



**jamk.fi**

# **Medical Tourism**

Development of Medical Tourism between Finland and Russia

Viktorii Filistianova

Bachelor's thesis

May 2017

Facility Management

Degree Programme in Facility Management

Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu

JAMK University of Applied Sciences

Author(s) Filistianova, Viktoriia	Type of publication Bachelor's thesis	Date May 2017  Language of publication: English
	Number of pages 42	Permission for web publication: x
Title of publication <b>Medical Tourism</b> <b>Development of Medical Tourism between Finland and Russia</b>		
Degree programme Facility Management		
Supervisor(s) Niskanen, Mika		
Assigned by		
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Even though Finland has strong assets and facilities to operate medical care, it is still not known as a popular medical tourism destination. Medical tourism would be rather popular among Russian customers due to various reasons, such as country's close proximity, good quality of Finnish medical services and current needs of Russian patients.</p> <p>The objective of this study was to find out how to develop medical tourism between Finland and Russia. Related issues were considered to look at current situation of healthcare in both countries and learn if the presence of an operator- a contributing factor in marketing, and as a consequence, development of medical tourism</p> <p>The theoretical background includes medical tourism and marketing definitions, information about current health care situation in Finland and Russia and statistics, which describes why Russian customer would choose medical services abroad.</p> <p>In order to come to the identification of the problem and to find possible ways to solve it, the study was based on the mixed method research, featuring qualitative and quantitative research methods. Several options of interviews, as well as questionnaire were carried out with different medical and tourism facility's representatives in Finland and Russia.</p> <p>The results showed that medical tourism in Finland requires the presence of an operator and improved marketing that would increase the interest of potential customers from Russia.</p> <p>The study also led to possible ideas for improving advertising of medical tourism between Finland and Russia.</p>		
Keywords/tags ( <a href="#">subjects</a> )  Medical tourism, health tourism, marketing, operator, Russian customer, mixed method research		
Miscellaneous		

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Research Set Up.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Medical Tourism Definition.....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1. Medical Tourist.....	7
3.2. Drivers .....	8
3.3. Reasons to choose medical care abroad:.....	9
3.4. Development of medical tourism.....	10
<b>4. Marketing.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5. Current situation .....</b>	<b>13</b>
5.1. Finnish Healthcare System .....	13
5.2. Health care in Russia .....	16
<b>6. Research.....</b>	<b>22</b>
6.1. Objectives and methods .....	22
6.2. Method Implementation .....	24
6.3. Reliability.....	25
<b>7. Results .....</b>	<b>25</b>
7.1. Information gathered in Russia .....	25
7.2. Information gathered from Finland, Tampere.....	27
7.3. Further propositions. Medical Tourism marketing development.....	31
7.4. Online marketing .....	34
<b>8. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appenicies .....</b>	<b>41</b>

Appendix 1. Questionnaire for interviewees.....	41
---	----

#### List of Figures

Figure 1. Satisfaction with Health Care in Russia .....	17
Figure 2. Reasons for treatment abroad .....	18
Figure 3. Destinations for medical care .....	19
Figure 4. Treatments of interest abroad .....	20
Figure 5. Criteria for choosing medical care abroad .....	20
Figure 6. How much patients are ready to pay for medical care abroad .....	21
Figure 7. Choice of destination , TAYS research; Saint Petersburg.....	28

## **1. Introduction**

Tourism is one of the biggest dynamic and competitive industry that requires the ability to adapt constantly to customers' changing needs and desires, as the customer's satisfaction, safety and enjoyment are particularly the focus of tourism businesses. People travel around the world for various reasons; fun, work, sightseeing, food tourism, active or leisure time, sports and health.

Travelling for health and wellness care has a long history. People have been traveling for centuries in the name of health, from ancient Greeks and Egyptians who flocked into hot springs and baths, to 18th and 19th century Europeans and Americans who were coming to spas hoping to cure diseases, like tuberculosis (Pickert, 2008).

The history of health tourism in Europe has tended to be based around spas and seawater treatments, mainly because of the large numbers of thermal and mineral springs and sea coasts, but modern medical tourism or as it also being called health tourism nowadays usually refers to people, who travel abroad to get specialized healthcare. Fortunately, in the past years more and more people around the world learn about medical tourism as it is one of the quickly developing parts of tourism industry nowadays, which, according to Flanigan (2009), has been projected to expand globally by 2017.

## **2. Research Set Up**

The purpose of this research is to find out how to develop medical tourism between Finland and Russia. To support the main aim, this study will also look at questions concerning current situation of healthcare in both countries. Learn if the presence of an operator is a contributing factor in marketing, and as a consequence, development of medical tourism .This thesis will also mention what are the operator's duties, during the process working with clients.

The reason why author has chosen this topic is because health tourism is relatively new concept in Europe and hasn't been researched well yet. According to Lunt and

colleagues, despite the fact that there is a keen interest coming from media towards medical tourism subject, the information about the effect of medical tourism for OECD countries, including Finland, is not sufficiently reliable and verified ( Lunt, Smith, Exworthy, Green, Horsfall & Mannion, p.2). Medical tourism in Finland, particularly, does not have enough sufficient data to be able to attract customers from other countries. Though in author's opinion Finland's medical tourism market has a lot of potential in getting consumers from neighbour country-Russia, due to the close location and excellent quality of Finnish healthcare.

### Methodology

This study focuses on development of medical tourism in Finland for Russian clients. Five medical facilities in Tampere, Finland were purposely selected as study areas, as well as one leading tourism agency in Petrozavodsk, Russia.

Mixed method research was used in order to collect and analyze the data. According to FoodRisc Resource Centre (2016), this particular research method is a methodology for organizing the research that involves collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitative (e.g., experiments, surveys,) and qualitative (e.g., focus groups, interviews) research. This approach to research contributes a better exploration and understanding of the research question than either of each alone (FoodRisC Resource Centre, 2016, Mixed methods research).

Quantitative data usually consists of close-ended information, that can be a base for estimating attitudes (e.g., rating scales), behaviors (e.g., observation checklists), and performance mechanisms. The quantitative data can be obtained by using surveys, questionnaires and the analysis be presented through statistically analyzed grades (FoodRisC Resource Centre, 2016, Mixed methods research).

Qualitative data consists of open-ended information which is usually gathered through different types of interviews and observations. The analysis of the qualitative data (words, text or behaviors) usually combines the collected data into categories of information and provides a variety of opinions and ideas gathered during data collection (FoodRisC Resource Centre, 2016, Mixed methods research).

By mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and data, the researcher gains broader and deeper understanding and acknowledgement, while compensating for the shortcomings inherent in the use of each approach independently. One of the biggest benefits of mixed method research is possibility of applying triangulation, using different means (methods, data sources and researchers) for exploring the same question. Triangulation allows to identify aspects of a phenomenon more accurately by approaching it from different advantage points using different methods and techniques (FoodRisC Resource Centre, 2016, Mixed methods research).

This research method was chosen to provide a more broad and full understanding of the research problem than either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone.

In order to gather information, different sources of theory were researched and questionnaire was created. Various types of interviews, including face to face, phone and e mail interviews performed with chosen respondents. The selection of the interviewees was based on their professional activities, which would make it possible to gather topic related information. The respondents have had work experience either in tourism industry or in the field of health. Gained information was collected and further it was analyzed. Results are presented in the Chapter 7.

### **3. Medical Tourism Definition**

Due to the recency of the phenomenon, medical tourism is not a popular theme to discuss, as one of the branches of either international or domestic tourism development. It is a recent example of tourism, with the rapid rise of international travel in search of cosmetic surgery and solutions to various medical conditions, benefitting health care providers, local economies and the tourism industry. Medical tourism is a new niche in the industry, when tourism has always been associated with improved health and well-being, usually through entertainment, rest and relaxation rather than by surgical and therapeutic treatments, that require stay at special medical facility. Often health tourism is used to label medical tourism and the other way around. Some writers have continued to use the phrase “health tourism” to cover all forms of health related tourism including medical tourism (e.g. Garcia-Altes, 2005), and some distinguish “medical tourism” as involving specific medical

interventions ( Connel, 2006) (Smith & Puczkó 2008, 101). "Medical tourism however can have two major forms: Surgical and therapeutic. There is a clear distinction between the two. Surgical, certainly involves certain operations, whereas therapeutic means participating in healing treatments. Surgical medical tourism has been a growth sector since the 1900s and is increasingly being assisted by the internet, agents, and brokers "(Smith & Puczkó 2008, 101).

