

## **A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON ATTRACTIVENESS OF GUJARAT STATE FOR MEDICAL TOURISM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Medical tourism is quickly becoming one of the world's fastest growing industries growing approximately 30% a year. Medical tourism presents an opportunity for hospitals to fuel growth by tapping the potential of the NRI (Non Resident Indian) and domestic patient market. To attract NRI and domestic patients, healthcare providers may consider leveraging on both business and clinical considerations. Gujarat is poised to be a leader in the medical tourism development of India. This state, offers tremendous potential to develop medical tourism particularly in its major cities like **Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat, Rajkot and Jamnagar.**

Gujarat has world class medical facilities in its various hospitals, which have set new standards of health care in all disciplines of Modern Medicine. This care is available at very competitive charges so Gujarat has become a lucrative destination for people wanting to undergo the best treatment at cost-

effective rates. For example, an open-heart procedure in the best hospital in Gujarat would cost the patient around \$10,000 as against \$50,000 abroad. Similarly, joint replacement operation in the state country would cost around \$ 4,000 as compared with \$39,000 in the US. A root canal procedure by a dentist in Ahmedabad would cost about \$20 as against \$100 in the US. A comprehensive health screening package could be as economical as \$ 100.

There are excellent multi- specialty hospitals with ultramodern infrastructure which offer attractive options for NRI & domestic patients in particularly Ahmedabad city. Medical facilities in Ahmedabad's hospital is well advanced with world class health facilities, zero waiting time and most importantly one tenth of medical costs spent in the US or UK, Gujarat is evolving into a preferred medical tourist destination. According to a rough estimate, about 1,200 to 1,500 NRIs, NRG's and a small percentage of foreigners come every year for different medical treatments, the majority being cardiac patients and a good number of patients coming for joint replacement, plastic surgery and In-vitro fertilization.

**Key words:** Medical tourism, NRI and domestic patients, Attractive factors.

## **1. BACKGROUD OF THE STUDY**

Medical tourism is quickly becoming one of the world's fastest growing industries growing approximately 30% a year. Medical tourism presents an opportunity for hospitals to fuel growth by tapping the potential of the NRI (Non resident Indian) and domestic patient market. To attract NRI and domestic patients, healthcare providers may consider leveraging on both business and clinical considerations. Gujarat is poised to be a leader in the medical tourism development of India. This state, offers tremendous potential to develop medical tourism particularly in its major cities like **Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat and Rajkot.**

Gujarat has world class medical facilities in its various hospitals, which have set new standards of health care in all disciplines of Modern Medicine. This care is available at very competitive charges so Gujarat has become a lucrative destination for people wanting to undergo the best treatment at cost-effective rates. For example, an open-heart procedure in the best hospital in Gujarat would cost the patient around \$10,000 as against \$50,000 abroad. Similarly, joint replacement operation in the state country would cost around \$ 4,000 as compared with \$39,000 in the US. A root canal procedure by a dentist in Ahmedabad would cost about \$20 as against \$100 in the US. A comprehensive health screening package could be as economical as \$ 100.

Gujarat Govt. want to make the State a preferred global destination for healthcare tourism, the State Government has setting up a State Medical Tourism Council under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister to oversee the implementation of this ambitious policy. The policy targets the Nonresident Gujaratis' who possess umbilical links to the land of their forefathers besides nonresident Indians as well as foreigners who will be extended a 'privileged status' in matters concerning customs clearance, immigration procedures as well as stay and transportation.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW OF MEDICAL TOURISM**

### **2.1 Tourism and hospitality**

**Medical tourism** is the act of traveling to other countries to obtain medical, dental, and surgical care. The term was initially coined by travel agencies and the media as a catchall term to describe the rapid growth of an industry where people travel to other countries to obtain medical, dental, and surgical care while at the same time touring, vacationing, and fully experiencing the attractions of the countries that they are visiting.

A combination of many factors has led to the recent increase in popularity of medical tourism: the high cost of healthcare in industrialized nations, the ease and affordability of international travel, and the improvement of technology and standards of care in many countries of the world.

