

KONYA

HEALTH TOURISM

KONYA HOSPITAL SECTOR HEALTH TOURISM ACTION PLAN



TR52 / 14 / TD / 0042 SUMMARY OF KONYA HOSPITAL SECTOR HEALTH TOURISM ACTION PLAN PROJECT

Health tourism is “Someone’s travelling from the country which he is in to the another country for any reason and for therapeutic purpose in order to regain his health”. Those who participate in this type of tourism are called “health tourist”. Health tourism shouldn’t be considered as a kind of tourism that is only destinations for treatment in hospitals. All kinds of tourism offering a healthy and qualified life need to be accepted as health tourism and health tourism should be evaluated under three titles. The first of them is medical tourism (hospital treatment, operations and so on), the second is thermal tourism (rehabilitation in thermal facilities, recreation and etc.) and the third is the elderly and disabled tourism.

A major breakthrough has been made in the health sector of Turkey in the last ten years. The quality and efficiency of the health system have been raised thanks to the reforms in health. Private health services have begun to develop rapidly in recent years as well as public health services. Turkey has been serving in compliance with European standards by means of its modern hospitals, qualified manpower, specialists of their own fields, technological infrastructure and experience accumulation. Turkey is a centre of attraction in terms of health tourism with its geographical location, health institutions, trained and educated manpower in the sector, hot springs and natural beauties. Turkey is among the world’s ten favorite countries with both its historical, cultural richness and level of development in the health field. Public and university hospitals particularly those in Ankara and İstanbul initially have a share in health tourism.

Ministry of Health Turkey Public Hospitals Authority goes to restruction in 25 provinces on health tourism. It is pleasing that it has initiated “International Patient Coordination Centres” in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Antalya and Muğla, where foreign patient potential is high and studies in Bursa, Aydın, Adana, Mersin, Denizli, Kayseri, Kocaeli, Nevşehir, Van, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Edirne, Gaziantep, Trabzon, Hatay, Samsun, Çanakkale, Şanlıurfa, Konya and Afyon, whose potential is at intermediate level and can be further developed. It is expected that tourists from many countries come to our region for treatment as our Konya also offers health services at a level that can compete with qualified health services in developed countries and Turkey has proceeded to attack in health tourism in recent years.

Here for this purpose Konya, which is a developing province in health tourism, needs a strategic action plan. Cooperation between Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Ministry of Health in health tourism is important. The steps to be taken in the coming years have been tried to be determined

with “Konya Hospital Sector Health Tourism Action Plan” which has been prepared jointly with Konya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism and Konya General Secretariat of the Association of Public Hospitals.

Health Tourism

Health tourism, tourism and tourist health care concepts that are confused. World Health Organization (WHO) defines the concept of health like this; “Health is not only the situation of not being diseased but also the situation of being well as mental, physical and social status”.

Tourism health; is a concept which includes the subjects of tourists’ health, employees’ health and environmental health and which tackles the effects of tourism movement on the region as a whole.

Tourist health; can be considered as treatment services such as basic health services about touristic life, first aid, emergency treatment and intensive care and measures intended to be protected against all kinds of accidents and contagious diseases.

THE RESEARCH OF KONYA HOSPITAL SECTOR HEALTH TOURISM ACTION PLAN PROJECT

Since our country and Konya have offered health services at a level that can compete with qualified health services in developed countries in recent years, tourists all over the world come to our country for treatment. It has been seen that the private sector, in addition to the public health services, also made significant investments to the health sector in our country especially after the 2000s. As a result of these developments, especially in big cities private health institutions that can compete with European standards have begun to increase. That the health facilities, whose costs are high in terms of construction and management, get into foreign markets is gradually becoming an essential situation for reducing these costs. In addition, our country’s geographic location and trained, educated manpower in the health sector are among the important advantages of Turkey in health tourism. In this context the aim of research, as part of the project of Konya Health Tourism Action Plan;

- To determine the current situation,
- To prepare tactics towards strategies for the action plan,
- To inform and raise awareness health sector managers,

KONYA HEALTH TOURISM SWOT ANALYSE

STRENGTHS

- Being an important center in health with 20 new hospitals built,
- Increase of tourists who come for Konya's belief and culture Tourism as well as health Tourism
- The improved service quality of 10 private hospitals and service capacities in health tourism
- Konya's becoming an attraction centre recently in terms of transfer, accommodation, food& beverage etc
- Familiarness and advertisement of Konya for long years
- The tourist attraction capacity with about 100travel agency
- The fame of Konya hospitals in cornea, implant and test-tube baby
- Being a culture capital and hospitability
- Varieties in tourism accommodation opportunities, comfort in accommodation and Tourism accommodation in each level
- The Positive view of Konya population to health tourism
- A lot of public institutions and private institutions which are serving in health Tourism