According t Puczkó and Smith (2008) there is a variety of medical tourism, which ranges from necessary surgery for life threatening conditions (e.g. cancer, heart diseases), to more esthetic, but sometimes necessary practices (e.g. orthodontic dentistry, needful plastic surgeries), to physically non- essential but physiologically boosting cosmetic surgeries. Many people are only discovering medical tourism, as there were frequently concerns about safety, sanitation, professionalism, and insurance. However, increasingly patients are being reassured that many of the institutions (e.g. hospitals and clinics) and the techniques and equipment used are if an even higher standard than they are at home (ibid.,136).

Therapeutic medical tourism differs in some aspects from surgical. It has similar elements, such as medical checkups and diagnostics, but its difference lies in the fact that it often requires a long stay or a repeat visit to the medical facility. Therapeutic tourism tends to use some natural assets that have healing capacity. This healing, however cannot take place during short period of time, while dental surgery could, but requires series of treatments and checkups. Therapeutic trips can, however, be of a post-operational or respirational nature, too, for example taking place in sanatorium or spa. Surgical trips necessitate the availability of a clinic or hospital; therapeutic trips can be based in a medical/ patient hotel. This form of medical tourism can actually cost much less for the guest than a wellness trip, especially if health insurance is funding it (ibid., 103) .

In general, according to Meštrović (2014) medical tourism can be defined as traveling outside the country of residence in order to obtain medical assistance. Worth to notice, that the inclusion of specialized medicine, requiring the presence of specialists such as surgeons, distinguishes medical tourism from wellness and spa tourism.



Wellness tourism means travel to maintain patients' wellbeing and life satisfaction through the experiences of healthy treatments, and has to do with quality of life (Fernandes & Fernandes, 2013).

"It is necessary to refer to illness since it is assumed that people would do anything, including travelling to get their health back or at least improve it. Henderson (2004) differentiates between travel for reasons of wellness (e.g. leisure and beauty spas) and travel for reasons of illness (e.g. medical interventions and health check-ups)" (Smith & Puczkó 2008, 41).

All in all medical tourism is an interesting phenomenon, that connects care of health and enjoyment of travelling. Tourists, so called patients go abroad to check, improve their health, or totally get rid of the disease, they participate in the other's countries' healthcare, and at the same time these people/patients can be attributed to the tourism industry, due to the fact that they go through almost all stages, that any other tourist would go, meaning, that patient experiences other countries' culture, foreign language environment, reflection of the trip.

### 3.1. Medical Tourist

Talking about health tourism above, it is important to identify people, who are using such services. Connel (2011) identifies four types of Medical Tourist. Firstly, medical tourist is a person, who receives treatment for accidents or health problems that occur during an overseas holiday. Secondly, person, who visits a country for medical treatment-unrelated to the trip-and who may also decide on a procedure while inside the country. Thirdly, medical tourist can also be a person who travels abroad mainly for medical treatment but makes incidental use of holiday opportunities and lastly, the one, who purposely goes only to get medical services and ignores any holiday activities (Connel, 2011).

### 3.2. Drivers

K. Pollard 's "model of destination attractiveness" covers the set of factors that help to determine the decision of potential patients, which medical tourism destination they are going to choose . It excludes technology and quality comparisons , and consists of seven key determinants, such as Geographical proximity, Cultural proximity, Destination image, Destination infrastructure, Destination environment, Risk and reward, and Price.

First factor is the geographical proximity, including travel time, ease of airport access and barriers in reaching the destination. The cross border healthcare (meaning patients crossing just the one national border) accounts for the biggest proportion of medical tourism because a short trip in a car, on a train or a plane is free of hassle. People would not like to take long, indirect flights from/to airports, neither going through complicated visa procedures (Pollard, 2012). The geographical proximity factor can be one of the most important one, especially for Russian customers, coming from Karelia, Murmansk or Saint Petersburg areas, as they are located near the borders with Finland.

The second factor is cultural proximity, including language, religion, customs and practices, and food. The neighbour countries may not be culturally similar. For some patients familiarity and similarity with own culture can be a determining factor. There's a large percentage of the medical tourism market which is induced by family and cultural connections. For example, Latin-American US residents travel to Latin American countries and Anglo-Indians travel to India (Pollard, 2012). However this factor may work for Finland- Russia as well. There are many families, who originally come from East Karelia or from Saint Petersburg's areas but nowadays permanently live in Finland.

The third factor is the destination image. Every country has its own stereotypes and it is everyone's choice, either to believe them or not. However these factors are not easy to change; destinations should accept what they are and focus, and develop the strengths and benefits of their locations (Pollard, 2012).

The destination infrastructure factor lets patients know what range of medical or non medical facilities, accommodation places are available at the destination point and how easy it is to orient around there (Pollard, 2012).

Destination environment factor, including climate, tourism attractions, facilities can enhance the attractiveness of the destination (Pollard, 2012). Finland at this point can offer it's pure beautiful nature, that encourages many people to escape from the big polluted cities. The fresh and quite environment only supports the health improving process.

Last but one factor is the Risk and reward. Medical consumers want to examine in contrast different destinations, hospitals, clinics, health providers and health professionals, in order to balance treatment outcomes against potential risks, considering safety and treatment guarantee (Pollard, 2012). According to The 2016 Global Peace Index, Finland is one of the 25 safest countries in the world, as well, as the health care considered to be good (Healthcare in Finland, 2016).

The seventh factor is the Price. Many people believe, that low price is attractive for patients, but for many people cheap price means poor quality of services. It is also good to remember that overall price is affected by other costs, such as transport, accommodation and insurance expenses (Pollard, 2012).

### 3.3. Reasons to choose medical care abroad:

Most common reasons for medical tourism are:

- Disappointment with medical treatment at home.
- Lack of access to health care at reasonable cost, time
- Inadequate insurance and income to pay for local health care
- The rise of high quality medical care in developing countries
- Greater mobility
- A wish to get medical services away from common environment (escapism)
- Growing popularity of getting medical services abroad

Most people think that medical travelers seek cheap and fast medical attention, however McKinsey and Company report in May 2008 concerning medical tourism, demonstrated otherwise. The report states that 40% of medical travelers are in need of advanced technology, while 32% seek better healthcare. Another 15% look for faster medical services and only 9% of travelers go after lower costs as their primary consideration (Health-tourism.com, Medical Tourism Statistics and Facts).

### 3.4. Development of medical tourism

Medical tourism started its history, as early as in 1930's. It became popular among USA and European countries' well-off residents, who wanted to get good quality health services abroad (health tourism.com, The History of Medical Tourism).

Since 1983, staying fit and healthy has been consumers' top priority and, according to the Future Foundation's Changing Lives Survey, will continue to be in the future. The World Health Organization predicts that health will be the world's number one industry by 2022 (Lister, 1999) .

Medical tourism gaining popularity in some countries better than in others, for example, Bookinghealth.com has prepared list of the best medical tourism destinations in 2016, it included India, Singapore, South Korea, Mexico, United States, Costa Rica and Germany.

USA choosing Asia, due to incredibly high insurance and medical services prices in America and low prices but very often 5 star quality medicines in Asia. Germany and Switzerland are very long time known for great quality medical services and different spheres, but the prices are high.

It comes to wonder, why Finland, having great healthcare is not among this list.

The quality of service in Finnish healthcare is granted as good; according to a survey published by the European Commission in 2000, Finland belongs to the top 5 of countries who are most satisfied with their healthcare. In average 88% of Finnish respondents were satisfied compared with the EU average of 41.3% (Healthcare in Finland, 2016). Finland values the good health care.

Likely, that the mentioned above BookingHealth.com top destination research is made, considering global data about medical tourism arrivals. This study, though, is focused particularly on Russian customers.

“ The number of Russians who annually travel abroad in order to improve their health is rapidly approaching 4 million “– said the president of the Russian Association of Medical Tourism, Constantin Onishchenko. “The crisis has affected certainly as people turned their attention to the health resorts in our country, but in order to get a highly qualified help and detailed diagnostics people still go abroad” (Russia.hr, What medical tourism destinations prefer Russians?).