## **2.2 Medical Tourism in Gujarat**

Medical facilities in Gujarat is well advanced with world class health facilities, zero waiting time and most importantly one tenth of medical costs spent in the US or UK, Gujarat is evolving into a preferred medical tourist destination. According to a rough estimate, about 1,200 to 1,500 NRI's, NRG's and a small percentage of foreigners come every year for different medical treatments, the majority being cardiac patients and a good number of patients coming for joint replacement, plastic surgery and In-vitro fertilization. The medical tourism is increasing at a very fast rate and it is being pursued by a strong vision of the Medical professionals and the Government.

The state has various advantages and the large NRG population living in the UK and USA is one of the major ones. Out of the 20 million-plus Indians spread across the globe, Gujarati's boasts 6 million, which is around 30 per cent of the total NRI population. Non resident Gujaratis or popularly known as NRG's coming to India for personal and medical visits are also marketing the health services available in the state. The specialized clinics and hospitals especially in the private sector is gaining popularity through word of mouth, and this is contributing to the inflow of medical tourists.

Apollo Hospitals, Ahmedabad receives high number of foreign tourists for all types of surgeries and health checkups. People are now aware of the health facilities being provided in Gujarat and knowledge of English language is another major advantage, along with a zero waiting period. The major factor for increasing medical tourists to the state is the low costs for cardiac surgery,

angiography, joint replacements, radiation and other medical services, which are one tenth of the costs incurred abroad.

For instance, joint replacement costs 1.25 to 1.50 lakhs in Gujarat and the same surgery is done for \$20,000 in America. Similarly a cardiac surgery is done for \$4000 in our state and the same is done for \$ 25,000 in the US. Similarly In-Vitro Fertilization costs one-fifth in Gujarat when compared to the USA.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Objectives of research**

In our research, following objectives for medical tourism

1. To find out factors which influenced NRI and domestic patients to travel to Gujarat for medical treatments and find out key factors which are playing major roles in medical tourism.
2. To study consumer perception, expectations regarding medical services provided by hospitals in Gujarat.
3. To find out the key criteria consider by patients to select particular hospital in Gujarat
4. To study available scopes for medical tourism in Gujarat.

#### **3.2 Research design**

3.2.1 **Nature of research:** Problem identification

3.2.2 **Type of research:** Exploratory & Conclusive Descriptive Type Research.

3.2.3 **Type of descriptive research:** Cross section (sample from NRIs and domestic tourists (Patient) at private hospitals).

3.2.4 **Type cross-section design:** Single cross sectional Design (only one series of survey).

3.2.5 **Target population:** Sample (not census)

3.2.6 **Elements:** NRI and domestic tourists (patients)

3.2.7 **Sampling type:** Probability Sampling

3.2.8 **Type of probability sampling method:** Simple random sampling

3.2.9 **Sampling unit:** Gujarat, Ahmedabad.

3.2.10 **Sampling frame:** Database provided by private hospitals and department of Gujarat tourism.

3.2.11 **Sampling size:** (1) Non residents Indian patients: 50

(2) Domestic patients: 50

3.2.12 **Time frame:** MARCH 2011

### 3.3 Research instrument

The research instrument is questionnaire for Non resident Indian & out state patients having only closed ended questions. The research instrument is structured. The data type is interval and likert scale is used to measure attitudes, opinions .Likert scale is a type of itemized scale which is non-comparative scale. Reason for using non-comparative scale is, in our instrument each stimulus object is scaled independently of the other objects in the stimulus set.

#### Data collection plan

Secondary data:-data from hospitals, publication from department of Gujarat tourism, internet.

Primary data:-survey by means of structured questionnaire for quantitative research, interview for qualitative research with NRI tourist and Domestic patients.

