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DETERMINANTS OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN COASTAL KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

Karnataka is a premier medical tourism destination in India, primarily cantered in coastal Karnataka, offering high-quality, cost-effective healthcare, including cardiac surgery, oncology, and transplants. Combining advanced corporate hospitals, accredited medical institutions, and traditional Ayurveda wellness, it serves international patients with specialized care, making it a leading health destination in India. The main objective of the study is to study the determinants of medical tourists in coastal Karnataka. *410 foreign patients and their family members as respondents for the study both primary and secondary data was collected for the study purpose. Structured questionnaires were distributed among the respondents for the data collection. Descriptive research methodology was followed. Yamen sample design was chosen for the sampling method. Regression analysis was used with the help of SPSS software to find out the influence of* Patients' Perceived Factors and *organisational determinants* on *the perception of foreign tourist towards medical tourism in coastal Karnataka. The research revealed that, Patients' Perceived Factors and organisational determinants are significantly influencing the perception of foreign tourist who are coming for medical treatment in coastal Karnataka.*

KEY WORDS: *Patients' Perceived Factors, organisational determinants, perception of foreign tourist, Coastal Karnataka*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian subcontinent is experiencing rapid increase in medical tourism. Recent developments in the medical field clearly suggest that the number of tourists seeking medical care is rising annually. Examining the elements driving the expansion of medical tourism in India has become crucial in this regard (Seow AN, et al., 2017). There is no universally accepted definition of medical tourism. It includes any international journey for medical care. any foreign patients are considered medical tourism patients, with the exception of expatriates seeking care in their present home country and any emergency situations (Ramamonjiarivelo Z, et al., 2015). In several nations, including Thailand, India, and several South American nations, medical tourism has grown to be a significant industry. Additionally, medical tourists are drawn to nations like Singapore and Malaysia (Hunter W. C. 2015). The medical tourism sector is progressively expanding. As part of their plan to market their product, different service providers are choosing different targeted categories. These groups are all referred regarded as medical tourists (Manaf, 2015). In the past, only wealthy individuals from developing and underdeveloped nations traveled to developed nations for medical care because it was not available in their own countries (Momeni K, & Janati A, 2018). Rich Indians used to travel to the US and the UK for medical care. However, there has been a recent reversal in the tendency. According to Wongkit M. and Mc Kercher B. (2015), many individuals from wealthy nations also go to underdeveloped nations that may provide equivalent medical care. Factors contributing to the growth of medical tourism The following are some of the main justifications for using medical tourism: Certain treatments and methods might not be available in their nation of origin (Khan M J, et al., 2016). As a result, the only option accessible to the patients is to travel to another nation where such therapies or procedures are offered for treatment.

The patient may choose to seek medical assistance or treatment from a renowned and skilled medical professional who works abroad (Ebrahim A H & Ganguli S. 2019). Since they will feel more at ease in a setting where they are surrounded by their own local culture, foreigners may like to choose a method from their own country (Das M C, etal., 2021). Some people choose to travel for medical tourism when they are aware that better technology is available in another country; others choose to travel for treatments when they are aware that better technology is available elsewhere or when they are certain that they can receive a necessary treatment sooner than they would at home (Beladi H, etal., 2019). By choosing medical tourism, patients have shorter wait times or none at all.

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Some may travel as a result of a doctor's recommendation. Some people may go because they have heard about the hospital, its services, or its physician from a close friend or family (Zolfagharian M, etal., 2018).

