

# COMPARISON OF TÜRKİYE'S MEDICAL TOURISM MARKET WITH EXISTING AND POTENTIAL COMPETITOR COUNTRIES

Alper ATEŞ<sup>1</sup>  
Halil SUNAR<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Health is one of the oldest and strongest travel motivations since the day humanity existed on Earth. In the last hundred years, in which tourism has become an essential requirement of modern man, health tourism has been in increasing demand every year. Medical tourism, a necessary type of health tourism, has a high expenditure per tourist and provides significant foreign currency inflows to the national economy. Türkiye, the fourth most visited country in the world in international tourism in 2021 and 2022, cannot show the same success in medical tourism. This study aims to compare the current state of medical tourism in Türkiye with that of competitor countries. Conclusions and recommendations based on the findings to be obtained within the scope of this purpose will be put forward. The comparison will encompass variables such as the caliber of healthcare services, cost-effectiveness, ease of access, and overall patient contentment. In addition, the study will examine the marketing techniques utilized by each country to attract medical tourists and pinpoint areas where Türkiye may enhance its competitive edge.

## Keywords

Medical Tourism  
Thailand  
South Korea  
Poland  
Greece

## Article Info

Research Article

Received : 13.01.2024  
Accepted : 20.03.2024  
Online Published : 15.06.2024  
DOI : 10.58702/teyd.1419097

<sup>1</sup> Doç. Dr., Selçuk Üniversitesi, Turizm Fakültesi, Seyahat İşletmeciliği ve Turizm Rehberliği Bölümü, e-posta: alpera@selcuk.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-4347-7306.

<sup>2</sup> Öğr.Gör., Giresun Üniversitesi, Tirebolu Mehmet Bayrak Meslek Yüksekokulu, Seyahat-Turizm ve Eğlence Hizmetleri Bölümü, e-posta: halil.sunar@windowslive.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-5131-4056.

## TÜRKİYE MEDİKAL TURİZM PAZARININ MEVCUT VE POTANSİYEL RAKİP ÜLKELER İLE KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

### Öz

Sağlık insanoğlunun dünyada var olduğu günden beri en eski ve kuvvetli seyahat motivasyonlarından bir tanesidir. Turizmin modern insanın önemli bir gereksinimi olduğu son yüz yıl içerisinde de sağlık turizmi her geçen yıl artan bir talep görmektedir. Önemli bir sağlık turizmi türü olan medikal turizm, turist başına harcaması yüksek olan ve ülke ekonomisine önemli döviz girdisi sağlayan özelliğe sahiptir. Uluslararası turizmde 2021 ve 2022 yıllarında dünyada en çok ziyaret edilen dördüncü ülke olan Türkiye, kitle turizminde gösterdiği başarıyı medikal turizmde gösterememektedir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de medikal turizmin mevcut durumunu rakip ülkelerle karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç kapsamında elde edilecek bulgulara dayalı sonuç ve öneriler ortaya konulacaktır. Karşılaştırma, sağlık hizmetlerinin niteliği, maliyet etkinliği, erişim kolaylığı ve genel hasta memnuniyeti gibi değişkenleri kapsayacaktır. Çalışmada ayrıca, her bir ülkenin sağlık turistlerini çekmek için kullandığı pazarlama teknikleri incelenecek ve Türkiye'nin rekabet gücünü artırabileceği alanlar tespit edilecektir.

### Anahtar Kelimeler

Medikal Turizm  
Tayland  
Güney Kore  
Polonya  
Yunanistan

### Makale Hakkında

Araştırma Makalesi

Gönderim Tarihi : 13.01.2024  
Kabul Tarihi : 20.03.2024  
E-Yayın Tarihi : 15.06.2024  
DOI : 10.58702/teyd.1419097

**Citation Information:** Ates, A. and Sunar, H. (2024). Comparison of Türkiye's medical tourism market with existing and potential competitor countries. *Journal of Society, Economics and Management*, 5 (2), 342-368.

**Kaynakça Gösterimi:** Ateş, A. and Sunar, H. (2024). Türkiye medikal turizm pazarının mevcut ve potansiyel rakip ülkeler ile karşılaştırılması. *Toplum, Ekonomi ve Yönetim Dergisi*, 5 (2), 342-368.

## INTRODUCTION

Although it is not known for sure, many sources state that the first tourism movement was the actions of human beings to change their location to reach food sources, protect themselves from the effects of seasonal weather changes, and eliminate various dangers as part of their survival efforts. Assuming that they had partially won the struggle for survival thanks to the primitive technologies they had developed, another important motivation for travel was health reasons, in addition to the commercial activities that increased with the transition to settled life. People who wanted to regain their health traveled to hot springs and regions where people thought they had the ability to heal. When evaluated from this perspective, travel for health purposes is among the oldest reasons for participating in tourism in history, and medical tourism can be considered as one of the oldest types of tourism. In this context, medical tourism is not a new phenomenon or concept, but the global nature and dynamics of the cross-country medical care industry are new and rapidly evolving.

The past 25 years have seen new trends in the consumption and provision of health services due to increased global movement of patients and health professionals, advancements in medical technology, capital financing, and changes in regulatory regimes. A significant development in the expanding healthcare industry is the rise of *medical tourism*, where patients travel across international borders to seek medical treatment and improve their well-being. Medical tourism refers to persons seeking medical treatment outside their nation of residence. These treatment excursions encompass a comprehensive range of medical services and additional offerings as part of a tourism package.

Türkiye is a leading international center for medical tourism, offering a diverse range of services at lower costs than other countries. The country's strategic location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia makes it an attractive destination for those seeking high-quality medical services. Türkiye's medical tourism success is based on cost-effectiveness, quality care, state-of-the-art equipment, and skilled healthcare practitioners. Many Turkish doctors and surgeons have received international training, ensuring they adhere to global norms. Medical institutions often focus on cutting-edge technology and patient-centric approaches. Türkiye's medical heritage dates back to ancient times, with the Byzantine period and the Ottoman Empire focusing on practical medical expertise. Türkiye's healthcare system integrates traditional and modern treatments, including thermal baths and natural springs, in rehabilitation therapy. Türkiye's strategic position as a connecting point between Eastern and Western regions influences its healthcare system. Medical tourists can enjoy a variety of traditional treatments, such as herbal remedies and physiotherapy techniques, which offer a holistic approach to healthcare. This cultural influence also enhances Türkiye's appeal as a medical tourism destination.

This study uses current data to compare Türkiye's medical tourism market with its current competitor, Thailand, and potential competitors, South Korea, Greece, and Poland. In light of the information obtained from the comparison, recommendations will be given for developing Türkiye's medical tourism market. The analysis will assess variables such as the quality of healthcare services, price, accessibility, and the marketing techniques implemented by each country. Furthermore, the study will investigate the possible obstacles and advantages that Türkiye can encounter in luring patients from outside.

## 1. Medical Tourism

Medical tourism is defined as travel with or without accommodation to receive drug treatment, undergoing surgical operations or general medical interventions in a health institution in another country, with low cost and waiting for less time (Enderwick and Nagar, 2011, p. 329; Hafizan et al., 2018, p. 17; Hopkins et al., 2010, p. 185; Horowitz et al., 2007, p. 1; Hudson and Li, 2012, p. 227; Jose and Sachdeva, 2010, p. 376; LEMONIA and Fragkiadakis, 2022, p. 1933). Medical tourism includes medical procedures or activities to improve the health and well-being of tourists. This includes medical check-ups, health screenings, dental treatment, heart surgery, prostheses, cancer treatment, neurosurgery, organ transplants, and other procedures that require qualified medical interventions (T.C. Sağlık Bakanlığı, 2012, p. 14).

Medical tourists leave their country of residence and seek health services in foreign countries due to the high cost of treatment, long waiting times, lack of treatment in their own country, and various other reasons (Brady, 2007, p. 1098). The top ten countries medical tourists prefer are India, Thailand, Singapore, Mexico, Brazil, Malaysia, Costa Rica, South Korea, Taiwan, and Türkiye. These countries combine healthcare services with tourism activities to make their countries more attractive while offering healthcare services at more affordable prices and high quality. Medical tourists' most important health reasons to travel include heart surgeries, cardiology, special surgeries, orthopedic surgeries, oncology, aesthetics, plastic surgery, infertility treatment, dental, eye, and obesity treatment (Batu Akdeniz Kalkınma Ajansı [BAKA], 2013, p. 7).

One manifestation of globalization is medical tourism. It has been the subject of research with claimed benefits and risks, as its effects have yet to be fully known. Due to high healthcare costs, long waiting times, or lack of access to new treatments in developed countries, many medical tourists (mainly from developed countries such as the United States, Canada, and Western Europe) seek treatment in developing countries in Asia and Latin America (Hopkins et al., 2010, p. 185).