Weaknesses

- Inadequacy of health tourism advertisements and marketing
- Inadequacy of qualified staff
- Because Health Tourism is new in Konya, inadequacy of organizing institutions
- Inadequate entry of travel agencies in Konya related to this issue
- Inadequacy of foreign advertisements –Inadequacy of marketing studies
- Inadequacy in hospitals' websites, lack of different language options
- Because health Institutions are generally in big cities (Istanbul, Ankara, Antalya), inadequacy in providing synergy between health tourism and belief and culture tourism in Konya
- Inadequate cooperation of the government, NGO, agency and representatives of health and tourism sector
- Inadequate organizations of travel agencies in health tourism
- Lack of consciousness and wrong information about health Tourism
- Inadequacy of health staffs' foreign language especially according to target market
- Not constituting Health Tourism packages

Opportunities

- Positive Economic Effect because of Konya's tourism potential
- Being in one of seven 17 cities in terms of tourism potential by The Ministry of Health
- High Speed train transportation network and airline opportunities
- Projects and Applications about Health Tourism related to MEVKA
- The price advantage of Konya in health tourism
- Attracting Touristic investors and the increase of investments
- The Support of local managements in Health Tourism issue

Threats

- Inadequacy of Health Tourism efforts internationally and weaknesses of competition strength which will compete with Istanbul, Ankara and Antalya, Lack of taking a strategic step which will turn into an action
- The reflection probability of negative effects such as unemployment, migrates and terror which threatens tourism, generally.
- Studies in Health Tourism which are price focused and alternative Medical in Thailand and India

ACTION PLAN WORKSHOP FOR KONYA HEALTH TOURISM

After desk research, surveys were completed; the action plan reached the final shape by the help of focus group work in the workshop within the framework of Konya Hospital Health Tourism Sector Action Plan. **In the focus group studies;** the views of the participants, and health tourism and tourism actors, who have an effect upon Konya health tourism, have been consulted on the action plan. Participants in the focus group meeting include:

In the preparation phase of the action plan, Op.Dr.Gökhan DARILMAZ, Secretary General of Konya Association of Public Hospitals, Oğuzhan KAYA, Health Tourism Unit Manager of Hospital Services Department of Public Hospitals Authority, Ministry of Health, and Asst. Prof. Dr. Mete SEZGİN, the Head of Tourism Management Department of Tourism Faculty, Selcuk University, have made presentations about health tourism. Participants identified two thematic axes and strategic objectives according to these axes. The rating results of the proposed strategic objectives are seen in the table below. According to the results of the voting, five strategic objectives were identified in

both axes. Then the appropriate actions to these purposes have been defined one by one, and the structure of the action plan has been created.

Table-1 Axes of Thematic Action Plan and Ranking of Strategic Objectives

Thematic Axis 1:		PROPOSED STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Rank
Promotion and Marketing of Health tourism Activities	Objective-1	To inform stakeholders on Health Tourism	1
	Objective -2	Create awareness about health tourism	2
	Objective -7	To promote health tourism services in the city	3
	Objective -8	To Choose the Market for Health Tourism in Konya and to perform targeting the market	4
	Objective -4	To create Brand Image of Konya Health Tourism	5
	Objective -5	To be Attraction Center in Health Tourism market in Turkey	6
	Objective -6	To create Free Zone of Konya Health Tourism	7
	Objective -9	To be in communication and coordination with the tourism and health sector stakeholders	8
	Objective -3	Positioning the existing hospitals with respect to health tourism	9

Thematic Axis 2:		PROPOSED STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Rank
Employment in health tourism ve Gelirin Artırılması	Objective -1	To optimize the physical infrastructure of the hospitals for the Health Tourism	1
	Objective -2	To employ Health Tourism staff	2
	Objective -3	To avail health tourism businesses from Government incentives and support	3
	Objective -4	To implement Innovation and the information technologies in Konya health sector	4
	Objective -6	To combine health services and the tourist products	5
	Objective -5	To create a niche market and services	6
	Objective -7	To removal the bureaucratic obstacles	7
	Objective -8	To make integrated marketing communication applications for health tourism	8

EVALUATION and RESULTS

As a result of studies, the opinions and suggestions collected from the survey, the analysis expressed at the workshop, the priority for Konya Health Tourism is to market Health Tourism. In this context, structuring "Strategic Health Tourism" such as market selection, segmentation, targeting and positioning should be provided by making geographical, demographic, sociological, economic analysis-especially overseas market analysis as above. In particular, it is so important to focus on target market we choose via market positioning, which is the final stage, and to ensure the sustainability of health tourism services.