Indian Medical Tourism

India's medical tourism market is expected to reach USD 16.21 billion in 2030, a compound annual growth rate of 13.23 percent. Global demand for high-quality, reasonably priced healthcare, highly qualified medical personnel, and hospitals with international accreditation are driving this expansion (Wong K. M, et al., 2014). India's standing as a top international destination for medical tourism is being further reinforced by favorable government policies, enhanced connectivity, and developments in digital health and patient facilitation services (Bagga T, etal., 2020). The healthcare system is changing as a result of the integration of technologies like AI and Gen AI. By 2026, these technologies will help healthcare providers manage all aspect of a patient's journey, including symptoms, test scheduling, result analysis, and follow-up treatment. They will help oversee and manage research projects in labs. Patients may even utilize them directly to keep an eye on their lifestyle and treatment compliance, and by identifying warning indications early on, they will enable proactive healthcare delivery (Khan M J, etal., 2017). Medical tourism will spread outside of major cities in 2026. Affordable, dependable, and more specialized medical services, together with improved hospital infrastructure, cutting-edge medical technology, and improved connectivity, are making Tier-2 cities formidable healthcare hubs (Biswas T, Rai A. 2022). High-quality care may now be provided in cities like Jaipur, Amritsar, Lucknow, and Chandigarh, relieving strain on metro hospitals and providing patients with a more convenient and affordable treatment experience (Dash A. 2021). International patients seeking high-quality care without sacrificing convenience have found these new hubs appealing due to shorter wait times, comparable pricing, and better connection (Malhotra N, & Dave K. 2022). Medical tourism has expanded beyond hospital treatments. By 2026, patients undergoing treatment overseas anticipate complete care coordination, including online consultations, assistance with visa applications, recuperation planning, and follow-ups after treatment (Aziz A, etal., 2015). The government of India has also introduced an e-medical visa, which allows for quicker document approvals. Documents that previously took weeks may now be completed in a matter of days. Facilitators oversee patients' seamless and effective healthcare experience from the moment of contact (Fetscherin M, & Stephano R. 2016). In order to assist patients, make well-informed decisions prior to departing their nation, this professional support begins with pre-travel preparation, which includes virtual consultations with leading physicians, comparative treatment alternatives, and customized cost estimates (Cham T H, etal., 2021). International patients are looking for recognized hospitals that offer transparent, value-based care as the cost of medications and treatments continues to grow. Low cost is no longer the only factor that influences patients' treatment decisions. JCI, NABH, and ISO accreditations are starting to become crucial. Global standards of care, infection control procedures, and proven success rates are what patients seek (Ghosh T, et al., 2019). Building confidence and drawing in cost-conscious medical travelers will require educating patients about treatment prices, hospital credentials, and quality standards. This will also ensure long-term, sustainable development in medical tourism. Growth of virtual consultations and telemedicine (Lovelock B et al., 2018). The emergence of virtual consultations and telemedicine has altered patient access to medical information and communication with healthcare professionals (Khan M J, et al., 2020). Before the pandemic, telemedicine was only a concept used by medical experts; nevertheless, telehealth became the primary method of delivering healthcare (Han H, & Hyun S S. 2015). This tendency has become even more significant in the context of medical tourism as it allows potential patients to interact online with medical specialists (Chelliah S, etal., 2021). These days, a lot of healthcare systems and medical travel initiatives are starting to include telehealth technologies to give patients instant access to medical specialists and prompt responses to their inquiries. This provides chances for post-treatment follow-up and remote patient monitoring (Han H, & Hyun S S. 2015).

Medical Tourism in Coastal Karnataka

Karnataka has emerged as one of India’s premier medical tourism destinations, with a strong concentration of services in Coastal Karnataka. The state is widely recognized for offering high-quality healthcare at comparatively affordable costs, attracting international patients seeking treatments such as cardiac surgery, oncology care, organ transplants, and advanced diagnostic services. The presence of modern corporate hospitals, internationally accredited medical institutions, and highly skilled, English-speaking medical professionals enhances the global appeal of the region. In addition to allopathic treatments, Karnataka also integrates traditional systems of healing such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and Naturopathy, providing holistic wellness options for patients during pre- and post-treatment recovery. The coastal belt of Karnataka, popularly known as Karavali, plays a significant role in this sector. Stretching over approximately 320 kilometers along the Arabian Sea, the region comprises three major districts: Uttara Kannada, Udupi, and Dakshina Kannada. This picturesque region is characterized by pristine beaches, serene riverine islands, and vibrant port towns, creating a soothing environment conducive to healing

