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How does medical tourism in developing countries affect the world medical system?

Medical tourism is a form of travel for tourists to obtain medical services. Its growth momentum is amazing. Medical tourism has now grown to become one of the fastest growing emerging industries in the world. However, there are positives and negatives to medical tourism, and the rhetoric about how medical tourism is affecting the world's healthcare systems has become an important topic. Medical travel in developing countries helps poor people from developed countries to get treatment and promotes the local economy of developing countries, but it also raises some medical safety and illegal issues(wound infections, surrogacy, etc.)

First of all, Medical travel helps poor people from developed countries access treatment. Greg Jefferys is an Australian student, and the medicine he needs sells for about $100,000. He can't afford it. Fortunately, he learned that the same drug can also be sold legally in India for about US$300( Rao, 2017, p. 1). For developed countries, the control of drugs is quite developed. For a particular drug, its price may be very high due to drug patents and national policies. And whether this drug is included in the health insurance, patients may not be able to pay the related costs. In some developing countries, drug patents are not recognized. For example, in India, the Indian Patent Act stipulates that only process patents are granted for food and drugs, not product patents, which means that it is perfectly legal as long as you can make it in another way. Therefore it is not illegal to imitate drugs in India. This results in a huge price difference between two drugs of almost the same potency. This is why poor people from developed countries choose to travel to these places for medical tourism. Similarly, Howard Staab did not have health insurance and decided to travel to India to replace a failed heart valve. Cost: About $6,700 - well below the $200,000 typically charged by U.S. hospitals( Kerry, 2021, p.1). Health care resources cannot cope with the pace of the world's aging population. In addition, healthcare costs for critical and elective procedures continue to rise, while countries providing care face an increasing burden of resources. All of these factors are compelling patients to seek out cross-border healthcare options in order to save money or avoid long wait times for treatment( Sanghavi, 2017, p. 1). These poor people from developed countries either pay high prices or wait longer to get health care in their home countries. And the most taboo thing about health care is the time delay. Therefore, these poor people have to travel to other countries with cheaper prices to get appropriate medical help. Latin American countries such as Mexico have made significant investments in healthcare infrastructure in order to attract patients from developed countries. In order to attract patients from Western Europe, some countries in Eastern Europe have built a large number of health care facilities( Hamid, 2019, p. 1). The North American region and Western Europe are mostly developed countries, where medical costs are high and the local poor cannot afford the high local costs, while the developing countries around these regions have established medical centers that are affordable and naturally admit these poor people.

Second, Medical travel improves local economies in developing countries. Every year, millions of people come to receive treatment and then enjoy their recuperation holidays across India. People from all over the globe and from different professions come to India to receive treatment at ease( Sanghavi, 2017, p. 1). Similarly, Thailand's medical tourism industry tops the world's list, with 0.16% of Thailand's total revenue coming from medical tourism in 2013( Hamid, 2019, p. 1). Developing countries like India and Thailand, the main component of their hospitals are private hospitals. These hospitals are often gorgeously decorated and offer friendly service. Their level of care is comparable to that of the United States, but at perhaps one-sixth the cost. At the same time, the medical process will be interspersed with some local specialties such as yoga, Thai massage, etc. This has led to people from all over the world traveling here for medical tourism, and in the process of medical tourism, people also visit some local attractions, while driving the development of the local economy. The organization estimates that the average recent expenditure for medical tourists is $3,550. This includes medical-related expenses, cross-border and local transportation, inpatient stays and outside accommodations. Costa Rica, India and Thailand are among the most popular destinations( Kerry, 2021, p. 1). As less developed countries, especially India and Turkey, are perennially ranked at the top of the list of places to go for medical travel. The value of medical tourism is estimated to have exceeded $100 billion and is growing at a high rate( Makinde, 2016, p. 1). With the large number of tourists traveling to these countries for medical treatment, the economies of these countries have also grown.

Finally, Medical travel raises a number of safety and illegal issues(wound infections, surrogacy, etc.) The widespread spread of the Internet has created new challenges for medical tourism in the country. Having doctors as MTFs is a major medical offense and the absence of legal protection tends to make the industry resistant( Makinde, 2016, p. 3). Also, Gillian Crozier and Dominique Martin consider offering reproductive services for women to travel, including the use of paid surrogates or the purchase of human eggs. Payment for these services raises a number of illegal questions( Snyder, 2012, p. 3). It is estimated that the surrogacy business alone is worth $6 billion. Antiretroviral treatment clinics are no longer concentrated in large cities, but also appear in small towns, which lack even the necessary health care facilities( Sanghavi, 2017, p. 2). Patients also travel abroad to undergo medical procedures that are prohibited in their home countries, such as stem cell therapy for Parkinson's disease and stroke, legally restricted assisted reproductive treatment and euthanasia( Hamid, 2019, p. 3). Different countries have different views on medical services. Performing medical services abroad that are prohibited by the laws of their home country, which may include surrogacy or organ transplants. This is bound to cause turmoil in the medical industry. For example, it can stimulate an increase in the use of illegally procured organs. Also, medical tourism, if not properly organized, can spread infections and antibiotic resistance. If medical tourism only targets the wealthy, it can widen the gap between the rich and the poor in terms of treatment.

Medical travel in developing countries helps poor people from developed countries to obtain treatment and promotes the economy of developing countries. At the same time, there are some ethical issues. The government should pay attention to avoiding some ethical and moral issues while developing medical tourism. Because different countries have different customs, if they are treated in the same way, it may cause some conflicts. Therefore, medical policies need to be more refined according to cultural conflicts. This will allow for better development of medical tourism.

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