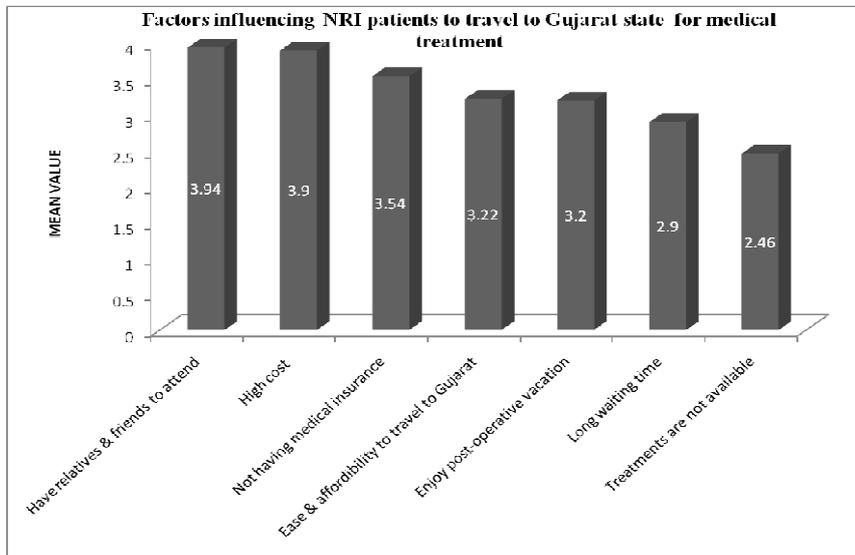
**Data analysis**

In this study the methods of collecting and gathering data from a part of population will be used by the questionnaire structured. The software approach for data analysis in this research will be SPSS.

**4. PRIMARY SURVEY & DATA ANALYSIS**

We have done survey of NRI and domestic patients from some major private hospitals in Gujarat, like Sterling, SAL, Apollo, Rajastan, and Krishna. We have done survey of 50 NRI and 50 domestic patients and find out such results. The whole analysis is given below.

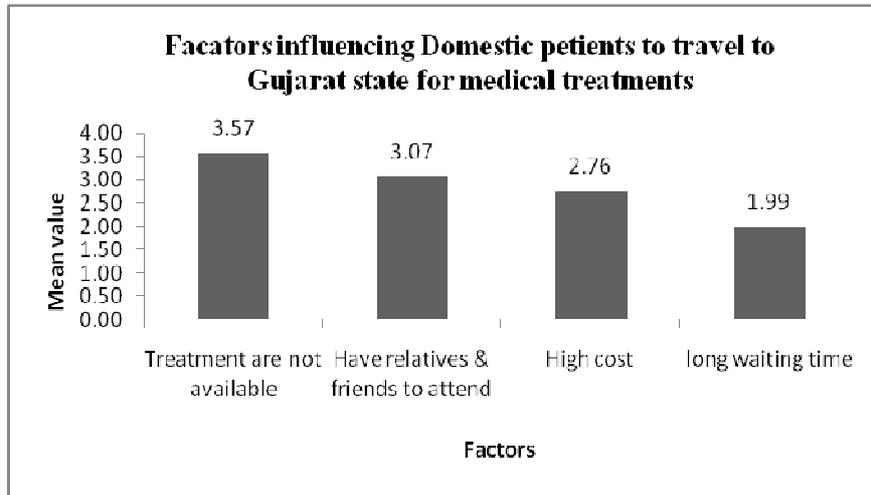
**4.1 Analysis of factors that influence NRIs and domestic patients to travel to Gujarat state for medical treatments.**



**Figure 1: Factors influencing NRI patients to travel to Gujarat state for medical treatments**

**Interpretation:** As shown in Figure 1 there are mainly three reasons, due to that most of NRI patients come to Gujarat for medical treatments.

1. Mostly NRI patients come to Gujarat for medical treatments are basically from Gujarat origin and they have friends and relatives to attend them during medical treatments in Gujarat .the mean score of the factor like, “they have friends and relatives to attend them during medical treatments” is 3.94, which is highest. So, this is the main factor for NRI patients to come to Gujarat for medical treatments.
2. The second most affected factor is “high cost of treatments in other countries than India”. So, this is another most important reason for NRI patients to come to Gujarat for medical treatments. The costs of treatments are triple or tenth times higher than Gujarat. The mean value of this factor is 3.9.
3. Third important factor for NRI patients to come to Gujarat for medical treatments is “they have no medical insurance for particular treatments”. The mean value of this factor is 3.54
4. Another factors like Ease & affordability of travel for coming to Gujarat, Enjoy post-operative vacation after medical treatment, Long waiting time in other countries for medical treatment and Treatments are not available or not good enough in other countries also affect NRI patients to travel to Gujarat for medical treatments.