A one of popular medical tourism destination of Russians has been Finland. Every year in Finland are treated about 20 000 patients from Russia. People are attracted by high quality of medical services, transport accessibility ,due to close country proximity, as well as Russian speaking staff and easy procedure of visa issue. Russian patients are very often drawn by possibilities of the early diagnosis of diseases, different complex examinations, treatment of infertility and childbirth. Finnish wellness resorts and SPA-tours are also very attractive (Russia.hr, What medical tourism destinations prefer Russians?). But unfortunately, Finland does not stay among the most leading and popular destinations for medical tourism, Russian customers are also interested in Israel, Germany, China.

#### **4. Marketing**

“Marketing is a customer focus that permeates organizational functions and processes and is geared towards marketing promises through value proposition, enabling the fulfillment of individual expectations created by such promises and fulfilling such expectations through support to customers’ value-generating processes, thereby supporting value creation in the firm’s as well as its customers ‘and other stakeholders ‘processes ” (Kotler,Keller,Brady,Goodman& Hansen 2009, 6-7).

Nowadays every industry needs good advertising, as the world’s markets are very competitive. Marketing in health care can be sometimes confusing and seem to be different, as it is more sensitive industry. Hawkinson (2015) states, that healthcare is

a continuous industry and it is essential to consider the changes and adapt while keeping patients informed. According to Singh (2015) the target market includes patients and families, communities, doctors, medical personnel, hospital staff, and society. Hospital marketing has three functions. First of all, from the hospital's point of view, through analysis of the target market, hospitals can understand the future needs of consumers and establish good management strategy for higher profitability. Secondly, from the consumer's point of view, it provides readily available and vital information to consumers to avoid delay treatment, worse medical condition, and increase medical expenditure. Thirdly, from a social aspect, consumers get good yet affordable medical services ( Singh, 2015).

Hospital marketing can bring many benefits, for instance, to save medical resources and educate the consumers with the correct and healthy information to promote hospital image, still some experts have different opinions, stating, that hospital marketing may reduce the quality of the medical services and lead to competition between medical organization, which may cause unnecessary medical services. The purpose of medicine is to service of humanity. The hospital marketing may inform the consumers with the correct healthy concept and accurate consumers' choices, and promote the quality of medical care ( Singh, 2015).

Singh ( 2015), also states, that hospital marketing promotion has an important role, that helps the hospital to communicate with outward society. Especially in this kind of competitive environment, it cannot be ignored. There are many kinds of hospital marketing promotion. For example, mail clinic hours and schedules to potential customers, free medical consultation, provide free transportation, provide education in public health and hygiene, offer free clinic treatments ( Singh, 2015).

It is important to remember, that the way marketing is done reflects the efficiency of health practice. The factors, such as keeping information updated and true, be transparent about previous customer's experience, offering marketing promotion tools, mentioned above and availability online, should be taken into account, when managing the marketing.

According to Pew Research Center, already in 2013 72% of Internet users were looking online for health information within the previous year. Consumers are

covering the huge amount of information available online, from pricing to patient feedbacks and using it to determine medical decisions, including provider selection.

With so many options for consumers to get health information (both credible and questionable), it's key for healthcare providers to assure potential patients that they are trustworthy (Murphy, 2017).

“Marketing promotion and relation marketing are very important methods for hospitals to improve their competition ability. It is not only can build up hospital image, increase the realization and understanding of consumers about the medical service, improve the customer satisfactions and loyalty, but also can create new customers and get more profits ”(Singh, 2015).

## **5. Current situation**

### **5.1. Finnish Healthcare System**

In order to perform medical services for international patients, it would be a good start to familiarize people with health care information about Finland, since this can be an important factor when choosing a medical tourism destination, so familiarizing potential patient with Finnish Healthcare, mentioning good indicators of high quality- is also a part of marketing.

Author has personally interviewed Ville Helminen, who works as a nurse at Pihlajalinna company (one of the biggest private health care provider in Finland) to tell about Finnish Health Care System. Ville has prepared information beforehand, using his own online sources, such as Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health; Health, Social Services and Regional Government Reform and ChooseHealthCare.fi web pages.

The foundation of Finnish health care system is social- and public healthcare, which is funded by Finnish government. Social healthcare takes care of people’s basic needs to have as good life as possible. Healthcare takes care of person’s illnesses, physical problems, etc. On the side of public healthcare, there are smaller private healthcare units and units that are companies, made by private and the town sectors together.

There is wide social and healthcare network that provides services for money and also ones that provide them for free.

Finnish social and healthcare Ministry makes the laws and makes sure that they are prepared and executed properly. The main orders come from the Ministry and it leads the Finnish healthcare units. It is responsible for the future of healthcare and healthcare politics. It draws the lines of Finnish healthcare politics and prepares most important renovations, guides the preparations and controls these reforms. It makes sure that the whole Finland is connected and guides thru the political processes.

Social and healthcare Ministry is also responsible of the research and development of the healthcare and social network. It is responsible for many different bureaus that supervise the different processes. These bureaus include National Institute of Health, Medical safety and research center FIMEA, Radiance Center STUK and Industrial health care center TTL. Also they take care of different social care ministries.

Regional State Administrative Agencies provide, guide and supervise public and private, social and public healthcare. They evaluate the quality of services and how well those are received by Finnish citizens. Agencies provide permissions to work for private healthcare providers. There are six different Regional state administrative agencies in Finland located throughout the country. Finnish healthcare permission and supervision unit VALVIRA takes care of the authorizations of social and healthcare, alcohol admissions and environmental health.

Providing the Regional healthcare is up to health care districts and towns, private healthcare and different organizations. Towns take care of public healthcare and social healthcare of own regions. Towns can provide the healthcare alone or combined with private providers. Town can buy healthcare services from private units, other towns or organizations. Health care districts are the bigger picture of the regional system and they provide special healthcare services, such as surgical, emergency services, mental healthcare, etc. Healthcare districts have always big University Hospital in the center of the administration. Towns are always responsible to give its citizens healthcare they need. They provide it, buy it from another facility or give people financial help to go to healthcare in private sector or in other city.



As it was mentioned before, Finnish healthcare provides good and quality services, fitting to the top 5 countries, who are satisfied with their medicine (HealthCare in Finland, 2016), however, despite the great health care quality, Finland is not a leading destination for medical tourism and numbers of patients are still very small (Growth of medical tourism to Finland is slow, 2015). Finland has been focused on domestic healthcare for a longest time, missing the opportunity to attract people from abroad. Certainly, different internal health care department issues, as well as visa and insurance difficulties could affect the fact of lacking the attractiveness of Finland, as medical tourism destination. However nowadays these issues can be solved and medical tourism should imply that there is a tour operator or agent involved, organizing the whole trip, including such services as helping with visa and insurance procedures, and offering both medical and non-medical services. In support of, the International Medical Travel Journal's report states that, public hospitals in Finland are interested in caring for health tourists coming from Russia. Many hospitals are looking for different ways of getting Russian residents to travel across the border for medical treatments in Finland. Among measures under consideration to make it easier for foreign customers to find medical care in Finland is the creating a patient agency that will allow organizing travel for both patients and their accompanying family members or friends (Medical tourism from Russia to Finland is growing, 2012).

Due to weak promotion of Finland, as medical tourism destination, Russian people do not know about services they can be offered. A majority of people associate Finland as holiday, accommodation, spa, wellness and shopping country. Every year Finland brings huge amounts of tourists from Russia, so why not to offer a new concept, which will definitely interest people.

In Finland there is some practise of treating international tourists, including Russians, however numbers are very small, and usually people find out about such possibility in their own desperate to get a good health care.

Most common reasons for Russian customer to choose Finland to get medical services are, first of all, lack of good quality medicine in public health care at in Russia, secondly long lines to doctors or high/comparable prices for high quality treatment with less wait time. As well as, many patients would like to stay

anonymous or abstract from their usual environment while getting any kinds of surgeries and rehabilitations (Krasnopolskaya, 2012).

