

MANGALURU – IV

‘The City of the Young’

Developing Mangalore as a Medical Tourism Destination

“Mangalore has one of the best quality of life in Asia. It has been ranked best in India and 2nd best in Asia for quality of life and 12th in the global list for healthcare. It is the only city from India to appear in top 50”

This is how Wikipedia introduces Mangalore. Predictably, European cities dominate the top rankings, and it is a great honor that Mangalore is in the top league for healthcare. This has been made possible by all the healthcare professionals, medical colleges, nursing colleges and para- medical colleges functioning in and around Mangalore. That we could match up to the European standards, and get a coveted ranking is a wonderful tribute to the professional excellence, industriousness, and commitment of Mangalore’s doctors, nurses and associated staff. What is more creditable is the fact that while European hospitals would be charging a whopping amount, our hospitals in Mangalore do it for a fraction of that amount. This opens up a new avenue for Mangalore – Medical Tourism.



Medical tourism has developed into a major industry in many third world countries because of affordable medical care. The prohibitive cost of medical treatment in U.S.A. and other Western countries, has forced the common man there to search for alternative locations. Many third world countries including China have developed Medical Tourism Hotspots to give efficient and excellent healthcare on par with world standards. China is setting up a 23 billion Yuan investment in the tropical island of Hainan, known for its beach front resorts, for developing a medical tourism facility.



They have enlisted Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital, a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, as adviser. The Chinese government has set up a Hainan Boao Lecheng International Medical Tourism Pilot Zone, to oversee the establishment of 23 hospitals including plastic surgery clinics. By 2025 they want to attract one million tourists a year on health related visits.

The Medical Tourism Market Report 2015 found that India was "one of the lowest cost and highest quality of all medical tourism destinations, it offers a wide variety of procedures at about one tenth the cost of similar procedures in the United States." It costs about U.S. \$ 1,650 to conduct a Cataract operation in U.S.A., whereas the same can be performed for a fraction of that amount in Mangalore.

According to a CII-Grant Thornton white paper, India's medical tourism market is expected to more than double to around \$8 billion by 2020.

As stated above "Mangalore is a recognized tourist destination, in terms of quality of life it is ranked best in India and 2nd best in Asia for quality of life, and 12th in the global list for healthcare" - but what is our position as a medical tourism destination? CII-Grant Thornton report 2015 states that the city of Chennai is "India's health capital". Multi and super specialty hospitals in Chennai managed to attract about 150 international patients every day!

Average revenue per medical tourist is U.S. \$15,000. Average revenue per inpatient stay is around U.S. \$ 1,700. In 2016, citizens of Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Maldives, Republic of Korea and Nigeria availed the maximum medical visas, to visit India.

CII-Grant Thornton report also states that Bangladeshis and Afghans accounted for 34% of foreign patients, Russia and the CIS countries accounted for 30% share of foreign medical tourist arrivals. Other major sources of patients include Africa and Middle East. Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and the National Capital Region received the

highest number of foreign tourists. Where is Mangalore? Despite being ranked as best for quality of life in India, 2nd best in Asia for quality of life, and 12th in the global list for healthcare, Mangalore is not favored as a medical tourism destination!

Top 5 hospitals in India are:

1. Apollo Hospitals
2. Fortis Hospital
3. Narayana Health
4. Manipal Hospitals
5. Max Health Care

Treatments sought for are in elective cosmetic surgery, dentistry, organ transplantation, cardiac surgery, orthopedic surgery, surrogate pregnancy, in-vitro fertilization, and other assisted reproductive technology methods. Non availability of certain medical procedures in some countries on account of law and religious injunctions is also a reason for medical tourism.

Mangalore needs to be aggressively projected and marketed as the best medical tourism destination for domestic and international patients. We need a medical lobby to actively canvass our plus points. More important, we need collaborations with top insurance firms, if we are serious about medical tourism. Wockhardt Hospitals has tied up with Blue Cross Blue Shield, the largest provider of healthcare insurance in U.S.A. It has collaborated with Harvard Medical International Inc, U.S.A.

Apollo Hospitals has tied up with insurers like BUPA (U.K.), Vanbreda (Belgium), and Mondial (France). It has a joint venture with Singapore based Parkway Group Healthcare.

Max Healthcare has collaborated with Singapore General Hospital, Singapore.

Fortis Healthcare has collaborated with Partners Healthcare System, U.S.A.

Birla Heart & Research Center has collaborated with Cleveland Clinic Foundation, U.S.A.

Collaborations are the only way forward to become a recognized medical tourism hot spot. By simply upgrading our post operative care standards to match European benchmarks, we can steal a march over all the other hospitals in India. Scrupulous high standards of hygiene, spick and span staff, exotic hospital ambience, can be developed to attract an upscale audience. To meet the unique needs of an international segment, we need a dedicated cadre of interpreters, providing individualized care in a caring and healing environment. Hospitals around the world have added facilities like concierge service, beautifully-plated meals, personalized tablet with Wi-Fi access and ensuite bathroom complete with premium toiletries, to attract the uber-rich. Delhi's new-age hospitals have recruits from the hospitality industry and air hostess academies to guide patients. Deluxe healthcare has been made into a lifestyle trend with 24 hour coffee shops, waiting lounges, bookshops, florists and business centers. Platinum lounges have

been set up for foreign patients fitted with wooden flooring, potted plants and leather couches. Hospital rooms comprise a sitting room, a pantry with a microwave and toaster, granite and chrome bathrooms and bedrooms with TV sets and exclusive nursing staff. Mangalore needs such type of new age hospitals to attract foreign clientele. The Indian medical tourism industry is pegged at \$ 1 billion per annum, growing at around 18 per cent, according to India Brand Equity Foundation. Mangalore also needs to take a slice of this cake. Expert medical care in a luxurious setting is needed to attract patients from across the globe. Many countries have devised their own medical specialties, Hawaii is renowned for the non-invasive neurosurgery and eyelid surgery, Brazil boasts of cosmetic surgery, and is the place to go for tummy tucks, breast implants, rhinoplasty, and face lifts, Mexico specializes in dental procedures and weight loss treatments. Neighboring Malaysia welcomes 700,000 international patients each year, centrally located in Kuala Lumpur is the Prince Court Medical Center which takes pride in its sophisticated burn unit and in-vitro fertility department. Singapore is famous for its top notch Cancer treatment. Thailand has made its mark for cosmetic surgery and sex change operations. When compared to all these destinations India offers cheaper and quality medical treatment. There is a great market evolving for high end hospital treatment coupled with opulent hospitality and a dash of local tourism. It is also the duty of the City Corporation to ensure that the city retains its pristine old world charm. The vast expatriate Mangalore population spread across Europe, U.S.A., Canada and Middle East can be leveraged to campaign for Mangalore as a choice venue for affordable and excellent medical tourism.