

ANALYZING SERVICEGAPS IN MEDICAL VALUE TRAVEL: A CASE STUDY OF MULTI-SPECIALITY HOSPITAL, COIMBATORE.

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Abstract - This study investigates the service gaps in the Medical Value Travel (MVT) sector at multi-speciality in Coimbatore, India. The research identifies critical challenges affecting international patients, including communication delays, logistical issues, cultural differences, financial complexities, and inadequate post-treatment care. The study employs a conceptual and descriptive design, utilizing qualitative analysis and hospital data from 120 international patients. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to enhance the international patient experience and improve the efficiency of MVT services.

Keywords: Medical Value Travel, service gaps, patient experience, healthcare services, India, Hospital.

1. INTRODUCTION

Medical Value Travel (MVT) has emerged as a significant sector in global healthcare, with India becoming a preferred destination due to its advanced medical infrastructure and cost-effective treatments. However, healthcare providers face various challenges in delivering seamless services to international patients. This study aims to identify and analyze the service gaps in MVT at a leading multi-speciality hospital in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, to propose strategies for enhancing the patient experience and operational efficiency.

2. REVIEW LITERATURE:

Previous research has highlighted several challenges in the MVT sector. Thangavel (2024) emphasized the uneven adoption of telemedicine in Tamil Nadu, which limits its potential for MVT patients. Udayakumar & Narayanan (2024) pointed out insufficient marketing and branding efforts for MVT services, particularly in smaller cities like Coimbatore. Vasanth & Rajan (2024)

noted that domestic health schemes often overlook the needs of international patients. Venkatraman (2024) suggested that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can improve diagnosis and treatment options for MVT patients. Yogeshwaran (2024) highlighted the need for dedicated support desks in hospitals to assist medical tourists.

Other studies have focused on the need for clear treatment packages, promotion of specific treatments like fertility services, the importance of cultural sensitivity, insurance coverage for medical tourists, and standardized quality monitoring systems. Further research has explored wellness tourism, support services for international patients, promotion of traditional medicine, awareness campaigns, accreditation challenges, urban-rural disparities in healthcare access, organ transplant services, language support, digital record-keeping, pricing transparency, access to specialized services, hospital accreditations, branding of alternative medicine, treatment packages, visa delays, travel restrictions, patient care standards, multilingual support, international collaboration, infrastructure investment, patient awareness, post-treatment care, insurance options, quality regulations, legal frameworks, specialized hospitals, communication, coordination systems, visa and travel restrictions, specialized medical personnel, cosmetic surgery, infrastructure, service quality, promotional strategies, hospital capacity, digital records, marketing, medical certifications, communication between providers and patients, and collaboration between hospitals and travel agencies.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a conceptual and descriptive research design, incorporating qualitative analysis and hospital data. The sample included data from 120 international patients who received treatment at Multi speciality

between June 2024 and May 2025. Data was collected from the hospital's International Patient Services Desk, monthly departmental records, and internal documents. Descriptive qualitative analysis was used to identify service gaps and interpret trends in MVT.

4. ANALYSIS:

The study reveals several key service gaps affecting international patients at Muti - speciality Hospital.

- **Communication Delays:** Inefficient communication between hospital departments leads to confusion and treatment delays, negatively impacting patient satisfaction.
- **Transportation Issues:** Limited transport options between airports and the hospital create inconvenience and discomfort for patients.
- **Cultural Barriers:** Language barriers and cultural misunderstandings hinder effective communication and reduce patient comfort.
- **Accommodation Challenges:** The lack of affordable and suitable accommodation near the hospital adds to the financial burden and stress of patients and their families.
- **Lack of Awareness of NABH Standards:** Insufficient awareness of hospital accreditation standards can undermine patient confidence in the quality and safety of care.
- **Insurance Portability Issues:** Difficulties in using international health insurance in India create financial strain and discourage patients from seeking treatment.
- **Food Availability:** The lack of culturally appropriate food options can lead to discomfort and nutritional concerns for international patients.
- **Inadequate Post-Treatment Care:** Limited follow-up services, such as teleconsultation, create challenges for patients managing their health after returning home.
- **Currency Exchange Difficulties:** Issues with currency exchange and fluctuating exchange rates add to the financial complexities faced by international patients.

These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the multi-faceted challenges in the MVT sector.

5. FINDINGS

The study has identified several critical service gaps affecting the Medical Value Travel sector in Coimbatore and Tamil Nadu. These gaps, including communication delays, transportation issues, cultural barriers, accommodation challenges, and others, pose significant challenges for international patients. The impact of these gaps is profound, leading to financial strain, dissatisfaction, and delays in treatment. Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions, such as improving communication protocols, enhancing transportation and accommodation services, raising awareness about accreditation standards, and streamlining financial processes like insurance portability and currency exchange. The recommendations made in this report aim to bridge these gaps, ultimately enhancing the overall experience for international patients seeking medical treatment in India.

6. SUGGESTION:

1. Set up a dedicated communication team for international patients.
2. Provide clear information about treatment, costs, and documents during enquiry.
3. Arrange reliable transport between airport, hospital, and accommodation.
4. Offer multilingual support for better communication.
5. Train staff in cultural sensitivity.
6. Partner with nearby hotels for affordable accommodation.
7. Promote NABH accreditation to build patient trust.
8. Simplify insurance claim and reimbursement process.
9. Tie up with international insurance companies for direct billing.
10. Start teleconsultation services for post-treatment care.
11. Provide referral support for follow-up care abroad.
12. Offer culturally appropriate food options for international patients.
13. Ensure patient-friendly payment and currency exchange support.
14. Create a helpdesk to assist with travel, stay, and treatment queries.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights that while Medical Value Travel (MVT) services at multi-speciality Hospital, Coimbatore, are steadily growing, there are several key service gaps that affect the overall experience of international patients. Issues such as delays in communication, lack of transport facilities, language and cultural barriers, accommodation challenges, insurance difficulties, and limited post-treatment support need focused attention. By addressing these gaps through improved communication, better coordination, and patient-centred services, hospital can enhance patient satisfaction, build trust, and position itself as a leading destination for international healthcare in Tamil Nadu. Continuous efforts to improve infrastructure, patient support, and global partnerships will be essential to strengthen MVT services in the future.

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