The scope of health tourism marketing; considering marketing and promotional activities, it is a real crucial to bring health tourism in a package tour program into our country and our city. In this context, the country selection, as well as the packages to be prepared, which should be individual and special packages, is noteworthy. Tours and programs in mass tourism are difficult to put into practice for health tourism. Therefore, the choice of the individual and private tour is based on the axes of the patient, disease and doctors. In the marketing of individual and special packages; the perception management should be performed by bringing images such as price, service, doctor, Konya into the forefront- “Konya for your Health” or “Konya is, now, becoming the capital city of health as well as of Civilization and Tolerance”. This perception must be supported in the media and t be converted to the activity.

Within the framework of Health Tourism services, communication with patients should be maintained in three ways. At far contact step; overseas promotion offices and agencies open; at medium contact step, the status of far patient is evaluated for health service; at close contact step, considering the patient as tourists, legal problems and the other problems such as, service-price contracts, insurance, language are solved. After these three steps taken, the process of transferring patients to Turkey and Konya should be initiated. In this context, welcoming the patients, treatment, patient follow-up and bid farewell is a detailed and highly sensitive issue. Details mentioned above must not be neglected.

The results obtained from the questionnaire done within the context of Konya Health Tourism Project can be summarised as follows: 19 hospitals have been built in Konya after the year 2000. The medical superintendent-responsible manager and hospital managers have participated in this research. Patients come to the 8 of our hospitals in Konya within the scope of health tourism in order to have medical treatment. The patients coming to the hospitals in Konya as part of health tourism are mostly from Holland, Germany and Sweden. Foreign health tourists usually head for Konya by the recommendation of people who came before.

Only 10 hospitals have health insurance agreements for foreign patients. This corresponds to 32 % and it is very low. Only 45 % of our hospitals in Konya have studies to increase the number of foreign clients. The others do not have such a tendency.

The hospitals in Konya mostly use websites, brochures and catalogues among the introductory materials. Only 5 hospitals have introductory documents in English in addition to these materials. Also there are hospitals having introductory documents one in German and one in Arabic.

94 % of hospitals do not have directing boards in different languages for foreign clients. All the hospitals have a website. All of them have a website in Turkish and 3 hospitals have a website in English, one hospital has a website in Arabic and one has a website in Dutch, as well. Only 16 % of the hospitals have detailed information about health tourism applications on their websites.

49 % of hospitals in Konya do not have a formed unit or a charged staff to be concerned with foreign patients. 61 % of the staff has not had any education about health tourism. The number of the qualified staff who knows one or more foreign languages to communicate with foreign patients coming within the scope of health tourism is 25. 58 % of the hospitals do not have any staff knowing a foreign language.

The rate of having special transportation facilities for the patients (from airport/terminal to hospital, from hospital to their accommodation, etc.) is 25 % which is very low. The hospitals cannot combine their health services with touristic activities. The number of the hospitals which can combine those is only 1. The hospitals cannot offer their health services in a touristic packet. There is not clear information about the approximate health expenditures of the foreign patients coming to Konya as part of health tourism.

The rate of having an accreditation certificate which shows that the service offered in hospitals are in accordance with international standards is 16 %. The rate of the hospitals having special attempts (meeting, conference, membership to related associations, etc.) as part of health tourism is only 6 %. The rate of those thinking that it would be useful to do cooperative work with other institutions related to health tourism is 90 %.

As part of the action plan, **Konya Health Tourism Platform** ought to be formed, and there should be efforts to achieve the aims in the determined time in the presidency of **Konya Metropolitan Municipality**. The members of the platform should participate in important conventions and seminars and they should visit health institutions within the context of awareness and informing studies in order to improve Konya health tourism. Furthermore, there will be participation to health tourism fairs, as visitors first and by setting up stands afterwards as stated in the action plan. Marketing researches should be done to the countries that we have improved relationships at ministerial level such as Iran, Kuwait and Turkic Republics and the actions within the scope of marketing should be started.

Our Prime Minister dear Prof. Dr. Ahmet DAVUTOGLU has announced the new reform packet which will lead to a transformation in the economy of Turkey. Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who stated that a new advance term would start as part of 1350 action plan, said they a structural reform action plan has been prepared for a strong and balanced improvement of new reforms. In his statement, health tourism takes place in 2018 action plan. This action plan includes 9 action headings and 7th and 8th items about health tourism stand out as they are mentioned below.

It is a fact that we are good at transportation, infrastructure and education in Konya health tourism; however, our health incomes are very low. Moreover, it is clear that there are not any problems about price and customer relations whereas we are insufficient in health tourism service.

Konya is in such a position in health tourism that it can make Konya a significant attraction centre after Istanbul, Ankara and Antalya. In accordance with the action plan, Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, General Secretariat of Public Hospitals, Provincial Directorate of Health, Association of Turkish Travel Agencies and Mevlana Development Agency should increase their efforts to improve health tourism with a holistic approach and they should urgently apply the actions in the plan in determined years using 'Strategic Health Tourism Management' model as our Prime Minister stated. This action plan will be announced to the public by a press conference after it is accepted by Mevlana Development Agency.