and recuperation. The combination of advanced healthcare infrastructure and natural therapeutic settings makes Coastal Karnataka a preferred destination for medical tourists seeking both treatment and wellness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The provision of affordable medical care for people seeking surgery and other specialist treatments with the assistance of the travel industry is known as medical tourism (Khan MJ, et al., 2017). In order to prepare for future applied research, this study reviewed the literature in the healthcare service sector and examined the industry's service quality. According to a study by Khan MJ, et al. (2016), India is becoming one of the top locations for medical facilities and services, greatly advancing socioeconomic development by creating jobs and raising foreign exchange earnings (Seow AN, etal., 2017). Through advancements in the infrastructure and educational system, this progress also helps to raise the standard of living of the host nation (Chelliah S, etal., 2021). Today's Indian hospitals are outfitted with cutting-edge equipment and staffed by highly skilled and experienced physicians who treat patients promptly and effectively (Ramamonjiarivelo Z, et al., 2015). The potential of the medical tourism sector in India is highlighted in this study, which also aids in the analysis of current trends that may boost the number of medical tourists and the government's involvement in advancing medical tourism infrastructure. Books, periodicals, journals, and websites were the sources of the information (Das MC, et al., 2021). According to Khan M. J. et al. (2020), India has an advantage when it comes to seizing international prospects in the medical tourism industry. The government must facilitate private endeavors in the healthcare system and plays a critical role in its growth. In order for foreign patients to effectively use immigration services at entrance points, steps should be taken to guarantee prompt visa approvals (Hunter W. C. 2015). According to the Government of India's Ministry of Tourism, medical tourism is the practice of going across international boundaries to get healthcare services, including different medical treatments, according to a research by Poonam Gupta et al. (Manaf, 2015). In India, this practice is expanding quickly. Delhi is one of the top five most popular cities in the nation, which is ranked among the top three medical tourism destinations in Asia (Momeni K, & Janati A, 2018). The study focuses on the advantages and disadvantages of medical travel in the Delhi-NCR area. A systematic questionnaire was used to gather information from 100 incoming patients from 22 different nations who visited 16 major hospitals in Delhi. Cost effectiveness, reputable hospitals, skilled physicians, a variety of treatments, cutting-edge technology, online consultation, shorter wait times, and well-maintained infrastructure with high standards of sanitation and hygiene are some of the key qualities noted (Wongkit M, & Mc Kercher B. 2015). However, patients encounter a number of hurdles, including as trouble locating translators, problems obtaining a visa, insufficient insurance, concerns with follow-up treatment, problems with tour operators, corruption, unequal pricing practices, and subpar lodging. (Ganguli S. & Abraham A. H., 2019). According to (Beladi H, et al., 2019), medical tourism is not a novel idea because healthcare has always been vital to humanity and necessitates extensive, high-quality treatment. India is one of the few nations that are important main medical destinations (Zolfagharian M, et al., 2018). Finding the variables affecting India's appeal as a medical travel destination was the aim of this study. According to Wong K. M. et al. (2014), the study looked at the main contributing elements and their relative significance in drawing medical tourists. A structural equation modeling method was used to perform the survey. When choosing a vacation in India, travelers prioritize affordability and high-quality services. (Bagga T. et al., 2020). While visitor opinions were shown to be somewhat less important, destination competitiveness is also appreciated. Maintaining high-quality services while keeping prices under control is necessary to make India a viable medical tourism destination in the age of globalization (Biswas T, Rai A. 2022). According to (Dash A. 2021), bone marrow transplantation, alternative medicine, heart bypass surgery, hip replacement, and eye surgery are the most common therapies available in India. The goal of (Malhotra N, & Dave K. 2022) research is to examine the elements that motivate prospective medical tourists to select a location, with a focus on the function of destination image. (Aziz A, et al., 2015) noted that while seeking medical care overseas is not a novel idea, the practice of American individuals seeking care in underdeveloped nations is relatively new. Studies frequently depend on surveys of healthcare professionals and conversations about the possible effects of medical tourism on developing countries because there is a dearth of reliable data on this sector. (Fetscherin M, & Stephano R. 2016) noted that while destination competition and service quality continue to be significant obstacles, the medical tourism industry's potential is well-established. According to (Cham TH, et al., 2021), patients from Western and Middle Eastern nations can utilize India's well-developed public healthcare systems and health insurance market. In their study on wellness tourism, (Ghosh T, et al., 2019) identified the major contributing factors and their relative significance in enhancing India's attractiveness as a health tourism destination from the perspective of international consumers (Lovelock B et al., 2018). They also mentioned that hospital charges are very affordable and that India offers a variety of medical systems, including Allopathy, Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani.