Possible problems that may arise in medical tourism can be grouped as medical and surgical risks, ethical problems, legal problems, infectious disease risks, and post-operative risks. The main characteristics of medical tourism are as follows (Altın et al., 2012):

- Medical tourism is a type of tourism that requires technical equipment and a labor force.
- In medical tourism, it is essential that the health institution providing the service provides services by international standards.
- The health institution providing services must have personnel who speak the standard foreign language.
- It is a type of tourism with high added value that supports developing different types for patients and their companions.
- The selected target market requires state-sponsored promotional and marketing activities in different languages.

- In these promotions, insurance and health institutions supporting patients to receive services abroad should be selected as targets (p. 158).

Traveling to other countries to receive treatment with better facilities and more advanced technology has become quite common. This situation is leading to the day-by-day growth of the medical tourism sector. There are reasons for the development and rapid spread of medical tourism worldwide. The main ones are as follows (Lunt et al., 2011):

- *Cost Savings:* The main driver of medical travel is cost savings, as procedures can be completed for as little as 30 to 80 percent less than they would in the patient's native nation. Patients often receive superior medical care abroad at significantly lower costs, increasing their willingness to seek treatment abroad.
- *Care Quality:* Access to top-notch medical services is a significant factor in the decision-making process for approximately half of medical tourists. Individuals often seek specialized therapies and procedures unavailable in their home country, prioritizing quality treatment and specialized knowledge at overseas medical centers.
- *No Insurance Coverage:* About 25% of medical tourists travel overseas for treatment because their insurance policies do not cover specific procedures. Medical tourism allows individuals to access advanced treatments and technology unavailable in their home country, reducing waiting times for specific procedures.
- *Shorter Wait Times:* 20% of medical tourists seek quicker treatment options abroad due to lengthy waiting lists in their home countries. Medical tourism expands in advanced healthcare countries, with patients seeking non-insured or affordable overseas procedures.
- *Advanced Technology:* About 30% of medical tourists go abroad to receive state-of-the-art care and equipment. Individuals are seeking advanced treatments that may not be available in their home country, leading them to travel internationally for specialized medical services.
- *Privacy and Confidentiality:* The privacy and confidentiality provided by foreign healthcare facilities is a top priority for approximately 15% of medical tourists. Individuals seeking medical treatment abroad prioritize the security and protection of their personal information, valuing the discretion of foreign healthcare providers in maintaining their medical records.
- *Lack of Local Expertise:* Approximately 20% of medical tourists journey abroad due to a lack of access to the specialized medical knowledge they require at home.
- *Holistic and Alternative Therapies:* About 10% of medical tourists go to specific places for holistic and alternative medicine.
- *Combining Treatment with Vacation:* Nearly 40% of people who travel for medical treatment do so to combine treatment with fun and relaxation.
- *Referrals and Recommendations:* About 25% of patients considering medical tourism rely on referrals and recommendations from people they know and trust, including friends, family, and healthcare providers (pp. 11-36).

## 2. Medical Tourism Market

Medical tourism is a prominent global sector where people go to different countries to receive medical care, usually to save money, access specialist treatments, or reduce waiting times. This phenomenon has experienced an increase in speed and force due to progress in transportation, communication, and healthcare technology, facilitating patients' ability to obtain medical services in many locations throughout the globe. According to a report by Sharma's 'Medical Tourism Statistics: Exploring the Global Landscape of Cross-Border Healthcare Seekers', the medical tourism sector is experiencing significant growth with an estimated 15-25% annual growth. Popular destinations such as Thailand, Mexico, India, Türkiye, Malaysia, Costa Rica, and Singapore attract patients due to 40-80% cost savings. Over 90% of medical tourists express high satisfaction with their care. The global medical tourism market is expected to reach \$35.9 billion by 2032, with the Asia-Pacific region accounting for 75%. This industry contributes over \$100 billion annually to the global economy. According to Sharma, the medical tourism market will continue to grow steadily every year (Media Market, 2023).

**Table 1.** 2023 Medical Tourism Index Key Findings

Ranking	MTI Overall Rating	Destination Environment	Medical Tourism Costs	Facility and Services
1	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada
2	Singapore	Singapore	Costa Rica	Singapore
3	Japan	United Kingdom	India	Israel
4	Spain	Israel	Philippines	India
5	United Kingdom	Germany	Colombia	Germany

Source: *Medical Tourism*.

As seen in Table 1, according to the overall rating provided by the Medical Tourism Index, the top 5 destination countries for medical tourism worldwide are Canada, Singapore, Japan, Spain, and the United Kingdom. 'The Destination Environment' dimension provides a comprehensive overview of the environmental conditions in a nation or area that may encourage or discourage medical travel, evaluating essential elements like security, economy, international standing, and image, in addition to the dominant cultural norms. 'The Medical Tourism Industry' dimension directly measures the effectiveness of a destination's healthcare system for patients from other countries. The medical tourism industry evaluates primary criteria, such as the expenses of treatments and the appeal of the destination as a provider of medical travel, in order to assist healthpayers and consumers in making well-informed selections. 'The Quality of Facilities and Services' dimension delves into the capabilities and standards of care that a medical tourism destination offers. This factor evaluates hospitals and medical tourism providers based on their ability to provide healthcare solutions by utilizing cutting-edge medical advancements and state-of-the-art technologies.

The medical tourism industry experienced a significant decline in 2020 due to the increased complexity of travel caused by issues related to COVID-19. Additionally, a significant number of individuals experienced heightened economic instability. Medical tourism faces significant challenges due to legal and ethical concerns, as it involves crossing international borders and navigating distinct legal frameworks, medical regulations, and



ethical standards. Ensuring patient rights, obtaining informed consent, and adhering to ethical practices can be challenging when dealing with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Medical tourists also face challenges receiving post-treatment care and follow-up when returning to their home countries. Coordinating and ensuring continuity of care between healthcare providers in different locations can be challenging, especially when language barriers, variations in medical records, or inadequate communication between healthcare providers arise. Technological advancements have led to the development of telehealth, a method of delivering healthcare services remotely. Telemedicine has successfully addressed barriers to treatment planning, pre-operation consultations, and post-operation follow-up care for patients seeking overseas medical services. This innovative approach encourages patients to seek medical treatments abroad, and virtual communication has facilitated seamless care delivery, reducing concerns about receiving healthcare services in foreign locations (Global Data Report Store, 2023).

As a result of changing tourist behavior and market expectations after the pandemic, 'Key Medical Tourism Industry Trends' can be summarized in the following articles (Future Market Insights, 2023):

- Advances in healthcare technology, such as robotic surgery and advanced diagnostics, have an impact on the market.
- Rehabilitation and post-treatment care have recently emerged as key components of medical tourism destinations.
- Hospitals and clinics in medical tourism mainly depend on internet evaluations and social media platforms to bolster their reputation. The increased clientele was drawn in due to patients having a favorable experience.
- Medical tourism has been growing in recent years. There are some insurance companies that will pay for medical procedures done in other countries.
- Medical tourism service providers and facilitators are increasingly making their prices more transparent. The provided information facilitated patients in strategizing their medical journey and making well-informed choices.
- Medical tourists are showing a growing interest in wellness and preventive care. Individuals sought various treatments and services, including spa treatments, yoga retreats, and dietary regimens.

The medical tourism industry has emerged as a highly profitable sector for countries and private institutions to participate in the international trade of healthcare services, generate foreign exchange revenue, address shortages of skilled personnel, and enhance the efficiency of healthcare systems (Collins et al., 2022, p. 488; Hanefeld and Smith, 2019, p. 2). Thailand, Singapore, India, and Malaysia are considered as the leading destinations for medical tourism because they offer reasonable prices, high-quality healthcare accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI), minimal waiting times, access to specialized surgeons, comprehensive post-surgery care, and appealing tourist attractions (Collins et al., 2022, p. 488; Ebrahim and Ganguli, 2019, p. 105). Furthermore, medical tourists are attracted to these countries due to their cutting-edge technology, exceptional proficiency in specialized medical domains, and health factors. These nations have invested significantly in cutting-edge medical

infrastructure and employ highly skilled healthcare practitioners, guaranteeing optimal patient care and treatment.

Thailand has a long-standing tradition of herbal therapy and wellness practices traced back to ancient wisdom spanning several millennia. These conventional customs are occasionally incorporated into contemporary medical care, providing a comprehensive approach to treatment. Thailand's distinctive appeal as a medical tourism destination lies in its combination of ancient and modern medical practices and its culture that highly values hospitality (Fujita and Sato, 2022, p. 49; Kaewkamol and Lim, 2021, p. 14). Thailand is a popular medical tourism destination due to its low healthcare costs and excellent service for expats. Medical tourism is growing by 16% annually, with Bangkok's Bumrungrad Hospital being a prime example. Thailand's medical system offers a wide range of surgeries and procedures at affordable prices, with many doctors trained in Western countries or Singapore and speaking excellent English. Since the currency crisis in the 1990s, Thailand has used its currency crisis to attract medical tourists, mainly for cosmetic surgeries. Today, Thailand is a haven for inexpensive plastic surgery and non-elective procedures, with facelifts and bypass surgeries costing around \$25,000, an 80% discount over US prices. Experts recommend staying in Bangkok for access to the best doctors and care (Nomad Capitalist, 2023).

