

9 Medical Tourism Destinations: A Multi-Level Framework

*Galia Fuchs, Sara Campo and
Maria Dolores Alvarez*

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- ☐ Provide a theoretical framework of the factors that influence tourists' decision-making concerning medical tourism,
- ☐ Discuss a comprehensive model of factors that shape decisions to visit medical tourism destinations.

Introduction

Medical tourism is a type of tourism in which individuals travel to a foreign country in order to benefit from medical treatment that include basic procedures such as check-ups or more invasive treatments – for example, different types of surgeries, transplants, organ replacements, fertility treatment and gender change (Connell, 2013; Ghosh & Mandal, 2019; Majeed et al., 2022; Olya & Nia, 2021; Wongkit & McKercher, 2013; Yu et al., 2021). Unconventional medical treatments that include Ayurveda, Chinese traditional medicine, Unani treatments and Siddha healing are also considered part of the medical tourism industry as individuals may travel abroad to receive them (Ghosh & Mandal, 2019; Li et al., 2023; Majeed et al., 2022). Thus, the medical tourism activities may differ significantly from one another.

The medical tourism industry has grown considerably in the last two decades. It is projected to grow to a worldwide market volume of USD 346.1 billion by 2032, increasing by 11.59% from 2023 (precedenceresearch.com, 2023). Various causes have fueled such a development. Industry growth has been driven, on the one hand, by the accessibility to inexpensive health care technologies (Connell, 2013), and on the other, by the rising availability of cheaper transportation options (Fetscherin & Stephano, 2016). In addition, the realisation that medical procedures can be combined with a vacation to an attractive destination has prompted the growth of this industry (Thelen & Yoo, 2023). Developing countries such as India, Turkey, Malaysia, Mexico, Thailand, etc., have fueled this growth, aggressively