Another important reason for Russians to choose Finland instead any other country is the near location of Finland, this fact, especially refers to citizens of Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Murmansk and Karelia areas. Also, due to recent world situations, people tend to choose safe from terrorism or poor care countries and the quality of non-medical care is as good or better than at home, where they will be treated with respect, not just as a number. Most accept that the troubles of the world - politics and terrorism - increasingly determine where people will and will not go.

## 5.2. Health care in Russia

The protection of citizens' health in Russia is a combination of measures of political, economic, legal, social, cultural, scientific, medical, sanitary and hygienic and anti-epidemic nature aimed at preserving and strengthening the physical and mental health of each person, maintaining his long active life, providing him medical care in case of loss of health (Здравоохранение в России, [HealthCare in Russia], 2017).

State must guarantee of free medical care on a universal basis, but today it is not available for all people. People are forced to use paid health care. The rate of such medical services is increasing. The surveys of personal expenses of the population for medical care conducted in recent years shows that the amount of these expenses is 40-45% of the total costs of medical care (state and personal). More than 50% of patients pay for treatment in hospitals, 30% for outpatient and outpatient care, 65% for dental services. The prices for relatively fast and good quality medicine a quite high and in big cities can be on same level with European medical services prices (insor-russia.ru, Российской здравоохранение: сценарии развития (2007–2016 гг.) [Russian healthcare: development scenarios (2007-2016) ]).

Also due to the reformation of health care, the cut of medical personnel comes to the situation, when people have to wait in long lines to get medical examinations or treatments (Raitseva, 2015).

According to Medshow, 2015 report, presented in International Medical Travel Journal, despite the continuing political situation, Medical Tourism from Russia continues to develop, as Russians continue to research and take health care treatments abroad in major clinics and hospitals around the world. The organizers of The Spring Moscow Medshow, 2015, took the opportunity and conducted the research, using survey, observing the requirements and tendencies of Russian patient nowadays. About 3 000 people visited the Moscow Medshow and 428 individuals participated in the survey.

Some of the results of The Medshow study are presented below:

- How do people rate the National Health Care System in Russia?

60% of the visitors rated Russian healthcare system as 'poor', 36% rated it as 'sufficient' and only 4% as 'good'. (See Figure 1.)

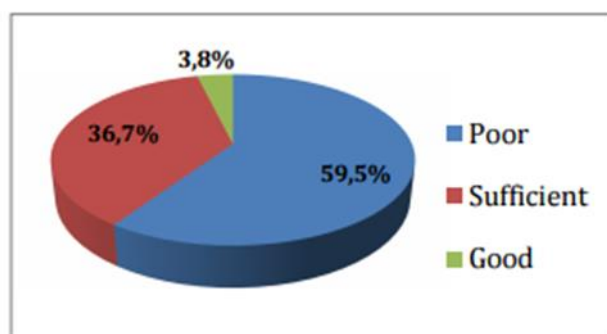


Figure 1. Satisfaction with Health Care in Russia

(International Medical Travel Journal (IMTJ), Medical Tourism from Russia: Autumn Survey 2015, 03 December 2015).

- The drivers for medical treatment outside Russia?

More than half of respondents (52%) stated that the primary reason was their need for a higher quality of treatment and services, 29% stated that their main reason was to be able to incorporate treatment and rest/recuperation. A further 14% indicated that they were looking for treatment abroad to save money and 5% as they were unable to obtain suitable treatment in Russia. (see Figure 2.)

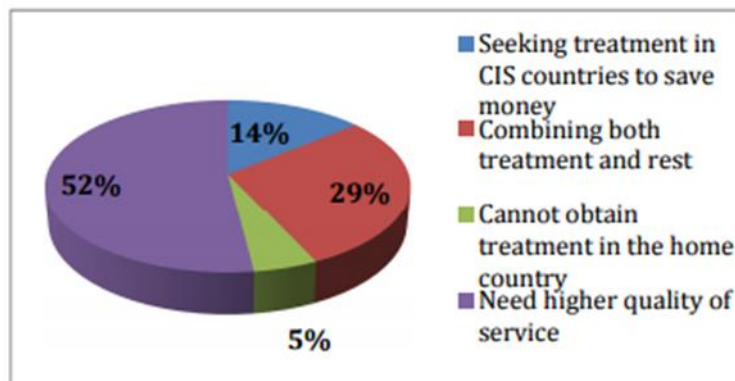


Figure 2. Reasons for treatment abroad

(International Medical Travel Journal (IMTJ), Medical Tourism from Russia: Autumn Survey 2015, 03 December 2015).

- Which countries are of most interest for Russian customers?

With the Russian economic fallout affecting countries' budgets; two countries with long practise on the market continue to lead the list, Germany 29%(+4%) and Israel 22%(+3%). However other countries are also starting to develop medical services for foreigners; among them are Spain 6%, China 6%, UK 5%, South Korea 4%, Japan 4%, India 4%, Cyprus 4%, Switzerland, 4%, Hungary 4%, USA & Austria with 3% and Thailand 2%. In total 39 countries were mentioned as medical tourism destinations of interest. (see Figure 3.)

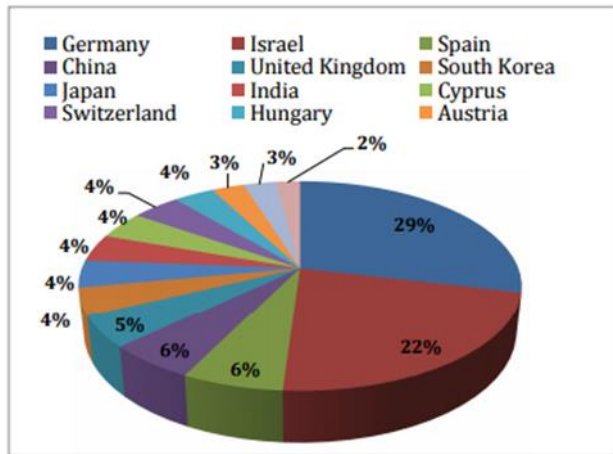


Figure 3. Destinations for medical care

(International Medical Travel Journal (IMTJ), Medical Tourism from Russia: Autumn Survey 2015, 03 December 2015).

- What medical treatments are Russians looking for abroad?

37% of the potential patients indicated that they are looking for specific diagnosis and subsequent treatment as required, 21% of people indicated that they are looking for surgery abroad for a diagnosed condition. Cosmetic surgery at 21% increased by 14%, while 13% are looking for dental treatment outside Russia. A further 8% showed interest in Spa & Preventative medicine. (see Figure 4.)

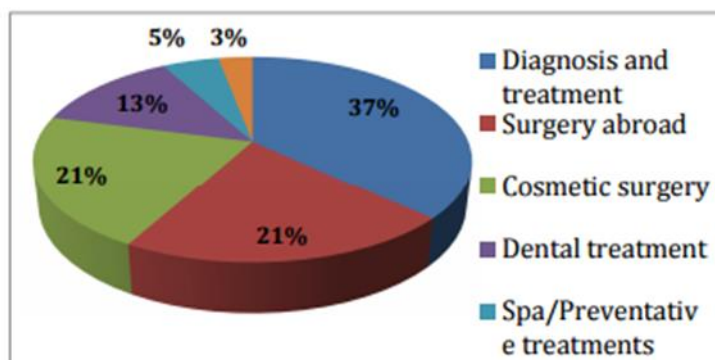


Figure 4. Treatments of interest abroad

(International Medical Travel Journal (IMTJ), Medical Tourism from Russia: Autumn Survey 2015, 03 December 2015).

- What criteria are important when choosing a healthcare provider abroad?

38% stated that distance and convenient location were the primary motivators, 20% regarded the quality and range of services provided. Recommendations from friends and acquaintances accounted for 18%, whilst for 12% the price of the treatment was the primary factor. Only 9% stated that Doctor's recommendations were important whilst 3% stated that advertising was the main factor. (See Figure 5.)