South Korea is a highly sought-after global hub for medical tourism. Over the past decade, the country has deliberately attracted overseas patients by offering cutting-edge medical technologies and services. Thanks to government assistance, South Korea has emerged as a leading global destination for medical tourism in recent years. This is primarily attributed to its emphasis on promoting exceptional clinical care, skilled physicians, and state-of-the-art medical equipment (Xu et al., 2021, p. 2). The increase in medical tourism can also be linked to the country's reasonable prices and exceptional patient care services. Moreover, South Korea's sophisticated infrastructure and state-of-the-art healthcare facilities enhance its attractiveness as a desirable medical tourism destination. The South Korea Medical Tourism Market competes fiercely with local and global players. Major hospitals and clinics have established a strong reputation for quality medical services, attracting many overseas patients. Innovation, collaborations, and strategic alliances characterize the market (Seo and Kim, 2021, p. 1767).

Ancient Greece, known as the 'Father of Medicine', has significantly contributed to medicine for millennia. Its traditional therapeutic techniques, like 'balneotherapy', are now combined with modern medical technology. Greece's medical tourism is fueled by its unique blend of modern services and picturesque landscapes. Patients can enjoy the scenic islands and historical sites while receiving exceptional care. Greek medical facilities often meet European and international standards, offering exceptional healthcare services. Greece's expertise in fertility treatments, cosmetic surgery, and dental care has made it a desirable location for medical tourism (Batakis et al., 2023, p. 2; LEMONIA and Fragkiadakis, 2022, p. 1933; Tsekouropoulos et al., 2024, p. 1).

Poland has a rich medical education and healthcare history, with renowned physicians and researchers like Albert Sabin. The country's medical schools are among the oldest in Europe and have been pioneers in medical research for centuries. Poland's medical tourism appeal is increasing due to its exceptional price-to-quality ratio, with medical centers



maintaining reasonable prices while providing high-quality services. In this regard, Poland surpasses other countries like the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Lithuania. The country's advanced health infrastructure and exceptional medical care attract foreign visitors seeking treatment, diagnosis, or preventive care. With over 19,000 dental clinics, 700 aesthetic and plastic medicine institutions, and 1,700 medical services, Poland offers medical tourists a wide range of services. Accreditation by the Joint Commission International ensures superior diagnosis and treatment standards. Polish medical tourism also benefits from skilled professionals using advanced treatment procedures and state-of-the-art technology comparable to top-tier clinics in the Western World (Kowalewski et al., 2020, p. 12; Wiśniewska, 2021, p. 151; European Foundation for the Development of Medicine and Education [EuroMed], 2023).

Türkiye offers high-quality facilities for healthcare. It also includes five-star hotel accommodation in its health package prices. Türkiye has become a destination for medical tourists from Russia, Ukraine, Germany, England, the UK, the Netherlands, Romania, Bulgaria, the Middle East, and Arab countries (Karakoç, 2017, p. 112). Türkiye is a popular destination for medical tourism due to its affordable healthcare services. The proportion of health costs within tourism income in Türkiye increased from 1% in 2002 to 4.5% in 2020. In 2019, 714,426 patients used health services in health tourism and tourist health. The total revenue from tourism by international tourists and citizens seeking health and medical purposes was 1,492,438,000 USD. However, due to the global pandemic, the number of health tourists declined, resulting in a decline in revenue. In 2021, 670,730 individuals availed healthcare services, generating 1,726,073,000 USD. In 2022, 1,258,382 individuals availed services, generating 2,119,059,000 USD. In 2023, 740,290 individuals sought healthcare services, generating 1,033,942 thousand USD (Health Türkiye, 2023).

Table 2, prepared in light of the results obtained from the SWOT analysis of Türkiye's medical tourism, provides a comprehensive assessment of the sector. Türkiye, a leading global health tourism destination, has diverse tourism opportunities, including a national airline, private and university hospitals, and experienced healthcare providers. The country's growth in these sectors, government incentives, and international medical tourism have led to increased employment and revenue. The focus in health care is on production, neglecting marketing. Issues include political image, lack of cooperation with foreign insurance companies, foreign language problems, and a need for a clear national strategy for health tourism. Other challenges include unprofessional management, inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic barriers, limited knowledge of European health legislation, and poor price policy practices. Globalization, technology development, limited insurance policies, healthcare expenditures, expatriate return, international health organizations, life expectancy, long waiting times, and demand for aesthetics, dental, and eye operations are the opportunities. The increasing elderly population, EU tourism policies, unregulated pricing, lack of promotion, political crises, human resources infrastructure, refugee burden, and economic crises are all contributing factors (Gürleyen and Çınar, 2021, p. 57-58; Yılmaz, 2018, p. 81; Yiğit and Demirbaş, 2020, p. 186).

**Table 2.** SWOT Analysis of the Turkish Medical Tourism Sector

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
-Türkiye is among the leading countries in the world in the field of health	- In health care, the focus is on production and relative neglect of marketing.
-Geographical location	-Political image
-Cultural similarity	-Lack of cooperation with foreign insurance companies
-Traditional tourism attractiveness	-Foreign language problem
-Türkiye has a wide range of tourism opportunities that will positively affect the demand for health services	-Lack of a clear national strategy for health tourism.
-Spreading tourism all year round	-New formation of the sector
-Demographic characteristics	-Problems of coordination between institutions and sectors
-Development of a national airline	-Unprofessional management structure
-Infrastructure of private and university hospitals	-Inadequacy of intermediary institutions
-Being an experienced country offering health tourism services.	-Infrastructure of public hospitals and related ministries
-Development of the private hospital sector	-Lack of sufficient cooperation between health institutions and the Ministry of Health in data sharing.
-Public-private partnership projects	-Bureaucratic barriers
-Increased employment in tourism and health sectors	-Lack of knowledge of European health legislation
Increased intra-country competition for health services	-Problems of individuals' access to health services
-Short waiting times	-Private hospital investments
-Low price advantage	-Low emphasis on the health of tourists
-Inclusion of medical tourism in various plans	-Wrong price policy practices
-Government incentives provided	-Low price advantage is not sustainable
-Decrease in international travel costs	Out-of-pocket spending and price relationship
-International medical tourism location	-External dependency in the medical device sector
-Increasing medical tourism revenue	-Lack of accreditation
- Image of Türkiye's health sector	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
-Increase in globalization	-Increased international competition
-Place in the world market	-Increasing elderly population in the West
-Developing technology	-EU tourism policies
-Limited insurance policies in developed countries and the employer's desire to reduce costs	-Continuously updated legislation
-Healthcare expenditures in developed countries	-Unregulated pricing
-Return of expatriates to their home countries	-Lack of promotion and image problem
-Relations with international health and tourism organizations	-Political crises
-Increasing life expectancy in Europe	-Human resources infrastructure of other countries
-Long waiting times	-The burden of the growing refugee population on the health system
-Increasing demand for aesthetic, dental, and eye operations	Second-guessing of local patients
-Presence of expatriates living abroad	-Economic crises around the world and consequent changes in per capita income

Source: Gürleyen and Çınar, 2021, p. 57-58; Yılmaz, 2018, p. 81; Yiğit and Demirbaş, 2020, p. 186.

### 3. Literature on Medical Tourism

The concept of medical tourism is experiencing significant growth. Scientific studies examine the alterations and difficulties associated with current and future patterns. The prominent issues and factors considered adequate in the studies conducted on hospitals and health institutions offering medical tourism services are public relations and marketing, language difficulties, human resources, patient rights, legal regulations, ethical issues, hospital infrastructure, accreditation, and financial incentives. This section will present some of the studies on the compassion of the medical tourism markets of the countries analyzed in this research.

Kyoung-Lee and Byung-Ro (2023) studied marketing strategies for medical tourism in Busan, South Korea. They surveyed doctors, stakeholders, and moderators to identify critical success factors. Key strategies included visa ease, non-face-to-face care, insurance billing systems, foreign language expertise, win-win systems, and international accessibility. Participants ranked healthcare quality and tourism resources as necessary and satisfactory, while cultural environment, economic support, and administrative support needed to be more satisfactory. Infrastructure was ranked high for Japanese patients. The study suggests a new model of patient attraction tailored to each country's cultural background and preferences, with strategies to strengthen the cultural environment and administrative support (p. 2090).

Lemonia and Fragkiadakis (2022) analyzes the variables of cost and quality of assisted reproduction services in Greece, comparing them to international statistics. It also assesses the advantages patients and the Greek healthcare system derive from these treatments. Greece is widely recognized as a prominent hub for reproductive tourism. Nevertheless, additional promotion is required, given that the primary channels of knowledge are medical professionals (43.7%) and social circles (41%). However, a significant majority of 90.5% of respondents concur with the suggestion of Greece as a favorable choice for reproductive tourism. This indicates that despite the scarcity of information sources, Greece has a notable degree of contentment and assurance as a choice for assisted reproduction services. This underscores Greece's ability to optimize its reputation and draw in a more significant number of international patients searching for cost-effective and top-notch reproductive therapies (p. 1933).

