achieving good results of treatment.

The quality of technology is evaluated only at one level, i.e. in relation to a specific patient, taking into account the clinical diagnosis, types of concomitant pathology, age of the patient and other biological factors. The quality of the technology itself is a component of the quality of the tourist product in the field of medical tourism.

Thus, one of the main factors determining the quality of a tourist product in the field of medical tourism is the quality of medical care. This criterion is multicomponent and is classified on two levels: the quality of the structure and the quality of the process. The quality of the structure characterizes the conditions for the provision of medical care, and the quality of technology determines the process of

providing medical care and acts as a direct component of the quality of the tourist product in the field of medical tourism.

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