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HEALTH TOURISM

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CONTENTS

- 9 Health Care Tourism in Romania: Main Features and Trends
Mihaela DINU, Alexandra Zbucnea, Adrian CIOACĂ
- 35 Measurement of Tourism – Oriented Aspects of Quality of Life
Gábor MICHALKÓ, Tamara RÁTZ
- 51 Exploring the Jamaican Health Tourism Sector Within a Sustainability Framework
Dawn H. PEARCY, Alicia ANDERSON
- 81 The Reconstruction of "The Salt Road" – A Means to Develop and Promote the Saline Health Tourism in Transylvania
Nicolae CIANGĂ, Marius G. OPREA, Daniel COSTEA, Laura GIURGIU, Iulia CIANGĂ
- 101 Health Tourism in Hungary: History, its Revaluation and Tendencies
Csilla MOLNÁR
- 151 The Role of Personal Values in Determining U.S. Medical Tourists' Expectations and Perceptions of Healthcare Facility Service Quality: An Exploratory Investigation
Michael GUIRY, David G. VEQUIST
- 141 Tourism As Solution - Perceived Risks Influencing Participation in Health-Related Tourism
Peter MAYER, Krisztina PRISZINGER

HEALTH CARE TOURISM IN ROMANIA: MAIN FEATURES AND TRENDS

Mihaela DINU^{*}, Alexandra ZBUCHEA^{}, Adrian CIOACĂ^{***}**

Abstract. *The Romanian health tourism, based on its exceptional natural resources represents an important segment of the tourism industry. Old tradition of valorization of thermal waters, mineral springs, mofettes curative mud spa treatments are intertwined nowadays with various forms of medical tourism, some practiced for over four decades (the Ana Aslan geriatric treatment) and others being more recent (cosmetic surgery, dental care, eye surgery, etc). The main purpose of this article is to analyze the evolution of medical tourism, especially of spa tourism in Romania, one of the richest countries in Europe in terms of extent and excellence of specific natural resources, with old and unsuitable infrastructure if referred to the public spa facilities, but with modern facilities in wellness and medical private units. The research is both quantitative and qualitative. The first method is based on statistical analysis of data provided by the National Statistics Institute of Romania. The qualitative analysis complements the previous one, which is not extremely detailed and is also not available for a long period of time. The research reveals unequal evolution of the Romanian spa tourism, a severe discrepancy between the quality of specific resources and the existing spa infrastructure, contradictory demand, as well as positive trends for the medium-term future. As a research method we used first of all the qualitative analysis – the available statistical data are rather scarce. The research reveals the lack of investments and the necessity of implementation of a whole host of local plans as part of a new national strategy for tourism industry.*

Key words: *health tourism, balneary-spa tourism, wellness, medical tourism, Romania.*

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MEASUREMENT OF TOURISM-ORIENTED ASPECTS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

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Abstract. *A society's and individuals' quality of life has long been in the focus of social science research. The subjective aspect of one's quality of life is usually assessed through a person's perceived satisfaction with their own life. In comparison, the indicators and methodological approaches used by researchers trying to objectively measure quality of life are more varied and complex. However, both the correct identification of the factors influencing objective quality of life and the longitudinal evaluation of quality of life on the local level have remained a serious challenge.*

The paper presents the results of an experimental study carried out by the HAS Geographical Research Institute in co-operation with the Kodolányi János University of Applied Sciences that aims to provide deeper understanding of tourism-oriented quality of life in Hungary. Although the research raised a large number of new questions as well, in this paper we discuss the development mechanisms of an indicator system that may fit within the currently used system of social indicators and may provide useful information on the interrelationship of tourism and quality of life. The development of the indicator system includes the delineation of the research area, the creation of the related dimensions and sub-dimensions, and finally the identification of indicators within the sub-dimensions. The indicator system is based on data available at the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, derived from regular data collection methods. Due to the obvious symbiosis of health and quality of life, a special emphasis is put on measuring tourism-oriented quality of life factors at Hungarian health tourism destinations.

Key words: *quality of life, well-being, health tourism, Hungary.*

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EXPLORING THE JAMAICAN HEALTH TOURISM SECTOR WITHIN A SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

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Abstract. *As with many countries, tourism has proven to be a vital source of revenue for the Caribbean Island nation of Jamaica. As a popular vacation destination for tourists seeking sun, sea, and sand, Jamaica has attracted substantial numbers of visitors from around the world over the years. However; emerging forms of tourism present opportunities for Jamaica to enhance its competitive position in the sector. One such form of tourism is health tourism. This study examines the current state of health tourism in Jamaica along with its potential for future growth and related challenges. The paper also examines the key role of sustainability in advancing a successful health tourism sector in Jamaica.*

Keywords: *Health, wellness, tourism, Jamaica, sustainability.*

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THE RECONSTRUCTION OF “THE SALT ROAD” – A MEANS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE SALINE HEALTH TOURISM IN TRANSYLVANIA

Nicolae CIANGĂ^{}, Marius G. OPREA^{*}, Daniel COSTEA^{*}, Laura GIURGIU^{*}, Iulia CIANGĂ^{*}*