Virani et al. (2020) highlight the variations in policy and policy research on medical tourism across different countries. They analyze how the surrounding policy environments and problems influence these policies and explore the extent to which research aligns with policy. Their research reveals significant discrepancies in development priorities and national policy issues within and between nations of origin and destination. Additionally, we see that studies on medical tourism frequently fail to address current policy obstacles, while policy discussions typically overlook pertinent research on the subject (p. 16).

Vovk et al. (2021) examined the connection between inbound medical tourism destinations, international tourism, recipient countries' economic development, national healthcare systems, and institutional features. They found that countries with high social and economic development form a balanced, unidirectional market for medical tourism. These countries share a link between medical tourism, healthcare funding, international tourism, and

political and civil freedom development. However, these aspects must be more dominant, suggesting other internal factors shape a country's positive image for medical tourism development (p. 1).

Alp (2021) conducted a study identifying the distinguishing features of the top medical tourism destinations, including India, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and Türkiye. The study also involved comparing these qualities. Based on the survey findings, Türkiye is the most optimal destination for medical tourism, particularly for medical treatments such as orthopedics, cardiology, and cosmetic surgery. Based on the numerical findings, India has the most significant quantity of doctors, Singapore has the highest average number of doctors per person, and Thailand has the most significant number of hospitals with accreditation (p. 47).

The objective of Ebrahim and Ganguli's (2019) study is to offer a comparative analysis of the strategic advantages that contribute to the competitiveness of the medical tourism sector in three chosen Asian destinations: India, Singapore, and Thailand. The resources encompass attributes of medical specialties, acquired international accreditations, infrastructure in the medical tourism sector, and a well-established reputation. The key capabilities that have propelled competitive advantages encompass the capacity to provide comprehensive and diverse medical services and establish streamlined and interconnected health and tourism sectors. The study highlights the importance of developing various strategic competencies in medical tourism among these locations. This is achieved through a strong market orientation and effective strategies (p. 102).

Dinçer et al. (2016) assessed Türkiye's comparative medical tourism potential compared to Thailand, Malaysia, and India using SWOT analysis and the TOWS matrix. They concluded that Türkiye is vital for health institutions and technology follow-up facilities, adequate public support, general solid tourism potential, and transportation facilities. It was found to be weak in issues such as having a lousy country image, keeping up with global medical developments, and some security deficiencies (p. 34).

Tengilimoğlu (2013) analyzed the growth of medical tourism in Türkiye, comparing it to countries like India, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Mexico, South Africa, and Brazil. The study found that rising treatment costs in developed countries have driven the growth. To further develop medical tourism, it was suggested that health institutions be accredited, qualified personnel trained, modern marketing strategies implemented, and agreements with other tourism stakeholders be made.

Medical tourism can increase tourism by focusing on accessibility, procedure options, facilities, travel arrangements, safety guarantees, and government legislation. The main goal is to meet visitor expectations and criteria while having suitable policy rules and frameworks is crucial. Medical tourism can negatively impact healthcare services for economically disadvantaged populations, as tourists from wealthier nations may gain at the expense of local communities. However, it can promote economic advancement in countries providing these services if effectively controlled (Zhong et al., 2021, p. 11).

## 4. Methodology

Secondary data analysis and comparison methods were used in this study. This section includes the *Purpose and Method of the Study* and *Scope of the Study*.

### 4.1. Purpose and Method of the Study

This study aims to compare the current state of Türkiye's medical tourism market with that of its competitor countries. Conclusions and recommendations based on the findings to be obtained within the scope of this purpose will be put forward. In this direction, secondary sources were consulted in this study. This study, which was prepared using literature review and secondary data analysis methods, evaluated studies in the relevant literature. In addition, reports published by the World Health Organization, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Economy, and international audit institutions, articles in social sciences and health sciences, statistical source data, and information obtained in the methodology of the study were supported.

In this context, firstly, among the most preferred countries in medical tourism, Türkiye's competitors were researched according to criteria such as *its place in the Medical Tourism Index (MTI) ranking, being among the countries with a developing medical tourism market, geographical location, tourist characteristics, and prices of medical services offered*. After the countries to be selected for comparison were determined according to the medical tourism reports published in 2023 (Medical Tourism Index, 2023; Media Market, 2023; Global Data Report Store, 2023; Research and Markets, 2023; Medical Travel Market, 2023; Nomad Capitalist, 2023), the most preferred medical tourism destinations and upcoming medical tourism destinations were listed. Of the 46 countries in the Medical Tourism Index, South Korea (Global ranking 14<sup>th</sup> in MTI), Thailand (Global ranking 17<sup>th</sup> in MTI), Poland (Global ranking 29<sup>th</sup> in MTI), and Greece (Global ranking 34<sup>th</sup> in MTI) were included in the research as existing and potential competitor countries of Türkiye (Global ranking 30<sup>th</sup> in MTI) met the specified criteria.

Within the scope of the research, the medical tourism actions and investments of the countries will be examined using information obtained from secondary data sources. Then, the situations of the countries examined will be presented comparatively. The main reason for choosing the analysis methods used in the research is to identify the positive and negative aspects of Türkiye's medical tourism internal and external environment. Türkiye's ability to outperform its existing and potential competitors in the field of medical tourism can only be possible by identifying the current situation and developing strategies to address it.

### 4.2. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the medical tourism activities of Türkiye and four countries, and comparisons are made based on some statistical data. Thailand was included in the scope of the study because it is a robust medical tourism destination under current conditions (Fujita and Sato, 2022, p. 48; Kaewkamol and Lim, 2021, p. 29). South Korea is considered one of the medical tourism destinations with the highest potential in the future in many research (Kyoung-Lee and Byung-Ro, 2023, p. 2090; Seo and Kim, 2021, p. 1766; Xu et al., 2021, p. 1). Greece and Poland are critical potential competitors in Europe, which is considered



geographically close to Türkiye while Greece and Poland are critical potential competitors in the European continent (Batakis et al., 2023 p. 2; Orekhovska and Bergier, 2021, p. 226).

## 5. Findings

In studies comparing medical tourism in different countries, health institutions, and personnel (Alp, 2021; Dinçer et al., 2016; Enderwick and Nagar, 2011; Hafizan et al., 2018; Kyoung-Lee and Byung-Ro, 2023; Momeni et al., 2021), medical service prices (Alp, 2021; Dinçer et al., 2016; Enderwick and Nagar, 2011; Lemonia and Fragkiadakis, 2022; Levary, 2011), medical tourist profile characteristics (Alp, 2021; Dinçer et al., 2016; Hafizan et al., 2018; Lemonia and Fragkiadakis, 2022), public support for medical tourism (Béland and Zarzeczny, 2018; Dinçer et al., 2016; Ebrahim and Ganguli, 2019; Enderwick and Nagar, 2011; Kyoung-Lee and Byung-Ro, 2023; Levary, 2011; Momeni et al., 2021). The countries subject to the research were compared under these headings.

### 5.1. Comparison of Health Institutions and Personnel

Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation is renowned for being an international organization that assesses and accredits healthcare services. Its primary objective is to enhance healthcare quality and ensure patient safety. The Joint Commission International (JCI) assists foreign healthcare organizations in enhancing the quality and safety of patient care, thereby expanding the Joint Commission's mission and standards globally (HongFan et al., 2023, p. 138). The number of facilities providing medical tourism services with JCI accreditation and the number of medical doctors are given in Table 3 (Joint Commission International [JCI], 2023; World Health Organization [WHO], 2023; Statista, 2022; The World Bank, 2023).

**Table 3.** Number of JCI Accredited Medical Facilities and Doctors

Country	Number of Medical Doctors	Number of Medical Doctors per 100000 People	Number of JCI-Accredited Organizations and Medical Facilities	
			Hospital	Other Facilities*
Türkiye	183.569	218	39	1
South Korea	130.000	256	7	-
Thailand	38.800	93	51	11
Greece	66.500	629	2	-
Poland	129.900	344	-	-

\*Other Medical Facilities are 'laboratory, imaging center, check-up center, fertility center, IVF center, dental center, home care program, MRI center'.

Source: The table was created by the authors by searching current websites and reports.

Table 3 shows Türkiye has the highest number of doctors, with 183,569. However, due to Türkiye's high population, the number of doctors per capita is much lower than in Greece, which is second to last in the total number of doctors. Greece is the leader in doctors per capita due to its low population. While Thailand ranks first in the number of JCI-Accredited Organizations, Poland has no accredited facilities. This suggests that a nation's healthcare standard should consider more than just doctors, population size, and accreditation variables when comparing healthcare systems across different countries.



