

The Aspects of Nutrition and Dietetics in Travel and Tourism

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Abstract: *The health tourism assiduity is gaining a growing global attention. Nutrition is one of the external factors that ensure the growth of health tourism. Health tourism includes four main headlines - medical tourism, senior tourism, impaired tourism, and thermal tourism. Travellers who want to be involved in health tourism, unlike other ones, want to admit services for certain requirements of which the most important of these is the nutritive services they admit during their trip. The lack of resources examining nutrition and healthful practices, including food and drink services in health tourism, created the need for a detailed compendium of this subject.*

Keywords: health, tourism, nutrition, dietary services, tourists

1. Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, health is not just the absence of disease and infirmity but also a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing (Wasserheit J. N.2009). The health tourism industries are gaining global attention since it provides medical treatment, relaxation, a balanced diet, exercise, and cosmetic services resulting in its growing popularity worldwide (Antunes, 2015). Health tourism mainly consists of different services such as medical tourism, senior tourism, disabled tourism as well as thermal tourism (Akbulut, G., 2010). Today, nowadays people are able to access more information via technology about different organizations that would provide economic and quality services in the field of health tourism outside their places of residence (Oduncuoğlu, F.2019). The causes such as the high standards of health services provided by many countries with advanced technological facilities, the fact that international travel has become more economical and easier, cost advantages, and waiting lists have enabled health tourism to spread over a very wide region across the world where South Asia, South America, and Southern Europe are the most prominent ones. (Albayrak A.2014)

The scope of health tourism not only includes travel for medical treatment, but also the follow - up of individuals with chronic diseases in the care centres especially for the elderly and rehabilitation services in thermal health facilities. Health services are provided for international patients in more than 30 countries such as USA, Malaysia, Thailand, Germany, South Korea, Singapore, Poland, Hungary, India, Jordan, and Turkey. Recently, Turkey is one of those countries that have secured its position in the field of health tourism (Aydn O., 2012). Henceforth, it can be said that people have now started to prefer developing countries to receive health services which can provide affordable policies and the increase in service quality and till now seen in developing countries such as Turkey, India, and Thailand. As per data of the Turkish Statistical Institute, 284, 577 people received health services in the first quarter of 2022, and the income obtained was 332, 212, 000 US dollars whereas in the second quarter around 2022, 302, 177

people visited this country to receive health services and the income obtained from these services was 436, 212, 000 US dollars (Eves A.2012). In other words, Turkey serves more and more health tourists every day thereby dedicatedly contributing to the country's economy. Tourists involved in health tourism prefers to receive services specific to their personal needs more than others and the leading one of these services is the food and beverage services the tourists receive during their travel (Hrelia S., 2015). In addition to providing affordable accommodation services, businesses that serve this purpose must offer healthy, hygienic, and destination - specific menus with a wide variety, and they have to be checked in terms of gastronomic suitability. Nutrition is one such external factor that ensures the growth of health tourism. Due to the limited resources regarding the nutrition and dietetics practices in health tourism, there arise the need for a detailed compilation and understanding of this section.

Nutritional Services in Medical Tourism

Medical tourism has become one of the "market niches" that is increasingly being growing potential. Today's medical tourism is certainly an "industry" that generates a significant number of passengers and financial turnover on an international level. Establishing a realistic factual state, turnover realized on arrivals and nights be it emotional and/or receptive side financial parameters, is really not an easy task because there are no international standards for statistical tourism medical monitoring. (Altaş A, 2016)

Medical tourism is like a gestation period covering whole of events and relationships that arise as a result of the travelling of individuals to a natural resources facility for a certain period (usually 21 days) to protect or restore their health, receive treatment, and meet their accommodation, nutrition, and entertainment needs. The main motive that directs individuals to medical tourism is the desire to protect or improve their health. Individuals leave their place of residence for a certain period to receive the services necessary for their health. Accommodation and catering are the primary services which are provided by institutions such as hotels, holiday camps, motels and guesthouses, hospitals, spa centres, and various cure centres. Medical tourism

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products are clubbed as per patient's goals or the type of service such as major surgeries, minor surgeries, cosmetic/plastic surgeries, healthy lifestyle services, alternative therapy treatments, and diagnostic services. In cases that require surgical intervention, pre - and postoperative nutrition therapy is very important aspect making sure to avoid or prevent possible complications, and reduce the length of hospital stay. In addition, these individuals will also receive dietary services may be in the form of a personalized food and beverage service or sometimes in the form of clinical nutrition support. Clinical nutrition is the temporary feeding of patients who cannot be fed normally orally, either with nutrient solutions (enteral nutrition) or by intravenous administration of the macro - micro nutrients they need (parenteral nutrition). Clinical nutrition is preferred in many cases such as postoperative period, trauma, cancer, neurological diseases, etc. as per standard recommended. It is well known that clinical nutrition is a special area of expertise and may not be possible to access this service in all health tourism businesses. Hence, various countries have hospitals with the standards that can provide this service to health tourists who need specialized clinical nutrition services.

