

Introduction

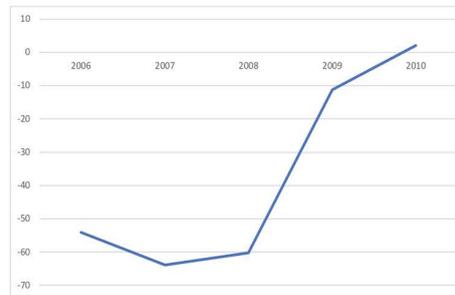
Medical tourism is a tourist service based on the themes of medical care, rehabilitation, and cultivation. It helps to drive the development of related industries, create jobs and create huge economic benefits for many countries. The purpose of this study is to describe the specific characteristics of medical tourism in an important destination-South Korea.

Background

With economic development and the improvement of people's living standard, medical tourism's major service has developed from medical travel to cosmetic plastic surgery and health care to meet higher-level needs. Cooper's(2015) research indicated the big difference of medical costs between developed and developing countries is the most important reason. Other reasons are the limitation of developed countries' medical insurance and developing countries' advanced, unique medical technique.

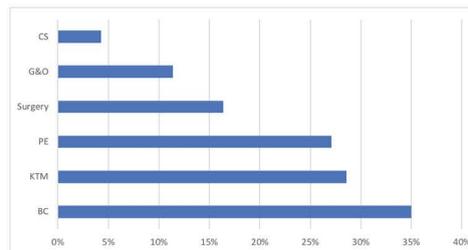
Analysis

Income



Compare with the same period of last year, the number of abroad outpatient has increased 31.7% and the abroad inpatient has increased 35.2% in 2011, which shows the trend of increasing abroad patient (Yu, Lee & Noh, 2011).

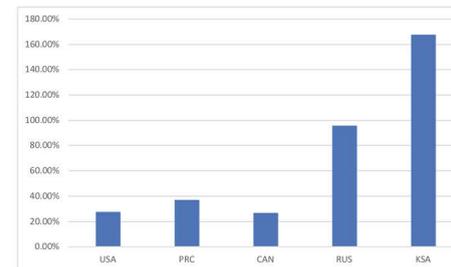
Type



As a medical high-developed country, Korea occupies a leading position in the field of cosmetic surgery (CS),

beauty care (BC), physical examination (PE), Korean traditional medicine (KTM), and dentistry. Especially in beauty and cosmetic surgery, its advantages are outstanding (Koh, 2016).

Quantity and Object



From January to April of 2009, the number of foreign patients in 21 major hospitals in South Korea has increased 32.1% compared to the same period of last year. Out of the total number of foreign patients coming to South Korea for medical tourism, the largest group are Americans and Chinese, and the highest rates of increase are Arab countries (167.9%) and Russia (96%) (Yu, Lee & Noh, 2011).

Conclusion

Although the government has supported this industry, that lack of specialty and expertise among the healthcare practitioners in the scope of cross-cultural communication seems to be the core barrier to the development of medical tourism in Korea (Rokni, Turgay & Park, 2017). Also, it is necessary to speed up the training of professionals (Kweon & Kim, 2013).

Companies and organizations should take chance in this emerging industry and introduce more tourists into this service.

Reference

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