## 5.2. Comparison of Medical Treatment/Operation Costs

Table 4 shows the medical treatment and operations within the branches of 'Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery, Orthopedics and Traumatology, Dental Treatment, Plastic Surgery, Eye Surgery, Hair Transplantation, Bariatric Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology Surgery, Oncology, and Nuclear Surgery, Urology Surgery and Gastroenterological Treatment' in Türkiye, South Korea, Thailand, Greece and Poland from different websites (Bookimed, 2023; European Foundation for the Development of Medicine and Education, 2023; Health Tourism, 2023; Med Refund, 2023; Medical Tourism, 2023; Medical Tourism Review, 2023; Medical Tourism Services, 2023; Medigence, 2023; My Medi Travel, 2023; Placid Way, 2023; Treatment Abroad, 2023).

**Table 4.** Medical Treatment/Operation Cost Ranges for 2023 (USD)

Medical Treatment/Operation	Türkiye	South Korea	Thailand	Greece	Poland
Aortic Valve	20000-30000	55000-65000	9000-11000	19000-27000	16000-20000
Cardiac surgery (CABG)	15000-19000	22000-30000	10000-22000	13000-18000	14000-16000
Angioplasty	2000-4000	15000-19000	12000-14000	2000-3500	2200-2400
Spinal fusion	11000-15000	13000-17000	6000-8000	8000-10000	7000-10000
Knee replacement	9000-13000	16000-20000	9000-11000	10000-14000	8000-10000
Hip replacement	12900-16900	14000-17000	11000-13000	12000-14000	13000-17000
Breast augmentation	3600-5200	6000-8000	2600-3200	3500-5500	2050-3000
Rhinoplasty	2000-4000	3500-5500	1200-1400	2300-4700	800-1600
Facelift	3000-5000	6000-8000	2200-2600	4000-5000	995-1020
Liposuction	3000-4000	5000-7000	1000-1400	2000-4000	1100-1700
Botox derma-filler	200-300	400-500	150-200	200-250	330-350
Cataract surgery (per eye)	1500-2000	2000-4000	1600-2000	1600-2100	2000-3000
Laser vision correction	900-2000	1000-2000	900-4700	1500-2200	800-1000
Hair transplantation	2000-3000	6000-7000	1000-2000	2500-3000	3000-4000
Gastric bypass	3600-4000	15000-25000	16000-18000	6100-7600	5000-7000
Gastric sleeve surgery	3000-3600	5000-7000	9000-15000	6000-7400	5000-6000
Myomectomy	7000-8600	4000-5000	5500-7300	3000-4000	5000-6000
Hysterectomy	8000-10000	11000-13000	3600- 7700	6000-10000	7000-8000
Ovarian cancer surgery	15000-19000	25000-35000	6000-8000	22000-28000	25000-29000
Extracorporeal shock wave lith.	1000-3000	5000-7000	1500-2000	3000-3200	2200-2800
Transurethral resection of prostate	3000-5000	12000-16000	2600-5000	2800-3600	2400-3400
Robotic radical prostatectomy	15000-17000	22000-26000	14000-31000	17000-19000	13000-15000
Endoscopic ultrasound procedures	600-800	750-950	400-500	600-750	500-700
Colonoscopy	350-550	630-830	500-600	500-550	450-500
Tooth implant	800-1000	1100-1300	1800-2200	1100-1200	900-1100
EMAX veneer	150-220	400-600	470-500	290-320	260-300
Tooth whitening	100-200	150-250	50-150	320-520	160-220
<b>Overall Cost Rating Result</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>104</b>

Source: The table was created by the authors by searching current websites and reports.

The coloring in the Table 4 was done to determine the costs for each medical treatment and operation from low to high and to identify the most advantageous medical destination in terms of price overall. The green color represents the lowest price and is worth five points. The blue color represents the second-lowest price and is worth four points. Yellow represents the

third-lowest price and is worth three points. The orange color represents the fourth-lowest price and is worth two points. The red color represents the highest price and is worth one point. As a result of the scoring made with this coloring process, the most advantageous country according to the criterion of the costs of medical procedures was Poland, which scored 104 points in total. With 96 points, Thailand is the second-most advantageous country, while Türkiye ranks third with 90 points. Greece, with 79 points, ranked fourth, and South Korea, with 36 points, was found to be the country where medical treatment and operations are the most expensive.

### 5.3. Comparison of Medical Tourist Profiles and Statistics for 2022-2023

The medical tourist numbers and revenues in Table 5 were calculated for 2022 and the first two quarters 2023 by averaging data from multiple reports and articles. Approximate amounts are given in the table due to the data obtained from independent sources.

**Table 5.** Medical Tourist Profiles and Statistics for 2022-2023

Country	Number of Medical Tourists	Income of Medical Tourism (\$)	Medical Services Most Preferred by Tourists	Residence Country of the Medical Tourists
Türkiye	2.004.672	3.153.001.000	Gynecology, hair transplant procedures, internal diseases, ophthalmology, dentistry, medical biochemistry, general surgery, plastic and aesthetic surgery, orthopedics and traumatology, infectious diseases	Germany, England, Netherlands, Belgium, Bulgaria, USA, Canada, Turkic Republics, Libya, Iraq, Qatar, Russia, United Arab Emirates
South Korea	548.110	3.287.125.000	Plastic surgery, dermatology, internal medicine, checkup, infections, rheumatology, gastroenterology, obstetrics and gynecology, dentistry, cardiology, nephrology, allergy, oncology, pulmonology	USA, Canada, China, United Arab Emirates, Russia, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Middle Eastern countries.
Thailand	3.600.000	6.516.253.550	Rhinoplasty, plastic and aesthetic surgery, rhytidectomy, dentistry, checkup, cardiology, joint replacement, eye surgery, cannabis-based medical treatments	USA, Canada, Japan, Australia South Korea, India, Baltic and European countries, Middle Eastern countries
Greece	152.035	950.045.550	Fertility treatment, plastic surgery, ophthalmology, dentistry, orthopedic surgery, cardiac treatment, SPA therapy, rehabilitation, hemodialysis.	Germany, England, USA, Canada, Türkiye, Russia, Middle Eastern countries
Poland	292.422	1.452.000.000	Plastic and cosmetic surgery dentistry, fertility treatment, ophthalmology, eye surgery, cardiology, orthopedics, oncology.	Baltic countries, England, Germany, Hungary, Ukraine, Greece, Russia, Czech Republic,

Source: The table was created by the authors by searching current reports and articles.

In Table 5, 'ophthalmic procedures, cosmetic treatment, cardiovascular treatment, orthopedic treatment, neurological treatment, gastric procedures, neurological treatments,

cancer treatment, fertility treatment, bariatric surgery and dental treatment' are the common branches in all five countries included in the comparison. These medical tourism services are similar to the medical tourism services preferred worldwide. It is seen that the countries that are the subject of the research are similar to the world medical tourism market in terms of both supply and demand. The medical tourist profile consists mainly of citizens of developed countries such as the USA, Canada, the UK, and other Western European countries. Another important group consists of the citizens of relatively less developed countries and the citizens of countries with geographical proximity to the medical tourism destination. Medical tourism offers potential cost savings of 40%–75% compared to countries such as the UK, Canada, Germany, the United States, and other developed Western countries (Global Healthcare, 2023; Market Data Forecast, 2023; Consultancy Asia, 2023). The main reason for this substantial cost disparity is mainly attributed to the target nations' reduced labor and operational expenses. These reduced expenses can be attributed to lower wages for healthcare professionals, lower administrative costs, and more affordable infrastructure. Additionally, the availability of advanced medical technology at a fraction of the cost compared to developed countries further contributes to cost savings. As a result, medical tourists from developed countries can access high-quality healthcare treatments and procedures at significantly lower prices, making medical tourism an attractive option for those seeking affordable and efficient medical care.

#### 5.4. Comparison of Advantages and Disadvantages of Medical Tourism Destinations

Table 6 shows the advantages and disadvantages of Türkiye (Alp, 2021, p. 66; Dinçer et al., 2016, p. 50-51; Kılıçarslan, 2019, p. 1142-1143; Sariaydın, 2023, p. 70-72), the advantages and disadvantages of Thailand (Dewi and Ayuningtyas, 2019, p. 969-970; Mayakul et al., 2018, p. 368-370; Wong et al., 2014, p. 4-6), advantages and disadvantages of South Korea (Byung-Yun, 2020, p. 56-63; Dewi and Ayuningtyas, 2019, p. 969-970; Kim et al., 2019, p. 7-10; Osmonova, 2019, p. 63-65; Zhang and Lin, 2018, p. 259-261), advantages and disadvantages of Greece (Batakis, et al., 2023, p. 10-13; LEMONIA and Fragkiadakis, 2022, p. 1941-1942; Prokopiou et al., 2019, p. 173-174; Tsekouropoulos et al., 2024, p. 17-19), advantages and disadvantages of Poland (Dragičević and Paleka, 2019, p. 224-225; Kowalewski et al., 2020, p.13; Wiśniewska, 2021, p. 159). Medical tourism offers lower costs than local healthcare services, allowing patients to access a wide range of medical procedures unavailable in their home country. This travel allows patients to explore new locations and immerse themselves in different cultures. Medical tourism can also benefit those without insurance coverage or whose health insurance does not fully cover surgery costs. It ensures privacy and minimizes disruptions during healing. Insurance products now offer coverage for patients if medical misconduct is claimed abroad, and some healthcare establishments provide medical malpractice insurance to protect against unexpected occurrences. Medical travel often faces challenges due to cultural and language differences, as well as the difficulty in communicating with foreign healthcare professionals. Allocating time and obtaining leave can be challenging, and additional expenses like airfare, accommodation, transportation, meals, and excursions must be considered. Environmental risks and travel advisories in specific countries can also pose challenges. In the event of an adverse outcome, the options for seeking redress may be limited, depending on the healthcare provider and jurisdiction. Postoperative travel can lead to severe problems.