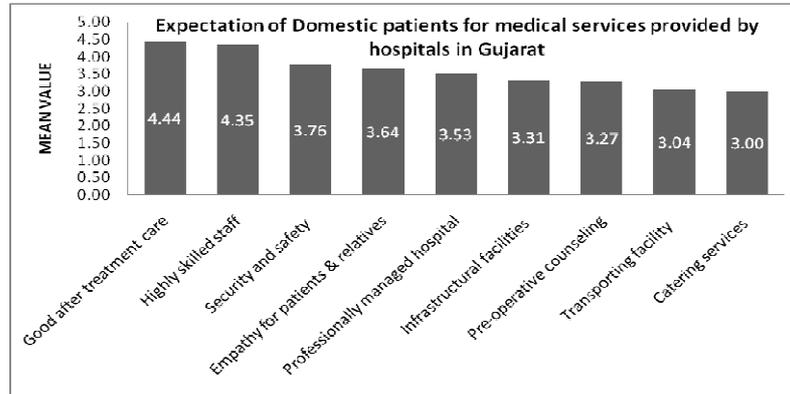


**Figure 2 Factors influencing Domestic patients to travel to Gujarat state for medical treatment**

**Interpretation:** As shown in figure 2 the factors which are affecting most to the domestic patients to travel to Gujarat for medical treatments are

1. The main reason for domestic patients to come to Gujarat for medical treatments is the “particular treatment is not available or not good enough in their residence state”. The mean score of this factor is 3.57, which is highest.
2. Second main reason for domestic patients to come to Gujarat is, “they have relatives and friends to attend to them during medical treatments”. The mean value of this factor is 3.07

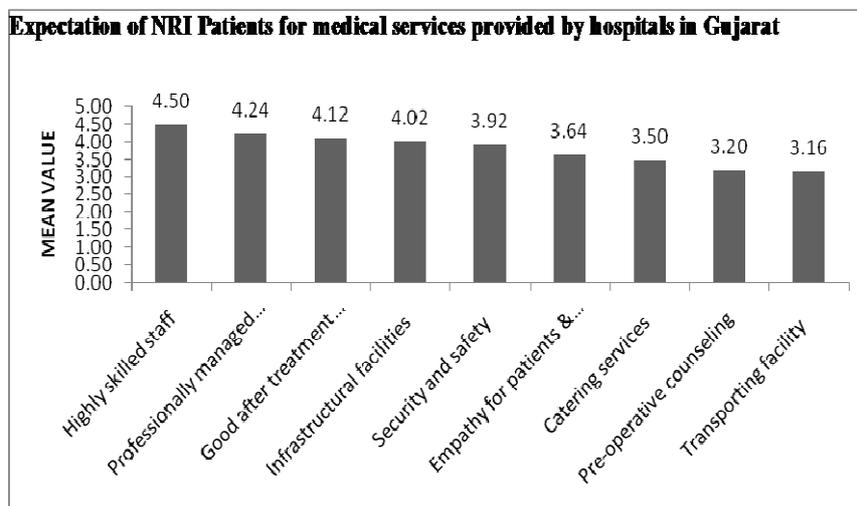
#### 4.2 Analysis of expectations toward particular hospital in Gujarat



**Figure 3 Expectation of domestic patients for medical services provided by hospitals in Gujarat**

**Interpretation:** As shown in figure 3, the priorities of expectations are given below according to mean values for domestic patients regarding to medical services toward particular hospital in Gujarat.

1. Good after treatment care. The mean value is 4.44
2. Highly skilled staff. The mean value is 4.35.
3. Safety and security of persons. The mean value is 3.76.
4. Empathy for patients and relatives. The mean value is 3.64.
5. Professionally managed hospital. The mean value is 3.53.
6. Infrastructural facilities. The mean value is 3.31.
7. Pre-operative counseling. The mean value is 3.27.
8. Transporting facilities. The mean value is 3.04
9. Catering services by hospitals. The mean value is 3.00.