Food and drink services are among the indispensables of the tourism sector and when it comes to medical health, individuals who need to go on a diet to maintain or restore their health, this sector go into a vicious circle of preparing good - looking, satisfying, low - calorie, and delicious foods and drinks. It is a challenging task to prepare foods and drinks which are not just appealing organoleptically but also satisfy them physically and mentally (Scarles, C.2009). As we are aware that the diet menu is a set of rules about foods and drinks prepared entirely in line with the needs of the person in a temporary phase. Diet menu is based on the characteristics of the person such as age, gender, height, body weight, social life, genetic diseases, previous surgeries, and on - going medications. While preparing and maintaining such special nutrition plans, the accommodation facility, the healthcare provider team, and the kitchen staff have important duties and responsibilities. In fact, the most important and constant factor that enables the number of medical tourists to reach the desired number is mere satisfaction with these services. The cultural differences, personal habits, religious factors, and diet programs specific to the individual's health must be taken into account in the organization. The main concern of medical tourists is the notion that they may not receive the nutritional service they desire while receiving health services. In a study, it is mentioned that around 87% of the people deemed food and beverage services in medical tourism businesses an important factor apart from dietary services for tourists/patients provided. To meet the best from the services the team should assure to meet certain standards regarding hygiene and sanitation, and receive service from health personnel who are trained well enough in the field of personalized nutrition programs to progress in medical tourism.

Nutritional Services in Senior Tourism

As the population ages, the number of elderly people also increases and their lifestyles are becoming more diverse. Older people tend to live longer, healthier lives, are far more

affluent than younger people, and are more likely to travel (Sukalakamala P., 2011). At the same time, more and more people in need of medical care are leaving overseas. A significant segment also seeks to combine medical treatment with leisure activities or travel to popular destinations. These trends have created two huge markets that didn't exist a while ago: senior tourism and health tourism. This older demographic has a longer life expectancy, is energized by advances in technology and medical services, and is more likely to actively participate in tourism. We also place great importance on having access to health - promoting foods and drinks while travelling, as different diseases can occur or develop depending on your age. Therefore, the availability of disease - specific nutrition services has a significant impact on the choice of travel destination (Lehto M. R 2009). This group of tourists may be more selective in their health tourism preferences. This situation therefore has a big impact on where you stay and what you eat while travelling. Because of this, they don't need special accommodations, but they do enjoy some benefits most than others. As this is a period of age - related physical and health decline, there is a much need for trained nutritionists, doctors, dietetic - trained chefs and accommodation support staff who can serve them. It is well aware that older adults expect menu variety, the availability of their own special menu, food quality and cleanliness, and information about meal content, friendly staff, restaurant location and cleanliness.

Nutritional Services in the Disabled Tourism

Everyone has the right to participate in tourism activities equally and that each disabled person needs different support according to his/her current condition, while this issue is especially tried to be standardized by laws and commissions in countries (Cole S. T.2007). There are few touristic destinations designed as per individuals. Businesses should take precautions and always comply with these standards so that disabled people can have a quality and comfortable holiday both in the hotel as well as other places where they can receive food and beverage services at the destination. Studies have shown that disabled individuals due to their physical deformities may encounter negative behaviors of the personnel, improper access to food and drink services and cannot take a vacation without a companion (Balci, İ., 2015). Studies have also shown an inverse relationship between the frequencies of going on vacation due to the problems encountered. Furthermore, establishments providing food and beverage services do not have proper information about facilities for disabled people, or such facilities are only partial, staff are not trained in this specific area, and do not provide standards. It turns out that there is no legal verification to do so. As per Turkish Standards Institute, it is necessary to specify that companies and trained personnel providing nutritional services for disabled tourists should specify the facilities especially for disabled because it makes easier for disabled ones to benefit from nutrition services and note their suggestions for improvement by understanding their problems via proper communication