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3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The analysis of the literature shows that a significant number of studies have concentrated on the development, potential, advantages, and difficulties of medical tourism in India, with an emphasis on elements like government assistance, cost effectiveness, high-quality treatment, and cutting-edge technology. However, the majority of these studies focus on urban areas like Delhi-NCR and other large cities, paying little attention to developing medical tourism destinations like Coastal Karnataka. Additionally, the majority of current research focuses on destination competitiveness, general industry trends, and patient inflow; the combined impact of institutional and patient-perceived determinants on foreign tourist perception towards medical tourism in coastal Karnataka has received relatively little attention. Additionally, there aren't many empirical studies that explicitly take into account the viewpoints of family members that accompany international patients, who are crucial in assessing medical treatment. Therefore, by investigating both foreign tourist perception and organizational determinants variables impacting foreign visitors' happiness in the chosen regions, this study aims to close these disparities.

4.NEED FOR THE STUDY

India's healthcare and economic growth have benefited greatly from medical tourism; nonetheless, patient happiness and service quality are key factors in its success. There is little study on the combined impact of foreign tourist perception and organizational determinants, especially in developing regions like Coastal Karnataka, despite the fact that previous studies have emphasized the significance of cost, quality, and infrastructure. To improve patients' entire healthcare experience, it is crucial to comprehend their impressions of things like comfort, safety, waiting time, and affordability. At the same time, institutional features like medical facilities, qualified personnel, cutting-edge technology, and assistance with visas are vital for drawing in and keeping international patients. As a result, this study is required to offer a thorough examination of these elements and how they affect satisfaction. The results will assist stakeholders, legislators, and hospital administrators in creating plans that will increase infrastructure, enhance service quality, and position these areas as competitive medical tourism destinations.

5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the impact of factors affecting the perception towards medical tourism by the foreign tourists in Coastal Karnataka.
2. To study the influence of organisational determinants impacting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka.

6. HYPOTHESIS

H_0: There is no significant impact of factors affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in coastal Karnataka.

H_1: There is a significant impact of factors affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in coastal Karnataka.

H_0: There is no significant impact of organisational determinants affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka.

H_2: There is a significant impact of organisational determinants affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey took into consideration 20 hospital in Coastal Karnataka that offer medical tourism services to international patients. The data was intended to be collected from 402 respondents. It was determined that all 410 surveys were legitimate and appropriate for examination. A 5-point Likert scale, with 5 representing "strongly agree" and 1 representing "strongly disagree," was used to gather data on how much international patients value certain aspects of medical tourism while choosing Coastal Karnataka as treatment locations. It was possible to get more precise perceptual answers by using a 5-point Likert scale.

Primary Data

A systematic questionnaire was used to gather the study's core data from family members who accompanied overseas patients to hospitals in the Coastal Karnataka (District wise) for medical care. These responders were chosen because they keep a careful eye on the course of therapy and the general healthcare experience. Reliability and representativeness of the data for examining factors impacting medical tourism satisfaction were ensured by obtaining 410 genuine responses from carefully chosen top institutions in the research region.

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Secondary Data

The study's secondary data came from a number of trustworthy sources. Selected peer-reviewed publications from well-known bibliographic databases, including Emerald, SAGE Journals Online, Science Direct, Scopus, Taylor & Francis Online, Web of Science, and Wiley Online Library, are among them. The selection of peer-reviewed journals was based on their reputation, scholarly integrity, and noteworthy contribution to the subject of study. Information was also obtained from published reports, journals, theses, periodicals, research articles, newspapers, and internet e-sources.