Abstract. *This paper investigate historical premises of the old salt routes, roads called the ancient or medieval trade route on which the salt was barely transported from the extraction point to the trading one, back then being an extremely valuable trading product. Nowadays these roads have an important role in promoting the saline health resorts in Transylvania developed on the former mining exploitations. The tourist potential and image analysis reveals that both those in desolation and those recently upgraded are lacking a unified promotion that could bring them great profit by raising the number of tourists. We also bring some proposals for these thematic tourist routes.*

Keywords: *Old salt roads, Resort tourism potential, Image profile, Saline health tourism, thematic tourist routes*

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HEALTH TOURISM IN HUNGARY: HISTORY, ITS REVALUATION AND TENDENCIES

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Abstract. *Tourism, and within its scopes health tourism is playing an ever increasing role in the economic- and social processes in Hungary. The sector's long range importance is indicated by the fact that the conscious, sustainable development of health tourism was included not only in the National Tourism Development Strategy accepted in 2005 but also as the main priorities of the 2007-2013 New Hungary Development Plan. The National Development Concept considers it as an outstanding development priority; furthermore, it dominantly appears in the marketing activities of the Hungarian Tourism Zrt.*

Key words: *health tourism, history, investments, services, tendencies*

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THE ROLE OF PERSONAL VALUES IN DETERMINING U.S. MEDICAL TOURISTS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTHCARE FACILITY SERVICE QUALITY: AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION

Michael GUIRY^{}, David G. VEQUIST^{**}*

Abstract. *This exploratory research investigated the relationship between U.S. medical tourists' personal values and their expectations and perceptions of the service quality of healthcare facilities located outside the U.S. Based on a sample of U.S. consumers, who had traveled abroad for medical care, stepwise regression results indicated that personal values, in particular self-fulfillment, warm relationship with others, sense of accomplishment, security, self-respect, and excitement, significantly predicted U.S. medical tourists' expectations and perceptions of the service quality of foreign healthcare facilities. The study establishes a foundation for future research on the role of personal values in medical tourists' evaluation of service quality in the rapidly growing medical tourism industry.*

Key words: *Medical Tourism, Personal Values, List-of-Values (LOV), Service Quality, SERVQUAL*

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TOURISM AS SOLUTION – PERCEIVED RISKS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH-RELATED TOURISM

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Abstract. *Health consciousness is one of the most important consumer trends. Health status and everyday stress triggers the need to travel more frequently. The following questions arise: how can health risk factors perceived and consequently, how can the identified factors assign health consciousness and the purchase of health-related tourism products. This paper aims to unfold consumer's awareness of health risks leading to the consumption of health tourism. Uncertainty before travelling is arising from everyday life, specifying the needs originating (directly) from the lifestyle and (indirectly) from health status. In this paper first we present HWT system and the different health risk factors, as well as Dunn's push and pull factors theory. Secondly, based on the results of a quantitative research we identify both push and pull factors in the case of Hungarian HWT tourists.*

Keywords: *health and wellness tourism, consumer behaviour, push and pull factors, behavioural health risk factors, socio-economic health risk factors.*

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Presentation

Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends (JTCT) aims at providing both professionals and academics with an overview of theories and practices in the tourism industry, while focusing on challenges and trends currently manifest throughout the world. Equal interest and attention will be given to both established tourism destinations and to areas only now making a name for themselves on the market.

JTCT is a bi-annual publication of the Romanian-American Association of Project Managers for Education and Research. The Journal accepts for peer revision both papers presented at international events which have not been yet submitted for publishing, and original article proposals submitted directly to the editorial board.

Subject coverage

Topics suitable for JTCT cover a wide range of issues, among which but not exhaustively, the following:

- In the field of tourism studies: ecotourism; rural tourism and agro-tourism, cultural tourism, event and sports tourism, mountain tourism, etc.
- In related or cross-disciplinary areas: sustainable development and globalization; human resource management and training; PR, advertising and branding in tourism; innovation and technological advances in the hospitality industry, etc.
- Case studies and best practices, specific national policies and legislation, analysis of regional and resort development.

Evaluation and acceptance

- Sound academic grounding: use of consistent and appropriate methodology, based on the latest sources and published research in the respective fields;
- Originality and innovation: innovative and original approaches are favoured in a comprehensive perspective encompassing imitation, assimilation, experimentation, continuous improvement and research-based activities;
- Correlation with current practices in the field: articles should tackle urgent and up-to-date issues and challenges currently manifest in the respective fields, as well as identify relevant trends and developments in this respect;
- Practical focus and bearing: submissions are encouraged to be practice-oriented and be applicable in the respective fields, they should be both descriptive and have a relevance and scope beyond the specific situations under analysis;
- Relevance to the topic of the issue: each call for papers shall comprise a new topic for every issue, as well as the submission guidelines to be observed.

Application procedure

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. All papers are refereed through a peer review process. Authors are kindly invited to send their papers to submission@journaltct.ro, pending revision and refereeing from board members. For any additional information you may contact the board at e-mail addresses specific in each call for papers.

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