These problems can range from increased risk of infection and blood clots to complications in wound healing. The discomfort of traveling for long periods of time can also exacerbate postoperative pain and discomfort. Furthermore, access to proper postoperative care and follow-up appointments may be limited or nonexistent, leaving patients with little support after their surgery. It is essential for individuals considering postoperative travel to carefully weigh the potential risks and benefits and consult with their healthcare provider before making any decisions.

**Table 6.** Advantages and Disadvantages of Medical Tourism Destinations

Country	Advantages	Disadvantages
Türkiye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* JCI-accredited medical centers.</li> <li>* Highly qualified skilled doctors.</li> <li>* Availability of advanced medical equipment.</li> <li>* Quality of healthcare services.</li> <li>* Short standby time.</li> <li>* Competitive prices.</li> <li>* Hospitality and culture.</li> <li>* Vacation destination.</li> <li>* Advanced medical technology.</li> <li>* Has rich thermal resources.</li> <li>* Advanced medical technology.</li> <li>* High-quality healthcare services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Language deficiency.</li> <li>* Medical records and documentation.</li> <li>* Problems in implementing the plans.</li> <li>* Insufficient promotional activities.</li> <li>* Medical tourists coming to public hospitals are directed to certain cities.</li> <li>* Possible negative attitude of local people towards medical tourism.</li> </ul>
South Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Favorable government policies.</li> <li>* Strong research capabilities.</li> <li>* Collaboration with international organizations.</li> <li>* Government support.</li> <li>* Medical Korean wave</li> <li>* The low cost of medical treatment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Language and cultural barriers.</li> <li>* Limited insurance coverage for international patients.</li> <li>* Lack of specialization and knowledge in the area of cross-cultural communication among medical professionals.</li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Some of the main advantages include access to affordable, high-quality healthcare, less wait times, and the opportunity to recover in a picturesque country.</li> <li>* Government support.</li> <li>* Vacation destination.</li> <li>* Hospitality of the locals.</li> <li>* Top ranked facilities</li> <li>* Lots of private clinics and rehabilitation facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* One danger to be mindful of is the possibility of language barriers when not in a hospital setting, as well as variations in legal protections.</li> <li>* Lack of primary healthcare system.</li> <li>* Lack of emergency transport facilities.</li> <li>* Medical records and documentation</li> </ul>
Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Competitive prices.</li> <li>* English is commonly spoken.</li> <li>* Vacation destination.</li> <li>* Strong geographical location.</li> <li>* Competitive pricing in comparison to other developed Western and European.</li> <li>* Highly qualified physicians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Disorganization in the public sector.</li> <li>* Economic situation.</li> <li>* No plan or execution for marketing.</li> <li>* Bureaucracy for non-EU patients.</li> <li>* Possible negative attitude of local people towards medical tourism.</li> </ul>
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* High quality of medical and diagnostic facilities</li> <li>* Close proximity to many European countries</li> <li>* Travelling from Europe is a cheap option.</li> <li>* Abundant natural resources with therapeutic properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Worldwide recognition is lacking in most healthcare facilities.</li> <li>* Treatment and surgery options for major illnesses are limited.</li> <li>* Most medical staff are not fluent in English.</li> <li>* Air pollution.</li> </ul>

Source: The table was created by the authors based on a literature review.

### 5.5. Comparison of Government Supports and Targets for Medical Tourism

The increase in medical tourism supply in all countries seeking tourism investment will accelerate with public incentives and support. The information obtained in the comparison was compiled from the websites and reports of public and private organizations providing investment-related services in the countries.

**Table 7.** Government Supports for Medical Tourism

Country	Supports and Targets
Türkiye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Income and corporate tax reduction in health tourism introduced by Law No. 6322.</li> <li>* Supporting Foreign Exchange Earning Service Trade No. 2015/8.</li> <li>*Market entry support, patient travel support, international promotion support, fair, congress, conference support, search engine advertising promotion support, overseas unit support (office rent), international certification support, trade and procurement delegation support, consultancy support.</li> <li>* Policies aimed at supporting and promoting cutting-edge medical programs, such as Korea's rich tradition of herbal medicine.</li> </ul>
South Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The South Korean government plans to increase the number of healthcare facilities that handle e-visa applications for foreign patients from 27 last year to at least 50.</li> <li>* South Korea provides specialized smart medical visas to promote medical tourism.</li> <li>* The South Korea intends to establish six innovative tourism hubs combining medical treatments and local tourist attractions.</li> <li>* Advancements in technology will be used to provide more medical services remotely and help medical tourists from other countries after their treatment, supporting legal, non-contact healthcare services.</li> </ul>
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A new trend in Thai public policy is to make it easier for people to come to the country for medical treatment.</li> <li>* The Medical Hub Project has boosted medical tourism since the 90s, focusing on accreditation, infrastructure development, and skilled personnel training.</li> <li>* Thailand 4.0 programme.</li> <li>* The Thai BOI is offering incentives to international operators, including CIT exemptions, import duty exemptions, ease of regulatory procedures, and a comprehensive support network.</li> <li>* Thailand provides specialized medical visas (e-visa) to promote medical tourism.</li> <li>* Thailand's government has implemented incentive programs to support chemical and pharmaceutical, skills training, research and development, electronics, automation, production, fabrication, and service providers.</li> </ul>
Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Greece actively supports medical tourism investors with financing and tax incentives.</li> <li>* New government incentives include grants, recognition programs, and fostering widespread adoption of sustainable development initiatives.</li> <li>* Both priorities are increasing doctors' pay and programs to keep them in Greece and integrate them into the healthcare system.</li> </ul>
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Poland's Minister of Sport and Tourism set up the Tourism Experts Council to help the country's tourism industry grow.</li> <li>* Tax exemptions, grants or low-interest loans to start-ups and entrepreneurs</li> </ul>

Source: The table was created by the authors by searching current websites and reports.

Table 7 shows that the support provided by countries for medical tourism is generally in essential areas such as tax exemption, facility, and device development incentives, market



entry supports, visa exemptions, or facilities. The state of Türkiye has more comprehensive support compared to other countries. Thailand and South Korea also have attractive incentives for investors. Greece and Poland have more limited incentives.

## CONCLUSION

The medical tourism industry is characterized by intense competition as multiple companies strive to attract customers. The medical tourism industry has witnessed a substantial resurgence in recent years due to the relaxation of travel limitations following the COVID-19 pandemic. Foreigners are increasingly drawn to medical tourism because of the accessibility of cutting-edge technologies and highly skilled physician education. Furthermore, some countries lure medical tourists from various parts of the globe due to the comparatively lower hospitalization costs. The medical tourism industry in Türkiye has shown consistent expansion. Türkiye's standing as a dependable and top-notch healthcare hub is steadily increasing. The nation's healthcare system, state-of-the-art medical facilities, and highly skilled healthcare practitioners have gained international acclaim. Although Türkiye has many essential advantages in terms of medical tourism, the revenues generated and the number of tourist arrivals are far below their current potential. Türkiye can realize medical tourism activities more effectively by integrating its existing considerable tourism experience and advanced infrastructure and superstructure with the components of the health sector. It has the potential to offer the high-standard medical tourism services of Western countries at a level close to the affordability of Far Eastern countries. The advanced accommodation and transportation services components of Türkiye's tourism sector are the critical catalysts for expanding medical tourism activities nationwide.

Turkish medical tourism is a significant industry that relies on the travel and hospitality industries, offering services such as travel, accommodations, transportation, and tourism activities for medical tourists and their companions. Trends like technology and skilled medical professionals providing top-notch healthcare services have an impact on the market. Türkiye has invested in its medical infrastructure, with many modern hospitals equipped with state-of-the-art technology and staffed by highly skilled medical professionals. Medical operations in Türkiye are often more affordable than in Western countries, attracting patients due to the cost-effectiveness of treatment. Turkish physicians and healthcare personnel possess extensive training and expertise in their specific domains, with multiple physicians undergoing foreign study and training. Türkiye's strategic geographical position at the intersection of Europe and Asia makes it highly accessible to patients from various regions. The Turkish government has endorsed the medical tourism industry by enacting laws and regulations to promote the sector.