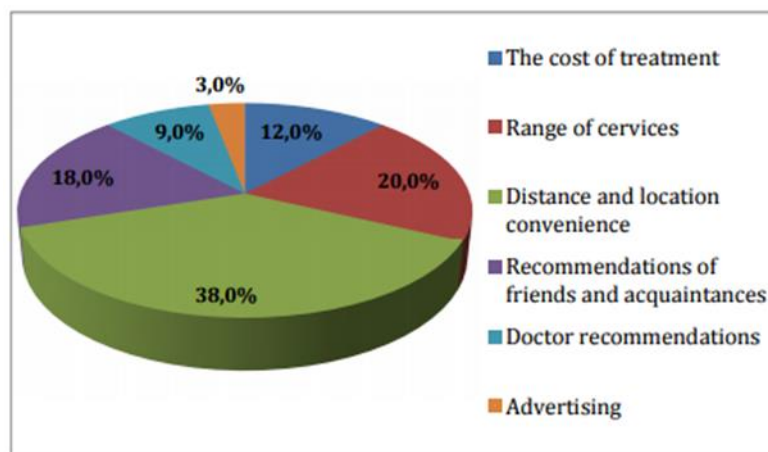


Figure 5. Criteria for choosing medical care abroad

(International Medical Travel Journal (IMTJ), Medical Tourism from Russia: Autumn Survey 2015, 03 December 2015).

- How much do Russians spend on Medical services abroad?

A majority of the visitors (58%) indicated that they were prepared to pay between Euro.10, 000 to Euro.25, 000 which continues to prove the value of this market. A further 39% indicated that their treatments abroad should cost less than Euro.10,

000 whilst 3% advised that they expect to pay more than Euro.25, 000 for their treatment in a foreign destination. This indicates that the total value of the Russian medical tourism market continues to be valued in excess of Euro.1. - Billion! (See Figure 6.)

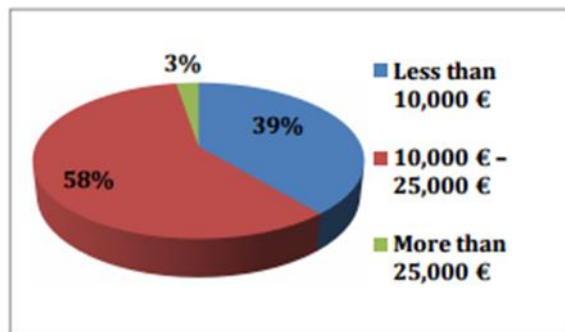


Figure 6. How much patients are ready to pay for medical care abroad (International Medical Travel Journal (IMTJ), Medical Tourism from Russia: Autumn Survey 2015, 03 December 2015).

These factors support the idea, that Russian customers are in need of good quality health care, and they are ready to travel abroad to reach it. In order to successfully perform medical tourism in Finland, potential patients need to be acknowledged with the phenomenon and with Finland, as medical tourism destination.

## 6. Research

### 6.1. Objectives and methods

The aim of this research was to find out if medical tourism is a known phenomenon among Russian tourists, look at the health care at current stage in Finland and Russia and find out how to develop medical tourism between both countries.

There were various techniques used to gather information, such as personal, phone and e-mail interviews with focus groups, which were private tourism agency in Russia, Petrozavodsk, five respondents from specialized hospitals and clinics in Tampere, Finland, as well as, two beginning health care workers from Tampere and Petrozavodsk.

To begin with there was a theory content analysis done, to understand definition of medical tourism, it's strengths and weaknesses, and impact on the country. As the sources for content, different online sites, forums, articles and academic literature were reviewed in three languages- English, Russian and Finnish.

It was difficult to find out the way to gather information about medical tourism from primary sources. Who is a primary source? Where and how to contact them?

Medical tourism contents two industries in one, health care and tourism, so it was decided to contact a tourism agency in Russia, to understand if health tourism is a known sphere, as well, as medical facilities in Finland, as this study presupposes, that Finland is going to be presenting medical services for Russian customers.

The methodology that was suitable to use for this study, was mixed method research, considering, that each interview differ from each other, and could be regarded as either qualitative or quantitative research. This methodology also allowed the research be more flexible and deep.

Mixed methods research (the combined use of quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study) is becoming an increasingly popular approach in the fields of sociology, psychology, education and health sciences (Greene, Caracelli and Graham,



1989; O’Cathain, 2009; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). The overall function of mixed methods is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches together may provide a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than either approach alone (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007) (Azorín, Cameron, 2010).

According to Wyse (2011), Qualitative Research is an exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of main reasons, opinions, behaviors and motivations. It provides insights into the problem and helps to develop ideas or assumptions for potential quantitative research. Qualitative Research is also used to discover trends in thought and opinions, and look deeper into the problem. Qualitative data collection methods vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), different types of individual interviews as well as participations and observations (Wyse, 2011).

Direct face to face interviews are often carried out as part of qualitative research, either by telephone or in person. It’s a more personal approach to getting the views of the chosen participants, allowing them to talk more sincerely and openly about their own opinions (British Library, Qualitative and quantitative research for small business).

Quantitative research is much more structured and so to say formal data collection method than qualitative research; it is usually used to evaluate the problem or phenomenon by achieving numerical data or information that can be transformed into statistics or any other measurable data. Quantitative research method allows to measure different opinions and behaviors and provide information, which presents generalized results from a large group of people. The data can be collected, using different methods, for example, online surveys, paper surveys, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, longitudinal studies, website interceptors, online polls, and systematic observations (Wyse, 2011).

#### Questionnaires and surveys

Quantitative questionnaires are one of the best way to gather numerical or statistic data that provides a bigger picture of the industry. Numerical data is usually gained

by the closed questions, which allow to quickly determine the most popular and similar answers. Usually the results of questionnaires and surveys are presented in the statistics or any graphics and charts, which makes it easier to follow the outcomes (British Library, Qualitative and quantitative research for small business).

## 6.2. Method Implementation

The questionnaire was designed to include both open- and close- ended questions, and basically was the same for all participants, but adapted in some details for each organization, to get more accurate answers and not to achieve generalized information. The questions were directed towards, gathering information about experience working with Russian customers, marketing, especially, need of involving an operator or agent into marketing management, as it was considered as a development tool, in the research problem.

Each respondent had a chance to choose the most suitable way of interview, taking into account and respecting the busy schedule of each one of them.

Some respondents decided to have a personal interview that allowed having relatively free form discussion and get a sincere opinion based on the experiences of the respondents. Other ones were able to answer questionnaire by phone and e-mail. What was surprising all respondents were ready to answer not only to pre made questionnaire but also to additional questions arising during the conversation by phone or e-mail. Also one interviewee presented own quantitative research results, considering medical tourism destinations.

All information, gathered from interviews was collected and written down for further analyzing. Qualitative data was assembled and based only on the words of the respondents- transformed into a more concise text-conclusion, presented in this study. Gathered quantitative data is presented in the figure seven down below in the results chapter.

### 6.3. Reliability

According to Zohrabi (2013), one of the important requirements of any research process is the reliability of the data and findings. Basically, reliability deals with the "consistency, dependability and replicability" (Zohrabi, 2013) of "the results obtained from a piece of research" (Nunan, 1999, p. 14). Receiving the similar results in quantitative research is quite ordinary, due to the fact the data is in numerical form. But getting same results in qualitative research is quite difficult, because the data is personal and based on inner experiences, rather than facts. " To this end, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 288) point out that instead of obtaining the same results, it is better to think about the dependability and consistency of the data" (Zohrabi, 2013). In this case, the purpose is not to get the same results rather to agree that based on the data collection processes the findings and results are consistent and dependable. Merriam (1998, p.206) believes that "the human instrument can become more reliable through training and practice" (Zohrabi, 2013, pp. 259-260, ).

Taking into consideration, medical tourism in Finland is not popular and yet, not fully researched topic, it is not easy to judge if the research is reliable. However all information, considering theoretical part, current situations in health care, methodology, the choice of informants and data analysis has been provided and explained.

The choice of interviewees, their professional field practices and experiences, as well as overall similarity of the responds can support the reliability of the research.

## 7. Results

### 7.1. Information gathered in Russia

The main question of this study was to find out how to develop medical tourism between Finland and Russia

The first step was to get information from one side of the border and understand if there is an interest from Russian people to experience medicine abroad. The information was gathered personally, throughout face to face interviews from two opposite sources: the tourism agency and a beginner doctor in Petrozavodsk, Russia.