**Figure 4 Expectation of NRI Patients for medical services provided by hospitals in Gujarat**

Interpretation: As shown in figure 4 the priorities of expectations are given below according to mean values for NRI patients regarding to medical services toward particular hospital in Gujarat.

1. Highly skilled staff. The mean values is 4.50
2. Professionally managed hospital. The mean value is 4.24
3. Good after treatment care. the mean value is 4.12
4. Infrastructural facilities. The mean value is 4.02.
5. Safety and security of persons. The mean value is 3.92.
6. Empathy for patients and relatives. The mean value is 3.64.
7. Catering services by hospitals. The mean value is 3.50.
8. Pre-operative counseling. The mean value is 3.20.
9. Transporting facilities. The mean value is 3.16.

By comparing the mean values from figure 3 and figure 4, we found that the priorities of expectations are different for NRI and domestic patients and also there is a variation in each expectation between NRI and domestic patients.

#### 4.3 Criteria considered by patients to select particular hospital in Gujarat

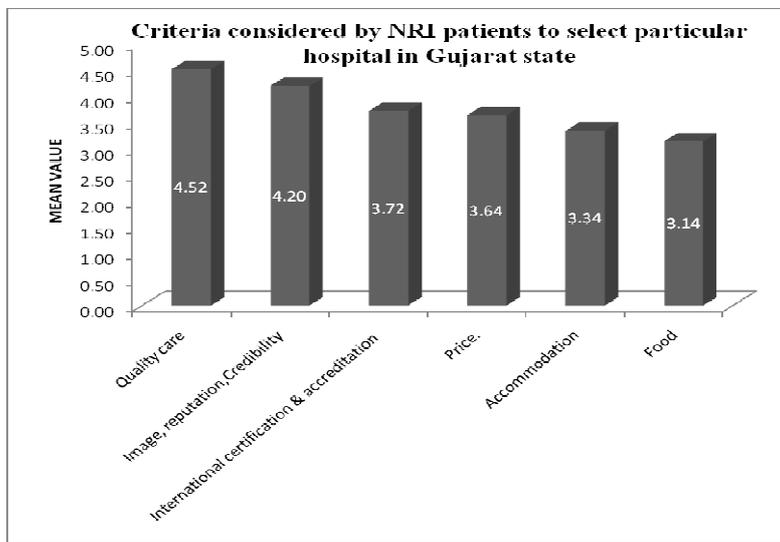
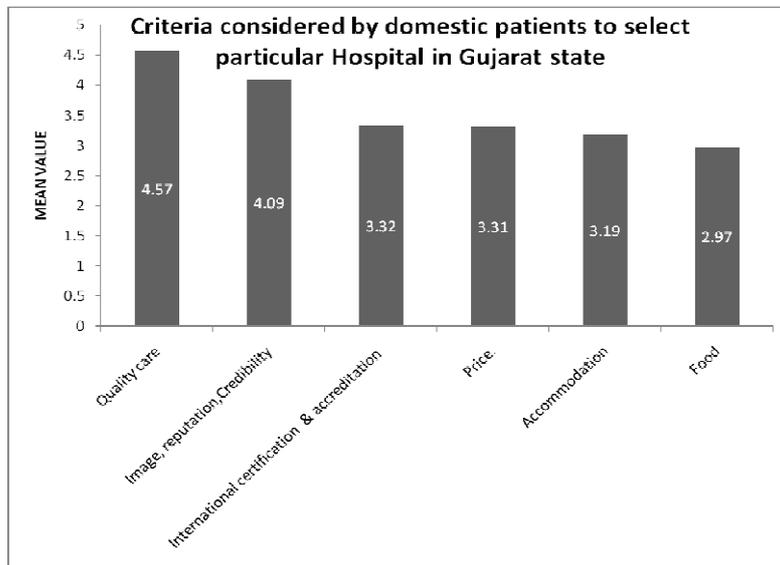


Figure 5 Criteria considered by NRI patients to select particular hospital in Gujarat state



**Figure 6 Criteria consider by domestic patients to choose Hospital in Gujarat**

From the Figure 5 and 6 the criteria considered by NRI patients and domestic patients are same as priority wise but they are slightly different in mean values of factors between NRI patients and domestic patients to choose particular hospital in Gujarat.