Nutritional Services in Thermal Tourism

Health and wellness tourism are always valued in the post - pandemic phase. This has the potential to be a strategic product that improves people's well - being and quality of

life at social, physical and environmental levels. A variety of offers for special experiences that complement the destination's offerings will help position the region as a health and wellness destination. Therefore, thermal tourism needs to be promoted as a specific product, based on the innovation and diversification of related services and its perceived benefits for all age groups (Celiloğlu F. K., 2016). Wellness tourism, especially in terms of thermal tourism, is a health tourism service that aims to help a person achieve fitness physically, socially and environmentally. Wellness includes all types of massages, skin care, mud and algae baths, bath care, natural care products, diet and detox offers (Avcıkurt C.2020). Wellness tourism is based on the premise that diseases that require treatment can be prevented before they start to develop. Increasingly intensive working periods, urbanization and population growth, technological development, economic and social conditions - all have led simply to an increase in people's stress levels and a decrease in labor productivity and production. As a result, many people are seeking healthy lifestyles via different preventive health services. Thermal tourism has become a preferred part of health tourism to alleviate this stress as well as physical and psychological fatigue. As per Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Thermal tourism is defined as a type of tourism resulting from the use of thermal resources for recreation and the application of remedies in combination with supportive care such as: physical therapy, rehabilitation, exercise, psychotherapy, dietary therapy, and even methods such as hot spring mineral bathing, drinking, inhalation, and mud bathing. The main expectation of individuals from thermal tourism is optimum treatment and care. Hence, an individually prepared menu is required which can cover aspects for weight loss, detoxification, fitness and detoxification. Having a personalized nutrition plan specially designed by experienced in-house nutritionist is very important and therefore cannot be ignored.

Nutrition and Dietetics Practices in Health Tourism in the World

The health tourism industry is gaining increasing attention around the world. It is gaining popularity around the world for providing medical care, relaxation, balanced nutrition, exercise, and beauty services (Oduncuoğlu F., 2019). There are lifestyle intervention programs in conjunction with health tourism and compulsory health counselling. In these programs, participants are provided with health information by a team of doctors, nurses, fitness trainers, and nutritionists and follow health parameters that measure the effectiveness of their training (Holst M., 2017). For example, in Japan, an experiential health tourism program was established for people with diabetes or at high risk of developing diabetes. As part of the nutritional intervention of this program, nutritional training was conducted by a registered dietitian based on the "Japanese Dietary Guidelines" and the "Japanese Dietary Guidelines." A nutritionist lectures on balanced nutrition, adequate calorie intake, and low glycemic index diets. We also instructed participants whose body mass index (BMI) exceeds her 25 kg/m² to lose weight, including: B. Reduce your caloric intake, especially snacking. Participants with BMI <25 kg/m² were advised to maintain adequate caloric intake and avoid excessive carbohydrate intake. In addition to

providing advice, he also introduced practical methods, such as providing buffet - style meals using locally sourced ingredients. Participants were advised to choose a balanced meal by comparing it with the actual meal they had chosen. In some cases, our chefs offer classes in preparing healthy meals using local, seasonal ingredients (Tanaka H., 2018). Improvements in body composition parameters (weight and waist circumference measurements) and metabolic parameters (triglycerides, cholesterol, fasting and postprandial blood sugar, haemoglobin A1c) were observed as a result of this program. Another example is a weight loss program consisting of overnight trips that combine the fun of travel with health promotion, as part of a Japanese health tourism project. The weight loss program includes exercise, leisure activities, and low energy intake using traditional Japanese food culture. In this program, individuals follow an intervention design (7 - day physical activity and diet boot - camp) to increase total energy expenditure toward goal weight loss while enjoying landscapes, locations, and food culture along with leisure and physical activity. At the end of this program, participants were observed to continue their habits after 12 weeks and establish lasting healthy eating habits (Martindale R., 2017). Therefore, health tourism is a field that can help create a strategic roadmap to achieve ideal body weight and protect against chronic diseases that are influenced by BMI. In Turkey, as part of a holistic approach to health tourism, a new model proposal called "Healthy Living Campus" has been developed to increase the diversity of health tourism (Yabe D 2020). In this model, enterprises are those that provide medical development and accommodation, catering, recreation, leisure and recreational services related to travel tourism. This model can also inform companies about the characteristics of food and beverage services offered in health tourism.