The tourism company offers different kind of services around Karelia, focusing, of course, on accommodation and different activities, excursions. As this company keeps connections with a lot of other tourism companies in other Russian cities, especially Saint Petersburg and Moscow the goal was to know, if health tourism is known phenomenon among people, as well as if there is any interest or potential within company's customers.

The outcome of the dialog was very positive, according to agency's director, the medical tourism is well known in Russia, as well as there is a lot of interest, but the problem is there is not much offers, especially about Finland. Medical tourism appears only in theory, but not in practice, there is no feasible information towards customers from Russia, at least not on tourism side of medical tourism.

The second discussion was with a student from Petrozavodsk State University's Medical Department. Alexander I. has been practicing in different hospitals and private clinics around Karelia; the main question was again to find out if medical tourism has any potential and interest within people, but already from medical point of view. According to Alexander's observations, medical tourism is now urgent, especially for Russian people.

*"We have patients traveling abroad, especially people with oncology (concerning chemo and radiation therapies), heart diseases, ophthalmology and prosthesis.*

*Some patients, who come to get medical help at our hospital, saying they would want to get observation and treatment in Finland, but they do not know how to reach Finnish hospitals and is it even possible for them to get medicine abroad"*

The study does not provide more information on the Russian part, since it was not possible to receive information of potential patients, because of the confidential principles of the hospital.

However further down will be presented quantitative results from the Tampere University Hospital, concerning interest towards different medical tourism destinations, including survey results among citizens of Saint Petersburg, Russia.

## 7.2. Information gathered from Finland, Tampere

The next step of the research was to gain information from Finland. Four hospitals and one patient hotel have been chosen to participate in this study.

Respondents were from TAYS-Tampere University Hospital, TAYS Heart Hospital, COXA, Ovumia Tampere and Norlandia Care Patient Hotel.

All these organizations are medical oriented. Tampere University Hospital provides demanding specialized care services to over one million Finns. Services include all medical specialties from emergency care to rehabilitation.

Due to busy schedules of respondents, most of the interviews were made throughout e mails and phone contacts, but this fact did not affect the efficiency of the research. Front office manager from Patient Hotel was available for personal interview. Summarized data from each of the respondent is presented below.

Director of communications from TAYS Tampere University Hospital, Elina Kinnunen in her answer states, that TAYS has a Russian language web page, which is mostly oriented towards Russian speaking people, who live in Finland. Hospital does not promote medical services particularly for Russian customers just yet. However they do have experience of treating Russian patients and see a potential for operating medical tourism in TAYS, as they feel a desire for non-emergency treatments (Kinnunen, 2017).

Also, TAYS just signed a contract with Saint Petersburg's hospital, what brings more possibilities for attracting Russian patients to Finland in the future.

But there is a need of special person, operator so to say, who would take care of checking patients beforehand in Russia, check if all the criteria for treatment abroad are fulfilled (Kinnunen, 2017).

Elina Kinnunen has also kindly presented results of their own (TAYS) research, concerning international patients. People from Saint Petersburg were asked if they would like to come for treatment in Finland. In sample was taken consideration person's social economic state, and possibility to travel outside Russia. Many had already been for treatment in Finland for some accident or sudden illness.

The table shows that about 40% of Saint Petersburg's respondents would choose to go to Finland to have medical services.

The results are not bad, considering there is no wide marketing has done before.

(See figure 7.)

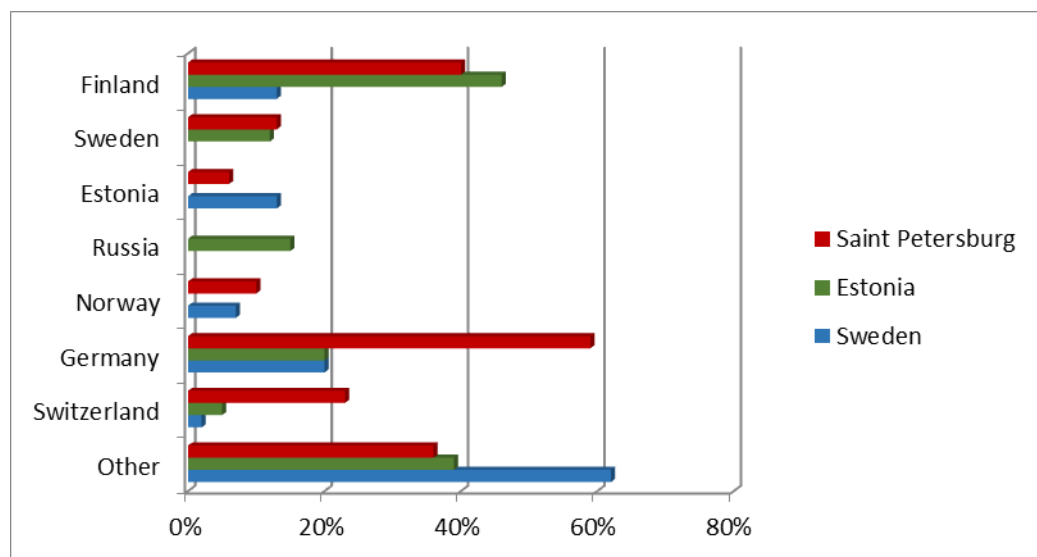


Figure 7. Choice of destination , TAYS research; Saint Petersburg

TAYS Heart Hospital is specializing in the treatment of the heart. The mission of the hospital is to provide good treatment and peace of mind for patients with heart disease. Hospital operates in conjunction with Tampere University Hospital and treats patients who require demanding cardiological care or cardiothoracic surgery.

The hospital offers all diagnostic services and treatment related to heart disease for both Finnish and international patients. (sydansairaala.fi)

According to Ylia Bahtina, service consultant, TAYS Heart hospital cooperates with Finland Care program, which also does cooperate with majority of hospitals/clinics in Finland. Finland Care does general advertising about all Finnish health centers, posting texts in professional medical magazines in Russia and Ukraine, sometimes focusing on particular theme or clinic.

Heart hospital does not market their services particularly for Russian customers at the moment, due to busyness. Web page in Russian language is for Russians living in Finland as well as in Russia and Ukraine. Patients usually find way to Tampere Heart Clinic through internet and if their criteria for treatment are approved, people do all preparations; as well take care of arrival by themselves; however service consultant does take care of translation help for patient (Bahtina, 2017).

Heart hospital has experience of working with Russian customers and showed interest in continuing practice.

Ovumia Tampere is a Finnish high-quality fertility clinic located in Tampere. Respondent told that they would be interested in international customers, but they do not promote their services particularly for Russian customers and have never had patients from Russia. However sister clinic in Tallinn has been specializing more in this case.

Coxa is the largest hospital in the Nordic countries to specialize exclusively in joint replacement operations. With services provided by over 180 top experts in their field, patient safety at Coxa is among the very best in international comparison.

Coxa Hospital for Joint Replacement is committed to providing the best possible care for its patients and to restore their functional capacity to help them go back to enjoying their normal daily lives as quickly as possible. ( coxa.fi, about coxa)

Marketing Director Tähhä R. in his interview answers states, that in many countries and especially in parts of Russia the amount of replacement joint treatment given is low, waiting lines long and also the quality of treatment varies. Thus some patients seek possibilities to have their treatment abroad. Due to these facts, COXA sees

potential in having patients from Russia. Patients find out about hospital mainly owing to word of mouth, specialist recommendations and online. ( Tähkä, 2017)

For advertising hospital hosts some Russian medical journalists every year and as they learn about their results and positive cases with Russian patients they often write about COXA when the topic in their magazine crosses replacement joint treatment. Also hospital does online activities to targeted medical personnel and to potential patients/customers in targeted areas ( Tähkä, 2017).

What comes to organizing the trip for patient to Finland, COXA has both ways possible: patients can do everything themselves or co-op agencies have a location or their “support network” for the patient available in Russian side of border.

According to COXA Marketing Director, the challenge that hospital meets withing Russian customers is the targeting of marketing efforts in an efficient way. ”The market is not actually huge when you calculate all spa visitors out from health tourism numbers and then narrow the numbers down to those actively seeking for specific treatment. Also the fact that patients often feel uncomfortable to travel long distances to get treatment to different culture away from their loved ones narrows down the potential market ” ( Tähkä, 2017).

