The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Seeking Health Abroad

By Mark H. Gay

March 19, 2013



Health tourism is a fast growing subsegment of the travel industry in Russia, with the number of people seeking treatment abroad rising 47 percent last year.

Once associated with nationals of one country seeking free health care in another, the medical tourism business is now a growing subsegment of the tourism industry.

Moscow's fourth Medical and Health Tourism Congress is underway this week with participants from the medical services and travel industry establishing networks across Russia, the CIS and Eastern European countries.

The lower cost of procedures is only one reason to travel abroad for medical treatment. Quality of care and availability or immediate access is also an impetus, with medical tourism companies providing charts comparing the cost of treatment in different countries.

Several destination countries have launched marketing programs to attract health tourists. Dubai is advertising itself as a place not just to sit back, but to fix back problems. It also

advertises dermatology, spa, dental work and cosmetology services.

Poland expects to welcome 500,000 overseas patients this year for orthopedic treatments, eye surgery, dental work and plastic surgery.

But the leader is Israel, which has advertised its high-quality medical care and warm climate. It no longer requires visas from countries of the former Soviet Union. Many doctors are of Russian origin, removing language barriers. A quick search on Google yields mostly Israeli links. Israel is also a favored destination for couples seeking fertility treatment.

Most tourist agencies offer two types of medical tourism. The first is the medical day offering 10 hours of health checks, and the second is actual treatment in medical centers. Prices are half to a third of those in Europe.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/03/19/seeking-health-abroad-a22502