The Turkish medical tourism sector encompasses diverse treatments and operations, including cosmetic surgery, dental care, fertility treatments, organ transplants, orthopedic surgeries, and cardiac procedures. The legislative framework in both the countries of origin and destination may influence the growth of the medical tourism industry. Türkiye's dedication to enhancing healthcare services further enhances its appeal as a medical tourism hub. In order to maintain a competitive edge, Turkish medical tourism companies must provide cutting-edge technologies for treatments and competitive pricing in the market. They also must make substantial investments in digital health technology, like telemedicine, remote



patient monitoring, electronic health records, and others, to offer patients post-treatment care. Bureaucratic obstacles, taxation, and accreditation problems are essential problems that must be overcome with the government's support and the cooperation of entrepreneurs and professional organizations. By overcoming these problems, Türkiye's medical tourism sector, which will be integrated more rapidly into the medical tourism sector in the modern world, will realize faster growth and income generation. Türkiye's future efforts toward medical tourism should be carried out within a specific plan and program representing private and public organizations. Most of the medical tourists coming to Türkiye prefer the country as a result of individual efforts. A more regular flow of tourists and a formalized sector structure should be established with the cooperation of intermediary institutions such as tour operators, travel agencies, various health institutions, and insurance companies. Government regulations and policies concerning healthcare, immigration, and tourism substantially impact the medical tourism business. Positive governmental measures, such as simplified visa processes and rewards for those seeking medical treatment abroad, can boost market expansion by establishing a conducive setting for medical tourism endeavors.

As a result of the analysis, Poland and South Korea are considered more competitive for Türkiye than Thailand and Greece. The analyses made in light of the data obtained for these two countries are given below.

South Korea is a prominent hub for medical tourism, drawing in global patients in search of top-notch healthcare treatments. The nation's sophisticated healthcare system, state-of-the-art equipment, highly trained medical personnel, and cost-effective pricing have established it as a center for medical treatments and procedures. The South Korea Medical Tourism Market is a fierce competition, attracting both local and global participants. Prominent hospitals and clinics have earned a reputation for exceptional services, attracting overseas patients. Innovation, collaborations, and strategic alliances characterize the market. The South Korea Medical Tourism Market has witnessed significant expansion in recent years, with a growing influx of international visitors selecting the country as their preferred choice for medical treatment. The nation's renown for cutting-edge medical technology, top-tier facilities, and highly qualified experts has established it as the preferred destination for patients from throughout the globe. There has been an increase in the number of people seeking cosmetic surgery, dental, cardiology, and orthopedic treatments on the market.

Poland can potentially be a formidable competitor for Türkiye in medical tourism in the coming years. Poland's historical contributions support its reputation for providing high-quality healthcare services. The increasing number of international patients in fields like dentistry, cosmetic surgery, and orthopedic procedures supports the rising prevalence of medical tourism in Poland. Poland's government and commercial healthcare providers are investing in upgrading facilities and implementing advanced medical technologies, making it a popular destination for medical tourism. Polish medical practitioners are known for their exceptional knowledge and proficiency, having gained experience and knowledge from foreign countries. The exceptional level of treatment offered is another crucial factor contributing to the growing reputation of medical tourism in Poland.

## Ethical Principles and Publication Policy

We declare that we have obtained the data, information, and documents we present in this study within the framework of academic and ethical rules, that I have presented all information, documents, evaluations, and results in accordance with the rules of scientific ethics and ethics, that I have cited and referenced all the works I have used in the study, and that the study is original. Otherwise, we declare that we accept all loss of rights that may arise against me.

## Author Contributions

Authors' contributions are equal.

## Ethics Committee Approval

In this article, ethics committee approval is not required. A signed consent form stating that ethics committee approval is not necessary is included in the article processing files on the system.

## Competing Interests and Funding

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

## REFERENCES

- Alp, G. (2021). Medikal turistler tarafından en çok tercih edilen medikal turizm destinasyonları ve karşılaştırmaları. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Research*, 19 (19), 47-79.
- Altın, U., Bektaş, G., Antep, Z. and İrbay, A. (2012). Sağlık turizmi ve uluslararası hastalar için Türkiye pazarı. *Acıbadem Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*, 3(3), 157-163.
- Batı Akdeniz Kalkınma Ajansı (2013). Batı Akdeniz Kalkınma Ajansı sağlık turizmi sektör raporu. Retrieved December 23, 2023 from <http://www.baka.org.tr/uploads/48947588121518SAGLIK-KATALOG-TURKCE-16MAYIS-3.pdf>
- Batakis, D., Sidiropoulos, S., Emmanouil-Kalos, A., Fouskas, T., Zopounidis, C. and Vozikis, A. (2023). Medical tourism in the region of Crete, Greece: Perspectives from healthcare providers. *Hotel Managers, and Medical Tourists, Sustainability*, 15, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su152416822>
- Béland, D. and Zarzechny, A. (2018). Medical tourism and national health care systems: An institutionalist research agenda. *Global Health*, 14(68), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-018-0387-0>
- Bookimed (2023). Discover the best clinics and costs in 2023. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://us-uk.bookimed.com/clinics/>
- Brady, C. J. (2007). Offshore gambling: Medical outsourcing versus ERISA's fiduciary duty requirement. *Washington and Lee Law Review*, 64(3), 1073-1113.
- Byung-Yun, C. (2020). *Current tourism trends in South Korea: A SWOT analysis* [Master Thesis]. Universidad de Alicante. Departamento de Filología Inglesa. <http://rua.ua.es/dspace/handle/10045/107806?locale=en>

- Collins, A., Medhekar, A. and Şanal, Z. G. (2022). A qualitative analysis of Turkish stakeholders perspective for improving medical tourism. *International Journal of Tourism*, 24(3), 487-500. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2516>
- Consultancy Asia (2023). Government to push Thailand as premier medical tourism centre. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.consultancy.asia/news/787/government-to-push-thailand-as-premier-medical-tourism-centre>
- Dewi, N. P. I and Ayuningtyas, D. (2019, August, 25). *Analysis of marketing strategies on medical tourism programs in developing countries hospitals in Asia* [Oral Presentation]. Proceedings of International Conference on Applied Science and Health, Mahidol, Thailand. 964–971.
- Dinçer, Z. M., Çiftçi, A. M. and Karayılan, E. (2016). Gelişmekte olan ülkelerde medikal turizm: Türkiye'nin Tayland, Malezya ve Hindistan'a göre potansiyelinin değerlendirilmesi. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 1, 34-60.
- Dragičević, D. and Paleka, H. (2019). Health tourism market in Poland and Croatia – Financial effects and potentials. *Tourism in Southern and Eastern Europe*, 5, 219-232. <https://doi.org/10.20867/tosee.05.5>
- Ebrahim, A. H. and Ganguli, S. (2019). A comparative analysis of medical tourism competitiveness of India, Thailand and Singapore. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, 67(2), 102-115.
- Enderwick, P. and Nagar, S. (2011). The competitive challenge of emerging markets: The case of medical tourism. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 6(4), 329-350. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17468801111170347>
- European Foundation for the Development of Medicine and Education (2023). Projects of the fund medical tourism. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.euromed-f.com/en/projects/medical-tourism/>
- Fujita, M. and Sato, Y. (2022). The current condition and issues of medical tourism in Thailand: A study on the marketing management process. *NUIS Journal of International Studies*, 7, 41–52.
- Future Market Insights (2023). Medical tourism outlook from 2023 to 2033. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.futuremarketinsights.com/reports/medical-tourism-market>
- Global Data Report Store (2023). Medical tourism market trends and analysis by region, provider, service (medical treatment and wellness) and segment forecast to 2027. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.globaldata.com/store/report/medical-tourism-market-analysis/>
- Global Healthcare (2023). Facts and figures. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.globalhealthcareaccreditation.com/medical-tourism-statistics-and-facts>

- Gürleyen, B. and Çınar, F. (2021). Türkiye'nin medikal turizm SWOT analizi: COVID-19 örneği. *Sağlık ve Sosyal Refah Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 3(1), 51-60.
- Hafizan, A. H., Mardiana, O., Syafiq, S. S., Jacinta, M. R., Sahar, B. M., Hanafiah, J. and Rosliza, A. M. (2018). Analysis of medical tourism policy: A case study of Thailand, Türkiye and India. *International Journal of Public Health and Clinical Sciences*, 5(3), 17-31.
- Hanefeld, J. and Smith, R. (2019). The upside of trade in health services. *The British Medical Journal*, 365(l2208), 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.l2208>
- Health Tourism (2023). Medical tourism. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.health-tourism.com/medical-tourism/>
- Health Türkiye (2023). Türkiye health system. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.healthturkiye.com/tukiye-health-system>
- HongFan, Z. M., Bittle, J., HerngChia, C., Leiyu, S. and Siou-Tang, H. (2023). The impact of JCI accreditation on the clinical, operational, and financial performance of Chinese private hospitals. *Journal of Radiology and Clinical Imaging*, 6, 138-145. <https://doi.org/10.26502/jrci.2809081>
- Hopkins, L., Labonté, R., Runnels, V. and Packer, C. (2010). Medical tourism today: What is the state of existing knowledge?. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 31(2), 185-198. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jphp.2010.10>
- Horowitz, M. D., Rosensweig, J. A. and Jones, C. A. (2007). Medical tourism: Globalization of the healthcare marketplace. *MedGenMed.*, 9(4), 33-39.
- Hudson, S. and Li, X. R. (2012). Domestic medical tourism: A neglected dimension of medical tourism research. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 21(3), 227-246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2011.615018>
- Joint Commission International (2023). JCI-accredited organizations. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.jointcommissioninternational.org/who-we-are/accredited-organizations/#sort=%40aoname%20ascending>
- Jose, R. and Sachdeva, S. (2010). Keeping an eye on future: Medical tourism. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 35(3), 376-378. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0970-0218.69247>
- Kaewkamol, P. and Lim, G. (2021). Neo-Liberalism, the rise of the unelected and policymaking in Thailand: The case of the medical tourism industry. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 51(3), 447-468. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2020.1740294>
- Karakoç, S. (2017). *Küresel sağlık turizmi: Biyoteknoloji ve Türkiye'nin durumu*. Kimlik Yayınları.
- Kılıçarslan, M. (2019). SWOT analysis of health tourism in Turkey. *Electronic Journal of Social Sciences*, 18(71), 1135-1145. <https://doi.org/10.17755/esosder.467515>
- Kim, S., Arcodia, C. and Kim, I. (2019). Critical success factors of medical tourism: The case of South Korea. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(24), 4964, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16244964>