#### Norlandia Care Tampere Hotel

According to front office manager Tiina Auvinen, 2017, hotel does not promote accommodation particularly for Russians. However the general marketing for target groups in Russia is performed by Finnmedi. In Finland Hotel does advertising through newspapers, radio, Facebook, homepage, roadside flat, online marketing and different fairs. The head department in Oslo,Norway helps planning and making ads with Hotel in Tampere.

Customers usually find out about Hotel through Booking, Expedia. What comes to patients, local hospitals are responsible for reservations. (Auvinen, 2017)

The front office manager also mentions that the biggest challenge within working in Norlandia Care is their different customers: patients, families, relatives, business



customers, groups etc. With Russian customers challenge is the language! (Auvinen, 2017).

### 7.3. Further propositions. Medical Tourism marketing development

Information collected from all sources was analyzed and led to the conclusion that all interviewed confirmed the fact that medical tourism is of interest to both Finnish health care representatives and potential patients in Russia. Every health facility has different challenges, poor or not existent marketing, no specialized staff or language difficulties.

There is a probability of involving a solution that will take care of all these problems. Involvement of a specialized operator that will be engaged in marketing and selection of patients can improve the indicators of medical tourism. Almost such practices are applied by Coxa and Heart Hospital, they also showed better performance indicators with Russian clients. But in order to develop tourism at a broader level, there might be a need of an agent who will be responsible for a larger territory. For example for the region of Helsinki, Tampere or Lappeenranta. So the potential patient would have the opportunity to contact the operator and get advice on what medical center he needs to consider, then the operator can take responsibility for the actions described down below.

#### Operator's activities

As the main question of this research was to find out how to develop medical tourism in Finland and whether there is a need for operator, based on this research it follows that marketing is major concept to be improved and that there is a need for an operator as a person whose duties will include:

- The selection of patients in Russia, familiarization with the history of the disease, consulting with doctors in Russia and Finland
- Helping with language translations. Considering the fact, that not every patient or medical staff would be able to speak same language fluently, tourism

operator must be able to offer translation services, if there is no such in particular medical facility.

Patients and their treating nurses or doctor should be able to understand each other, in order to avoid wrong actions.

- Being responsible for all kind of arrangement between patient and hospital, hotel.

The operator will arrange for initial consultations between patients and foreign doctors, schedule procedures and make all travel arrangements. For the procedure itself, the patient will be contracting directly with the medical provider. Financial arrangements, including necessary deposits, will be finalized before travel itineraries are booked and before the client is admitted to the medical facility. The operator will work directly with the client's insurance provider to determine in advance whether a portion of the treatment and related expenses will be covered.

- Help during organizing the travelling, documentation, visa procedures (sending the invitation to the embassy from hospital). Operator should have information about places, where people can gather all needed papers and help with the process as far as possible.

- Transportation .In cases when customers are not able to arrive to hospital or hotel, tourism agency should help to organize transportation for patient and his/her accompanier. It could be either booking tickets for train or flights, or, for example, cooperation with taxi companies, which can arrange transportation from address to address.

Operator has to explain access map.

- Accommodation for patients and their relatives, friends or co-traveller.

It would be a nice addition to provide a good, comfortable stay for customers which would not remind about hospital ward, either for patient, if he/she does not need to stay in hospital or his/her relatives.

There are also couple hotels in Finland that offer night stay, particularly for hospital patients, for example, Norlandia Care in Tampere and Nordic Clinic in Helsinki. Hotels

are also located in close proximity to hospitals that makes access for patients and their co-travelers easy and less stressful.

- Food

While providing food services, it is important to remember about special diets and allergies, especially for the patient, while he is going through medical treatment.

Operator should control that either customer or/and hospital staff inform about such details.

- Activities for families or accompanying people

Travel operator should inform people who travel with patient about local possible activities, they can get, while patient is going through examinations or treatments in hospital. (In cases that appropriate to leave patient alone)

According to my observations, most of patients, who wish to travel with family, would like his relatives to have a chance to experience another culture and try some other activities, for instance, take a walk around city, shopping and other entertainments.

- Personal assistance

- 24/7 customer support

Analyzing the interviews it becomes obvious, that hospitals, which have good international marketing information particularly for Russian customers, are more successful and effective in attracting patients from Russia. So COXA and TAYS Sydänsairaala showed the best results concerning questions about Russian clients. They already have working experience with such patients and they performed successfully. But, in my opinion, that not only good advertising has produced such success, but also the availability in companies, Russian-speaking workers, doctors and nurses in COXA and a consultant to work with clients in Heart Hospital.

Another confirmation of my main question about the need of operating in medical tourism is the respond from the main hospital TAYS. They say that in order to be able to work with Russia, a person (operator) is needed, who will be the link, for example, between hospitals in Tampere and St. Petersburg.

Considering the interview's outcome, real life experience and my observations, in my opinion, there is place for an agent or operator, who will perform as a link between number of hospitals as in Finland, as in Russia. It is one of the main challenges for health and wellness destinations is how to manage their facilities and services.

I think operator/agent should assume the responsibility for experiencing all stages, that client would go through. Starting from marketing, contacting, choosing the right medical facility, whether it would be a hospital, private clinic, or any special spa, going through consultations with medical professionals, organizational part, support activities for patients and their co travellers and feedback.

Agent's duties are to create an overall attracting features for medical tourism in Finland, advertise particular hospitals and clinics, considering their specialties, for target markets and be a one point, connecting several medical facilities, for example in one city or municipality, which international patient could contact and get useful information for himself and be able to have a choice, whether he would like to continue his/her treatment.

#### 7.4. Online marketing

Due to technological change, online marketing is very important. Online networks, such as web sites or blogs should be managed the way, that allows the potential customer to be informed for both their medical and recreational needs. The medical tourism industry deals with both a serious topic (health care) and a vocational- this is big advantage. Online adverts have to include clear information, as well as photos/pictures for medical theme and, for example, Finnish nature, views, places to visit, accommodation possibilities, etc. Created content must be that people want to read, share and view.

According to Nielsen's latest Global Trust in Advertising report, 92 percent of customers around the world state, that they trust recommendations and feedbacks from their friends and family, above all other forms of marketing. The next most popular ( 70%) source of gathering the company's information is consumer's online reviews. Customers check the earlier patient's experience's feedbacks, because they take planning their health improvement procedures very seriously (Seda, 2014,). It

could be a plus, if the web page have recommendations or feedbacks from previous clients. This kind of feature has COXA's web page. Such inclusion makes information more trustworthy.

Another important detail to think about is that people want to engage with real humans. According to Seda (2014), the key is to make potential customers feel they're receiving personalized and attentive care by a company they can trust before they even start their medical treatments. Being available for your customers most of time and online is the first step. The next is being responsive and informal. Most importantly, earning a consumer's trust, particularly in regards to something as important as someone's health, is essential. Face to face tools such as Skype, FaceTime, Viber or any other text-video applications provide better opportunities for strengthening trust and relationships. Video conferencing lets people have this experience without the expense of travel (Seda, 2014,).

## **8. Conclusion**

Clearly medical tourism has not been that researched yet, however it is a recent example of niche tourism, with the rapid rise of international travel in search of cosmetic surgery and solutions to various medical conditions, benefitting health care providers, local economies and the tourism industry.

It appears that benefits outweigh the weaknesses for medical tourists from Russia by avoiding long waiting lists, the confidentiality of their treatments, high quality medicine and enjoying sceneries of the pure nature of Finland. Unfortunately, nowadays, medical tourism is still focusing too much on low price or factors that the average medical tourist cares nothing about. People, who have faced a disease or any health problems, will do best for themselves or for their close ones to cure it.

For people to be able to solve their problems there should be an access to information, certainly, in the era of technology, it's hard to imagine that people still cannot get enough information using the Internet. But in such a sensitive subject as health, the human factor is important to people, who can sympathize, but at the

same time get advice for making a decision. At this time there is a need of operator, who can be contacted by any person, the elderly, the young, relatives or friends. Operator will create a situation, in which patient will not feel himself uncomfortable or a stranger in different country, the best way to escape these feeling is to be well informed and be able to speak same language, especially what comes to health. But what is the most important; patients would be able to experience great high quality medicine in Finland, and their co-traveller, family or friends to have good time, enjoying nature or city views.