From the figure 5 and 6 we can interpret that below criterion is considered by both NRI and domestic patients to select particular hospitals in Gujarat.

1. Quality care of patient by hospital.
2. Image, reputation and credibility of hospital.
3. International certification and accreditation of hospital.
4. Price.
5. Accommodation facilities provided by government or hospital.
6. Food for patients and relatives.

## 5. FINDINGS

1. NRI patients come to Gujarat for medical treatments are mostly Gujarati and there are 6 million Gujarati spread across the world, which constitutes about 32% of the total 20.1 million people of Indian origin. So, the NRI patients come to Gujarat because “they have relatives and friends to attend them during medical treatments”, which gives psychological or moral support to them.
2. Other reasons are, there is “high cost of treatments in other countries than India” and the NRI people are mostly “not insured for particular treatment”. So they cannot afford medical services in their residence countries like U.K., US. So, they come to Gujarat because the cost of treatments in Gujarat is very less and they can easily afford.
3. The most effective reason for domestic patients to come to Gujarat is “medical treatment is not available or not good enough” and another reason is “they have friends and relatives to attend them during medical treatments” in Gujarat.
4. Expectation of domestic patients regarding hospital shown more tendency towards good post treatment care, skill of staff and security & safety
5. Expectation of NRI patients regarding hospital shown more tendency towards highly skill staff, professionally managed hospital and good post treatment care.
6. NRI patients & Domestic patients considered quality care, image reputation & credibility as well as international certification & accreditation of hospitals as the prime criteria to select particular hospital in Gujarat.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the hospitals:

1. Hospitals have to collaborate with the international hospital. So, it is more convenient for the patients to get treatment at various locations through centralized procedure.
2. Hospitals should be professionally managed and established at good location.
3. Hospitals should concentrate on “Post- treatment Care”.
4. Hospitals should establish its health care brand synonymous with safety, trust and excellence.
5. Hospital should do buzz marketing for positive word of mouth.
6. Hospital should concentrate on quality care of patient and build image, reputation, and credibility first. So, everyone can recognize their services
7. Hospitals have to promote the medical tourism through trade show; exhibition or seminars, which allow the healthcare providers to share their medical expertise.
8. Hospitals need to develop their fix pricing policy to avoid malpractices.
9. Arrange regular health care check up camp at various National & International centre.
10. For attracting more NRI patients, hospitals should have international certificate and accreditation.

To the government of gujarat:

1. Gujarat government should establish its health care brand synonymous with safety, trust and excellence like Kerala has the name in Ayurvedic treatment
2. Government should concentrate on the medical as well as non medical services like hospitality, accommodation facility
3. Gujarat government should increase promotion by advertising and other instruments.
4. Government should promote private players for establishing super speciality hospitals. So, patients get treatments under one roof. Government should make friendly policies for private players.
5. Government should give some tax benefit for the hospitals to develop their research on different treatments.
6. Government should also promote the basic infrastructure facility like airport, hotels, blood banks, research institutes.
7. Government should have to promote medical tourism with campaign like “FIRST WORLD TREATMENTS AT THIRD WORLD PRICE”

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

From the study, we have found that Gujarat government has good opportunity in the tourism especially, medical tourism. Because of 6 million Gujarati spread across the world and the growth of medical industry is very high. NRI patients mostly come here for medical treatments because of their friends and relatives to attend them during medical treatments. Domestic patients come here due to lack of medical facilities in their resident states.

Due to all kind of services under one roof and the specialist, now days the private hospitals are booming. The hospitals are becoming more conscious about

quality and basic infrastructural facility. The patients get feel good factor. Government should also take it positively and make friendly policy to boost the medical industry. Government should concentrate on infrastructure facility.

Gujarat has wide scope and market for medical tourism. So, vast opportunity is waiting for Gujarat. The only thing is that the Gujarat government and private hospitals have to understand the medical tourism properly and concentrate on above discussed factors and should come out from the traditional medical environment and make Gujarat as a medical destination in the world like **“FIRST WORLD TREATMENTS AT THIRD WORLD PRICE”**.

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