- Kowalewski, P., Michał, R., Kwiatkowski, A., Paśnik, K. and Walędziak, M. S. (2020). Bariatric tourists. Foreign bariatric patients treated in Poland – a survey based study. *Pol Przegl Chir*, 92(4), 12-16. <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.1289>
- Kyoung-Lee, K. and Byung-Ro, S. (2023). Analyzing a new model of medical tourism policy: Target country-specific models and marketing strategies. *Iranian Journal of Public Health*, 52(10), 2090–2098. <https://doi.org/10.18502/ijph.v52i10.13847>
- Lemonia, A. and Fragkiadakis, G. F. (2022). The involvement of in vitro fertilization in the development of medical tourism in Greece: Study of the cost and quality of services offered in comparison with other countries. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 15(3), 1933-1942.
- Levary, R. R. (2011). Multiple-criteria approach to ranking medical tourism destinations. *Thunderbird Int'l Bus Rev*, 53, 529-537. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tie.20430>
- Lunt, N., Smith, R. D., Exworthy, M., Green, S. T., Horsfall, D. G. and Mannion, R. (2011). *Medical tourism: Treatments, markets and health system implications: A scoping review*. OECD Publications Service.
- Market Data Forecast (2023). Europe medical tourism market research report – segmented by treatment type, country (UK, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Netherlands, Turkey, Czech Republic and Rest of Europe) - industry analysis on size, share, COVID-19 impact, trends and growth forecast (2023 to 2028). Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.marketdataforecast.com/market-reports/europe-medical-tourism-market>
- Mayakul, T., Kiattisin, S. and Prasad, R. (2018). A sustainable medical tourism framework based on the enterprise architecture design: The case in Thailand. *Journal of Green Engineering*, 8(3), 359–388. <https://doi.org/10.13052/jge1904-4720.838>
- Med Refund (2023). Private treatment in Poland: Costs, treatments, clinics. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://medrefund.co.uk/private-treatment-abroad/poland-costs-treatments-clinics/>
- Media Market (2023). Medical tourism statistics: Exploring the global landscape of cross-border healthcare seekers. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://media.market.us/medical-tourism-statistics/>
- Medical Tourism (2023). International medical treatment prices. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.medicaltourism.com/compare-prices>
- Medical Tourism Review (2023). Medical packages. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://medicaltourism.review/packages/medical>
- Medical Tourism Services (2023). Health services. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.medicaltourismservices.com/>
- Medical Travel Market (2023). Global medical tourism outlook in 2023. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://medicaltravelmarket.com/news/global-medical-tourism-outlook-in-2023>



- Medigence (2023). Featured packages. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://medigence.com/packages>
- Momeni, K., Jannati, A., Khodayari-Zarnaq, R., Ghasemyani, S. and Havasian, M. (2021). Iranian medical tourism industry and selected countries in 2020: A comparative study. *Health Scope*, 10(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.5812/jhealthscope.97919>
- My Medi Travel (2023). Popular procedures. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.mymeditravel.com/>
- Nomad Capitalist (2023). The 10 best countries for medical tourism and overseas healthcare. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://nomadcapitalist.com/global-citizen/freedom/top-5-best-countries-medical-tourism/>
- Orekhovska, I. and Bergier, B. (2021). Medical tourism in Poland – Development proposals. *Health Problems of Civilization*, 15(3), 225-233. <https://doi.org/10.5114/hpc.2021.106811>
- Osmonova, C. (2019). *A study of the choice attributes affecting to medical tourism in Korea using big data* [Master Thesis]. Pukyong National University Department of Business Administration.
- Placid Way (2023). Explore pricings by selecting medical treatment. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.placidway.com/find-cost-search/>
- Prokopiou, D., Giannopoulos, K., Anagnostellos, K., Tselentis, B. and Mavridoglou, G. (2019). SWOT analysis of the tourist sector on Paros Island, Greece. In: G. Passerini, G. Rodriguez, S. Ricci (Eds.), *Coastal cities and their sustainable future III* (pp. 165 – 176). 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. WIT Press.
- Research and Markets (2023). Medical tourism global market report 2023. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.researchandmarkets.com/report/medical-tourism>
- Sarıaydın, İ. (2023). Medikal turizmde paydaşların rolleri ve SWOT analizi. *ENTIS-Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 1(2), 64–83.
- Seo, B. R. and Kim, K. L. (2021). The post pandemic revitalization plan for the medical tourism sector in South Korea: A brief review. *Iran Journal of Public Health*, 50(9), 1766-1772. <https://doi.org/10.18502/ijph.v50i9.7047>
- Statista (2022). Health professionals and hospitals. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.statista.com/markets/412/topic/452/health-professionals-hospitals/#overview>
- T.C. Sağlık Bakanlığı (2012). Sağlık turizminde süreçler ve aracı kuruluşlar araştırma raporu. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <http://dursunaydin.com/upload/tr-saglik-turizminde-surecler-ve-araci-kuruluslar-arastirma-raporu.pdf>
- Tengilimoğlu, D. (2013). *Sağlık turizmi* (2. Baskı). Siyasal Kitabevi.
- The World Bank (2023). Physicians (per 1,000 people). Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.MED.PHYS.ZS>



- Treatment Abroad (2023). Popular destinations for medical tourism. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.treatmentabroad.com/destinations/>
- Tsekouropoulos, G., Vasileiou, A., Hoxha, G., Dimitriadis, A. and Zervas, I. (2024). Sustainable approaches to medical tourism: Strategies for Central Macedonia/Greece. *Sustainability*, 16(1), 121, 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16010121>
- Xu, Q., Purushothaman, V., Cuomo, R. E. and Mackey, T. K. (2021). A bilingual systematic review of South Korean medical tourism: A need to rethink policy and priorities for public health?. *BMC Public Health*, 21(658), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10642-x>
- Wiśniewska, A. M. (2021). Sustainable development and management of medical tourism companies in Poland. *International Journal of Management and Economics*, 57(2), 151-160. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ijme-2021-0010>
- Wong, K. M., Peramarajan, V. and Arshad, T. N. T. (2014, December, 9-11). *Medical tourism destination SWOT analysis: A case study of Malaysia, Thailand [Oral Presentation]*. Singapore and India. 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Tourism Research (4ICTR), SHS Web of Conferences 12. Kola Kinabalu, Malaysia.
- World Health Organization (2023). Health workforce: Medical doctors. Retrieved December 30, 2023 from <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/indicator-groups/indicator-group-details/GHO/medical-doctors>
- Virani, A., Wellstead, A. M. and Howlett, M. (2020). The north-south policy divide in transnational healthcare: A comparative review of policy research on medical tourism in source and destination countries. *Global Health*, 16, 37-51. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-020-00566-3>
- Vovk, V., Beztelesna, L. and Pliashko, O. (2021). Identification of factors for the development of medical tourism in the world. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(21), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182111205>
- Yılmaz, B. (2018). *Türkiye'nin medikal turizmde ekonomik performansı: Bir karşılaştırma [Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi]*. Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Yiğit, A. and Demirbaş, M. B. (2020). Türkiye'de medikal turizmin gelişimine etki eden faktörlerin SWOT-AHP yöntemi ile tespit edilmesine yönelik bir araştırma. *Karadeniz Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 12(22), 173-192.
- Zhang, L. and Lin, Q. (2018, October, 13-14). A multidimensional analysis of medical tourism in Shandong Province-based on SWOT analysis. In Z. Chen (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 2018 international conference on social science and education reform (ICSSER 2018)* (p. 259-262). 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., Atlantis Press.
- Zhong, L., Deng, B., Morrison, A. M., Coca-Stefaniak, J. A. and Yang, L. (2021). Medical, health and wellness tourism research—A review of the literature (1970–2020) and research agenda. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 18, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182010875>