The Importance of Nutrition in Choosing A Health Tourism Destination

The origins of tourism activities date back to the 3rd century BC when the ancient Greeks believed that travelling to the sunny coastal areas of Egypt would improve health (Yılmaz, N.2022). As the importance of life activities and health increases, so does the importance of nutrition. With the fusion of different cultures, people's interest in local and traditional cuisine is increasing day by day. Nutritional fallacies are creating a more authentic and conscious consumption trend (Elsworth J., 2006). People seem to be travelling to destinations that offer nutritional and dietary advice to support the intake of a balanced and sufficient diet for a healthy life. Some studies have shown that health trends can influence eating habits while travelling. For example, nutrition and health are considered risk factors in international tourism, and some tourists avoid eating certain local foods due to perceived hygiene and health risks. On the other hand, there is also the view that health may be one of the motivations for tourists to consume local food at their destination. Generally, health tourism travellers prefer destinations where they can maintain their previous dietary habits. In fact, destinations that offer these opportunities motivate people to travel (Lemieux C. J.2015). Furthermore, food and drink shape neighbourhoods and contribute to the formation of regional identity. Considering Turkey's position in health tourism, the abundance and diversity of agricultural products compared to natural resources are very

advantageous. However, facilities such as hotels and hospitals that provide health tourism services do not have set standards regarding nutrition and dietary habits, making testing difficult. No matter what the situation is during a trip, the act of eating continues (Chang R. C., 2017). However, food intake can have both positive and negative effects on health. Therefore, travellers worry about food - related health issues while travelling. Novelty travellers avoid trying new local cuisines due to unknown health risks, but nonnovial travellers are less likely to have similar health issues and concerns. A healthy diet is a necessary prerequisite for tourist travel. All intercultural tourism activities, including health tourism, can allow travellers to experience new local foods and eating habits. Consuming local food can provide tourists with an authentic cultural experience and increase the quality and satisfaction of their overall experience. In fact, for some people, eating local food has become a necessary ritual to becoming a "real" tourist. On the other hand, tourists should be careful when dealing with very strange foods, eating environments, and the health problems they can cause. Food poisoning can disrupt a carefully planned trip. Therefore, health is an important issue in tourists' local food consumption in cross - cultural tourist destinations.

2. Conclusion

The special impact of health tourism is associated with the improvement of the economic situation of enterprises serving this category of tourists (hospitals, medical centers, clinics, sanatoriums, spa hotels, and the medical system in general). Health tourism generates economic flows of resources both to the country origin and to the countries that provide health services to tourists through their national health systems and related sectors (e. g. hotel management, food industry, medicine). For this reason, many countries are striving to develop medical tourism, attract investment into this sector of the economy, and increase the influx of foreign medical tourists. Accommodations in the health tourism sector offer different menus depending on the guest's age, gender, weight, health condition, etc., and are prepared for special guests. Given that hotels meticulously prepare meals by large teams of chefs, staffs are expected to approach each meal menu with the same care and division of labour. On the other hand, companies operating in the health tourism field need to understand exactly what points to keep in mind when providing nutritional services and what are needed to diversify the meal menu. Therefore, the carbohydrate, protein and fat content of the diet must be adequate. Care must be taken to ensure that the menu contains enough vitamins and minerals. Health tourism accommodations should employ staff with extensive knowledge, skills and experience in the field of dietary foods, and the latest nutritional information should be constantly updated through new training. By combining training and imagination, chefs are able to create very tasty and low - calorie menus, which will never be repeated. Guests' special circumstances, such as food allergies, food intolerances, and vegetarianism, must be considered when creating the menu. Before providing catering services, the individual characteristics of the guests must be identified and recorded. The area where catering is provided and produced must have suitable conditions in terms of size, humidity, light, ventilation, storage, waste

disposal, etc. The equipment used in these fields must be of high quality and its calibration must be adhered to. At every stage of nutrition services, utmost attention should be paid to the principles of hygiene and hygiene. All food produced must be sampled and stored. If necessary, it should be sent to a food laboratory for analysis. In order to set certain standards and ensure that these diet menus are always of the same quality, it is necessary to create standard recipes. availability of health tourism opportunities, affordability for those participating in these activities, climate, natural resource potential, diversity of food and drink options, presence of thermal facilities, high oxygen content with ease.

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