8. SAMPLE DESIGN

Family members of overseas patients who came to various facilities in Coastal Karnataka for treatment made up the final sample units. 410 respondents from a number of prestigious hospitals in Coastal Karnataka were given a standardized questionnaire. The Yamane (1967) sample size formula was used to establish the sample size of 410 respondents, guaranteeing a suitable and statistically sound representation of the target population. This technique offered a more straightforward way to calculate the sample size based on the total number of hospitals in the research region that provide medical tourism services. Respondents were provided with a list of certain Coastal Karnataka hospitals in order to get insight into patient opinions and institutional variables driving medical tourism. This selection ensured that the sample adequately captured variations across institutions, thereby enhancing the reliability of the findings.

9. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The current study focuses on investigating the institutional and patient-perceived factors influencing international visitors' satisfaction towards services of hospitals in the Coastal Karnataka. The coastal region of Karnataka, known as Karavali, consists of three administrative districts spanning approximately 320 km along the Arabian Sea: Uttara Kannada (North Canara), Udupi, and Dakshina Kannada (South Canara). This region features numerous beaches, riverine islands, and port towns. Family members who accompanied foreign patients to hospitals in these areas for treatment are the main focus of the study, and these respondents make up the final sample units. Only hospitals that offer medical tourism services are included in the study. The results provide useful information for hospital administrators, healthcare providers, and legislators to create supportive healthcare systems and successful medical tourism initiatives that improve the general health, lifestyle, and well-being of foreign patients.

10. DATA ANALYSIS

Family members who accompanied overseas patients seeking medical care at hospitals in the Coastal Karnataka provided the majority of the study's data. Due to their thorough observation of the hospital services, the treatment procedure, and the general patient experience, these respondents were regarded as valuable sources of information. With the use of SPSS statistical software, the gathered data were methodically examined using regression analysis, allowing for precise and trustworthy interpretation of the findings. The link between the independent variables—patient-perceived factors and institutional factors—and the dependent variable—foreign visitors' satisfaction—was investigated using regression analysis.

This approach assisted in determining how several elements, including staff conduct, hospital infrastructure, cost-effectiveness, quality of treatment, and support services, affect foreign visitors' overall satisfaction. Additionally, the study identified these correlations' statistical significance and strength. The results give a clear picture of how these elements enhance the general healthcare experience, contentment, and well-being of international patients seeking care in these areas.

Factors affecting the perception of foreign tourists

H_0: There is no significant impact of factors affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in coastal Karnataka.

H_1: There is a significant impact of factors affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in coastal Karnataka.

The regression analysis was carried out to examine the influence of perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in coastal Karnataka. The model summary indicates a very strong relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, as evidenced by an R value of 0.929. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.863, which implies that 86.3 percent of the variation in foreign tourist perception is explained by the selected patients' perceived factors. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.859 further confirms the robustness and reliability of the model, while the standard error of estimate (0.36152) indicates a good level of prediction accuracy. The ANOVA results reveal that the overall regression model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 208.708 and a

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significance level of 0.000, which is less than the threshold value of 0.05. This clearly indicates that the model is well fitted and that the independent variables collectively have a significant influence on foreign tourist perception. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) There is no significant impact of factors affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. The coefficient analysis provides further insights into the individual contribution of each variable. Among the significant positive factors, affordable accommodation and food options (β = 0.641) emerge as the most influential predictor, followed by the ease of obtaining medical visas (β = 0.599). Other important positive contributors include the availability of procedures without delay (β = 0.256), lower cost of treatment compared to other countries (β = 0.254), early access to treatment (β = 0.222), and the presence of adequate patient safety and security measures (β = 0.176). These findings highlight that cost effectiveness, accessibility, and efficiency are the key determinants shaping foreign tourists' perception. On the other hand, some variables exhibit a significant negative influence, including patients being guided by doctor referrals (β = -0.338), reduced waiting periods (β = -0.241), financial condition of patients (β = -0.231), and comfort in the surrounding environment (β = -0.176). These negative relationships may indicate underlying issues such as dependency, financial constraints, or mismatched expectations that could adversely affect perception. Furthermore, certain factors such as the provision of a compassionate care environment (p = 0.311) and the attractiveness and accessibility of the destination (p = 0.535) are found to be statistically insignificant, suggesting that they do not play a major role in influencing foreign tourists' perception in this context.