## References

Auvinen T., Front Office Manager, Norlandia Care Tampere Hotelli, interview, 2017

Bahtina Y., service consultant, TAYS Heart hospital, phone interview, 2017

Bookinghealth.com, Top medical tourism destinations, accessed on 22 March 2017

[https://bookinghealth.com/clinics/all?gclid=CjwKEAjw\\_uvHBRDUkumF0tLFp3cSJACAIHMYmrlv\\_TqkLSvFiW6ubZgF4fawI8rC0thEVvpGYNr-RxoCKs3w\\_wcB](https://bookinghealth.com/clinics/all?gclid=CjwKEAjw_uvHBRDUkumF0tLFp3cSJACAIHMYmrlv_TqkLSvFiW6ubZgF4fawI8rC0thEVvpGYNr-RxoCKs3w_wcB)

British Library, Qualitative and quantitative research for small business, accessed on 19 April 2017

<http://www.bl.uk/business-and-ip-centre/articles/qualitative-and-quantitative-research-for-small-business>

Cohen H., 2011, 72 Marketing Definitions, accessed on 21 March 2017

<http://heidicohen.com/marketing-definition/>

Connell J., 2011, Medical Tourism

Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007. Azorín J.M., Cameron r., The Application of Mixed Methods in Organisational Research: A Literature Review, accessed on 17 March 2017

<file:///C:/Users/wallu/AppData/Local/Temp/ejbrm-volume8-issue2-article250.pdf>

Dillinger J., 2017, The 25 Safest Countries In The World, accessed on 29 April 2017

<http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/safest-countries-in-the-world.html>

Fernandes, J.V., Fernandes, F.M.V., 2013. Health and Wellness Tourism Today, accessed on 9 January 2017

<http://www.medicaltourismmag.com/health-and-wellness-tourism-today>.

Flanigan Brian E. F, April 16, 2009, Medical Tourism: Consumers in Search of Value Chicago, IL, accessed on 21 March 2017

<http://medicaltourisminturkey.org/panel/Panel1/3Deloitte.pdf>

Food risk research center, Mixed methods research , accessed on 9 January 2017

[http://resourcecentre.foodrisc.org/mixed-methods-research\\_185.html](http://resourcecentre.foodrisc.org/mixed-methods-research_185.html)

Hawkinson N., 2015, Healthcare Marketing: Why it is Important for Your Practice, accessed on 12 April 2017

<http://www.spine-search.com/blog/2015/04/healthcare-marketing-why-it-is-important-for-your-practice/>

Health-tourism.com, Medical Tourism Statistics and Facts , accessed on 12 April 2017

<https://www.health-tourism.com/medical-tourism/statistics/>

Health and long-term care in the European Union" (PDF). European Commission, 2000, accessed on 15 April 2017

[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_283\\_en.pdf015](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_283_en.pdf015)

Meštrović Tomislav, 2014, What is Medical Tourism?, accessed on 9 January 2017

<http://www.news-medical.net/health/What-is-Medical-Tourism.aspx>

Murphy B., 2017, The Future of Healthcare Marketing: Lessons for All Marketers, accessed on 15 April 2017

<https://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2017/31768/the-future-of-healthcare-marketing-lessons-for-all-marketers>

Institute of Contemporary Development, Российской здравоохранение: сценарии развития (2007–2016 гг.)/ Russian healthcare: development scenarios (2007-2016), accessed on 10 April 2017

<http://www.insor-russia.ru/ru/programs/doc/343>



International Medical Travel Journal, 2015, Growth of Medical Tourism to Finland is Slow, accessed on 15 April 2017

<https://www.imtj.com/news/growth-medical-tourism-finland-slow/>

International Medical Travel Journal, 2012, Medical tourism from Russia to Finland is growing, accessed on 15 April 2017

<https://www.imtj.com/news/medical-tourism-russia-finland-growing/>

International Medical Travel Journal, Medical Tourism from Russia: Autumn Survey 2015, accessed on 15 April 2017

<https://www.imtj.com/news/medical-tourism-russia-autumn-survey-2015/>

Kinnunen E., Director of Communications, TAYS, e-mail interview, 2017

Kotler P., Keller K., Brady M., Goodman M., Hansen T., 2009, Marketing Management

Lunt N., Smith R., Exworthy M., Green S., Horsfall D., Mannion R., Medical Tourism: Treatments, Markets and Health System Implications: A scoping review, p.2, accessed on 19 April 2017

<https://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/48723982.pdf>

Pollard K., 2012, How can we measure a destination's attractiveness?, accessed on 19 April 2017

<https://www.imtj.com/blog/how-can-we-measure-destinations-attractiveness/>

Raitseva Natalia, 2015, Реформы в здравоохранении: результаты, плюсы и минусы/Reforms in health care: results, pros and cons, accessed on 12 April 2017

[https://medaboutme.ru/zdorove/publikacii/stati/sovety\\_vracha/reformy\\_v\\_zdravoo\\_khramenii\\_rezultaty\\_plyusy\\_i\\_minusy/](https://medaboutme.ru/zdorove/publikacii/stati/sovety_vracha/reformy_v_zdravoo_khramenii_rezultaty_plyusy_i_minusy/)

Seda R., 2014, 5 ways to market medical tourism, accessed on 15 April 2017

[https://www.healthcarecommunication.com/Main/Articles/5\\_ways\\_to\\_market\\_medical\\_tourism\\_10052.aspx](https://www.healthcarecommunication.com/Main/Articles/5_ways_to_market_medical_tourism_10052.aspx)

Singh R., 2015 Hospital marketing management basics, accessed on 14 April 2017

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/hospital-marketing-management-basics-ravi-singh>

Smith M., Puczko L., 2008, Health and wellness tourism, illustrated, reprint ed., Elsevier/Butterworth-Heinemann

Tähkä R., Marketing Director, COXA, e- mail interview, 2017

What medical tourism destinations prefer Russians?, accessed on 18 April 2017

<http://www.russia.hr/en/news-on-russia/what-medical-tourism-destinations-prefer-russians/>

Wikipedia.org, Healthcare in Finland, accesses on 9 January 2017

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healthcare\\_in\\_Finland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healthcare_in_Finland)

Wikipedia.org, Здравоохранение в России/Healthcare in Russia, accessed on 12 April 2017

[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%97%D0%B4%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BE%D1%85%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5\\_%D0%B2\\_%D0%A0%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B8](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%97%D0%B4%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BE%D1%85%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5_%D0%B2_%D0%A0%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B8)

Wisker G., 2007, The postgraduate research handbook, 2nd ed. ,Palgrave

Wyse S. E., 2011, blog: What is the Difference between Qualitative Research and Quantitative Research?, accessed on 16 April 2017

<https://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/what-is-the-difference-between-qualitative-research-and-quantitative-research/>

Yeoman I., 2008, Tomorrow's tourist, Scenarios and Trends, 1 ed., Routledge

Zohrabi M., (Corresponding author), Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 254-262, 2013, Mixed Method Research: Instruments, Validity, Reliability and Reporting Findings, accessed on 13 April 2017

<http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/tpls/vol03/02/06.pdf>

## Appenicies

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire for interviewees

Questionnaire:

1)Through surfing the hospital's web page, I made a conclusion, that ...offers medical treatment services for international patients.

Could you tell what fact influenced the decision to advertise medical services for international patients, in particular, for Russian Customers ?

(Ex. Cooperation with Finland Care program ? General interest in attracting Russian market?)

2)How do patients find out about ...?

(Ex. Online/ word of mouth/ other channels )

3)How do You organize the marketing activities ? Which channels do You use?

4)Do You have any agent/agency, who helps patients and/or their co-travelers to organize the trip to get medical treatments in Finland? ( transport, accommodation, medical services)

- If yes, is it located in Russia or Finland?

Or patient takes care of organization the supporting services ( accommodation/ transportation/ translator) himself?

5)Do You have any Russian speaking staff at ...?

6)What , in Your opinion, is the biggest challenge, regarding offering health treatments for international customers nowadays?

(Ex. Language barrier/Within organizing/ preparations, documentation ( treatment story)/ insurance ?)