Table 1: Factors affecting the perception of foreign tourists

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.929[a]	.863	.859	.36152

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	327.324	12	27.277	208.708	.000[a]
	Residual	51.886	397	.131		
	Total	379.210	409			

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.573	.081		7.072	.000
	Adequate measures are in place to ensure patient safety and security.	.131	.030	.176	4.412	.000
	Affordable accommodation and food options are readily available.	.526	.034	.641	15.376	.000
	Hospitals provide a warm, homely, and compassionate care environment.	-.084	.083	-.086	-1.014	.311
	Medical visas are easily obtainable for patients.	.445	.060	.599	7.465	.000
	Patients are guided by referrals or advice from their doctors.	-.284	.053	-.338	-5.340	.000
	Patients benefit from reduced waiting periods.	-.174	.043	-.241	-4.080	.000
	Patients feel more at ease in the surrounding environment.	-.143	.034	-.176	-4.179	.000
	Procedures and therapies are available without significant delays.	.200	.035	.256	5.733	.000
	The attractiveness and accessibility of the destination play a key role.	.025	.040	.034	.622	.535
	The cost of treatment is lower than in many other countries.	.199	.038	.254	5.292	.000
	The financial condition of patients influences their decisions.	-.199	.037	-.231	-5.408	.000
	Treatment is received earlier compared to delays in their home country.	.185	.036	.222	5.201	.000

a. Dependent Variable: **Foreign Tourist Perception towards medical tourism in coastal Karnataka**

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Overall, the results clearly demonstrate that patients' perceived factors significantly influence foreign tourist perception towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka, with economic and procedural aspects such as affordability, cost advantage, visa ease, and timely treatment being the most dominant determinants, while tourism-related attributes appear to have a comparatively lesser impact.

Table 2: Organisational Determinants

H_0: There is no significant impact of organisational determinants affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka.

H_2: There is a significant impact of organisational determinants affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.928[a]	.861	.857	.45983

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	518.248	12	43.187	204.249	.000[a]
	Residual	83.732	396	.211		
	Total	601.980	408			

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.430	.096		4.464	.000
	A specialized medical visa category is available for international patients.	-.039	.054	-.039	-.733	.464
	Advanced medical technologies are accessible for diagnosis and treatment.	.554	.063	.486	8.761	.000
	Effective marketing and promotional activities support the growth of medical tourism.	.284	.067	.309	4.225	.000
	Government initiatives	.167	.078	.160	2.142	.033
	Highly trained and competent healthcare professionals, proficient in English, are available.	-.640	.135	-.502	-4.743	.000
	Industry federations actively promote and support the healthcare sector.	.558	.035	.634	15.843	.000
	Medical tourism facilities and institutions are readily accessible.	.129	.049	.120	2.629	.009
	Post-treatment care services, including Ayurveda, Yoga, and Naturopathy, are offered.	.476	.078	.450	6.119	.000
	Specialized therapies and medical procedures are easily obtainable.	.096	.079	.085	1.213	.226
	Strong infrastructure, proper accreditation and certification, and effective communication systems enhance accessibility.	-.067	.058	-.066	-1.170	.243
	Support from equipment manufacturers and healthcare institutions strengthens service delivery.	.580	.064	.502	9.055	.000
	The "Incredible India" campaign by the Ministry of Tourism enhances awareness of India as a medical tourism destination.	.588	.060	.608	9.793	.000

a. Dependent Variable: **Foreign Tourist Perception towards medical tourism in coastal Karnataka**

The regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of organisational determinants affecting the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka. The model summary indicates a very strong relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, with an R value of 0.928. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.861, which implies that 86.1 percent of the variation in foreign tourist perception is explained by the organisational determinants included in the model. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.857

further confirms the robustness and reliability of the model, while the standard error of estimate (0.45983) indicates a reasonably good level of prediction accuracy. The ANOVA results show that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 204.249 and a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This confirms that the model is well fitted and that the organisational determinants collectively have a significant influence on foreign tourist perception. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, establishing that organisational factors play a crucial role in shaping perceptions. The coefficient analysis reveals that several variables significantly and positively influence foreign tourist perception. Among these, industry federations promoting and supporting the healthcare sector ($\beta = 0.634$) emerge as the most influential factor, followed by the "Incredible India" campaign ($\beta = 0.608$), support from equipment manufacturers and healthcare institutions ($\beta = 0.502$), and advanced medical technologies ($\beta = 0.486$). Additionally, post-treatment care services such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and Naturopathy ($\beta = 0.450$), effective marketing and promotional activities ($\beta = 0.309$), accessibility of medical tourism facilities ($\beta = 0.120$), and government initiatives ($\beta = 0.160$) also show a statistically significant positive impact. These findings highlight the importance of institutional support, promotional efforts, technological advancement, and service diversification in enhancing the attractiveness of medical tourism. On the other hand, some variables exhibit negative or insignificant effects. Notably, the availability of highly trained and competent healthcare professionals ($\beta = -0.502$) shows a significant negative influence, which may reflect perception gaps or higher expectations among foreign tourists. Variables such as the availability of a specialized medical visa category ($p = 0.464$), specialized therapies and procedures ($p = 0.226$), and strong infrastructure and accreditation systems ($p = 0.243$) are found to be statistically insignificant, indicating that they do not have a direct influence on perception within this model. Overall, the results demonstrate that organisational determinants significantly influence foreign tourist perception towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka, with factors related to promotion, institutional support, technology, and post-treatment care emerging as key drivers, while some structural and professional aspects either show limited or unexpected effects.

11. FINDINGS

The findings of the study reveal that patients' perceived factors have a significant influence on the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka. The regression model demonstrates a very strong relationship between the variables, with a high explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.863$), indicating that a substantial proportion of variation in foreign tourist perception is explained by these factors. The ANOVA results further confirm that the model is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Among the various factors, affordability emerges as the most influential determinant, particularly the availability of affordable accommodation and food options. This is followed by the ease of obtaining medical visas, which plays a crucial role in attracting foreign tourists. Additionally, factors such as availability of procedures without delay, lower treatment costs compared to other countries, early access to treatment, and adequate patient safety and security measures significantly enhance perception. These findings suggest that cost-effectiveness, accessibility, and efficiency are the primary drivers influencing foreign tourists' decisions. However, the study also identifies certain factors that negatively influence perception. Variables such as reliance on doctor referrals, reduced waiting periods, patients' financial condition, and comfort in the surrounding environment exhibit significant negative relationships. These findings may indicate the presence of underlying issues such as dependency on intermediaries, financial constraints, or mismatched expectations among foreign tourists. Furthermore, factors like compassionate care environment and the attractiveness and accessibility of the destination are found to be statistically insignificant, suggesting that tourism-related attributes are less important compared to core medical service factors. Overall, the findings highlight that foreign tourists prioritize economic and procedural benefits over emotional or destination-related aspects.

The analysis of organisational determinants also indicates a significant impact on foreign tourist perception, with a strong model fit ($R^2 = 0.861$). The results confirm that organisational factors play a vital role in shaping perceptions, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Among these determinants, industry federations emerge as the most influential factor, emphasizing the importance of coordinated efforts in promoting the healthcare sector. Promotional initiatives, particularly the "Incredible India" campaign, along with effective marketing strategies, significantly enhance awareness and attract foreign tourists. Additionally, the availability of advanced medical technologies, support from equipment manufacturers and healthcare institutions, and the provision of post-treatment care services such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and Naturopathy contribute positively to perception. Accessibility of medical tourism facilities and government initiatives also play a supportive role, though to a relatively lesser extent. On the other hand, certain organisational factors show negative or insignificant effects. Notably, the availability of highly trained healthcare professionals exhibits a significant negative relationship, which may reflect a gap between patient expectations and actual experiences. Factors such as the availability of a specialized medical visa category, specialized therapies, and strong infrastructure and

accreditation systems are found to be statistically insignificant, indicating that they do not directly influence foreign tourist perception in this context. Overall, the findings suggest that while organisational determinants are crucial, greater emphasis should be placed on promotional efforts, institutional support, technological advancement, and integrated healthcare services to strengthen the attractiveness of medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka.

12. SUGGESTIONS

Factors influencing perception of foreign tourist on medical tourism

1. Enhance affordability of services: Provide cost-effective treatment packages along with affordable accommodation and food options.
2. Simplify medical visa procedures: Introduce fast-track visa processing and improve awareness about easy medical visa availability.
3. Ensure timely and quick treatment: Reduce waiting time and improve efficiency in diagnosis and treatment procedures.
4. Strengthen patient safety and trust: Maintain high standards of safety, security, and transparency in medical services.
5. Reduce dependency on intermediaries: Encourage direct communication between hospitals and patients to avoid over-reliance on referrals.
6. Improve patient comfort and financial support: Provide culturally friendly environments, language support, and flexible financial options (insurance/EMI).

Suggestions Based on Organisational Determinants (6 Points)

1. Strengthen marketing and promotional activities: Enhance global promotion through digital platforms and campaigns like “Incredible India”.
2. Promote industry collaboration: Encourage active participation of industry federations in promoting medical tourism.
3. Invest in advanced medical technologies: Upgrade healthcare facilities with modern diagnostic and treatment technologies.
4. Expand post-treatment care services: Promote Ayurveda, Yoga, and Naturopathy as part of integrated healthcare packages.
5. Improve infrastructure and accessibility: Strengthen hospital infrastructure, accreditation, and communication systems.
6. Enhance service delivery support systems: Improve coordination with equipment manufacturers and healthcare institutions for better service quality.

13. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is geographically limited to Coastal Karnataka, which restricts the generalization of findings to other regions of India or global medical tourism destinations.
2. The data were collected only from family members accompanying foreign patients, which may not fully reflect the direct experiences and perceptions of the patients themselves.
3. The study focuses only on selected hospitals offering medical tourism services, which may not represent all healthcare institutions in the region.
4. The use of a structured questionnaire may limit the depth of responses and overlook qualitative insights into patient experiences.
5. The study is cross-sectional in nature, capturing perceptions at a single point in time, and does not account for changes over time.
6. Certain variables such as cultural differences, psychological factors, and individual expectations were not deeply explored.
7. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias or subjectivity in the findings.

14. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research can expand the scope of this study by including multiple regions across India to provide a comparative understanding of medical tourism dynamics. Studies may also focus on collecting data directly from foreign patients rather than relying solely on accompanying family members, thereby capturing first-hand experiences. Longitudinal research designs could be adopted to examine changes in perceptions over time and assess the long-term impact of medical tourism services. Further studies can incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews and case studies to gain deeper insights into patient satisfaction and expectations. Additionally, exploring the role of cultural sensitivity, language barriers, and psychological comfort could provide a more

comprehensive understanding of patient experiences. Comparative studies between India and other leading medical tourism destinations would also be valuable. Finally, future research can examine the impact of digital healthcare services, telemedicine, and post-pandemic trends on medical tourism.

15. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that both patients' perceived factors and organisational determinants play a significant role in shaping the perception of foreign tourists towards medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka. The findings reveal that patients primarily prioritize economic and procedural aspects such as affordability, lower treatment costs, ease of obtaining medical visas, and timely access to healthcare services. These factors significantly enhance the attractiveness of the region as a preferred medical tourism destination. At the same time, issues such as dependency on referrals, financial constraints, and unmet expectations negatively influence perception, indicating the need for improved patient-centric approaches. From an organisational perspective, the study highlights the importance of institutional support, promotional strategies, and technological advancement. Initiatives such as effective marketing campaigns, industry collaboration, availability of advanced medical technologies, and integrated post-treatment care services contribute positively to foreign tourist perception. However, certain factors like infrastructure and availability of skilled professionals show unexpected or limited influence, suggesting gaps in perception or service delivery. Overall, the study emphasizes that strengthening cost efficiency, accessibility, service quality, and promotional efforts can significantly enhance the growth and competitiveness of medical tourism in Coastal Karnataka.

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