

# Dentistry in the Time of Crisis

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Have you ever heard the phrase "dental tourism?" To most people this combination of words doesn't sound too pleasing because the following question comes immediately to our minds: what do tourism and vacations have to do with cosmetic dentistry? The fact that they might not be obviously related doesn't mean that there is no connection between each other.

Dental care in Europe and America is notoriously expensive. With the economic crisis wreaking havoc in the pockets of workers in the West, taking care of one's teeth has become prohibitive. Yet dental care is a core health issue. Recent research has linked bad oral hygiene and inappropriate dental care to serious health problems such as heart disease and stroke. It is therefore of prime importance for people to take good care of their teeth in order to promote their overall long-term health.

People who live in countries where the life style is expensive have always had the option of flying to another country where consultation prices for health related issues are much lower, this is the case of people who live in the UK, USA, Germany, Japan, etc. Every year, millions of patients from around the globe

flock to some of the hottest dental tourism destinations in order to receive five-star dental treatment at unbelievable low prices.

Health Tourism is a concept where a patient travels to another country for medical treatment in order to save costs, or get treatment faster or even to avail better medical facilities.

According to the National Coalition on Health Care, more than 500,000 Americans travelled abroad to receive medical and dental work in 2006. And this is not an isolated trend. With fewer NHS dentists around and the costs of private treatment rising beyond many patients' means, more and more British Citizens are having their teeth fixed abroad.

Dental procedures are a common choice because only about 50 percent of Americans have insurance for such care. And those people who are insured often face stiff dental bills. Insurance plans, typically offered through

employers, require patients to pay a significant share of the costs of procedures beyond standard preventive care and many a dental procedure is does not come under its preview. Most patients from countries like USA and Europe travel to developing countries such as India for treatment because India offers some of the cheapest pricing options of treatment, offers a good holiday, there are no waiting lists or queues to stand in, the doctors are comparable to anyone in the world and finally, language does not pose a problem as most people speak English

Teeth implants are normal procedures which can improve your overall look, these can be somewhat pricey in these countries but luckily we live in times when most of the currencies used in these great countries double and sometimes triple the value of other currencies. Dentists can charge \$300 to \$400 for a Dental Filling in USA and Europe. It costs only \$20 to

surely prefer a country where English is widely spoken. Also, it is believed that the facilities in India are more suited for International patients.

Well, many highly qualified doctors have had some form of training from abroad, especially USA and UK. Indian surgeons and doctors are known for their skill and research throughout the world. Many countries have developed links for speedy treatments in India for their nationals on account of the fact that in these countries one has to wait for extended periods of time to undergo operations.

In India, medical treatment is not only fast but also costs a fraction of what it costs in USA or Europe. Even tele-consultancy is available for expert opinion and transmission facilities. Some of the states like Kerala and Goa have already established themselves as destinations for health care and medical tourism.

As health care costs skyrocket, patients in the developed world are looking overseas for medical treatment. India is capitalizing on its low costs and highly trained doctors to appeal to these "medical tourists." Even with airfare, the cost of going to India for surgery can be markedly cheaper, and the quality of services is often better than that found in the United States and UK. Indeed, many patients are pleased at the prospect of combining their implants and dental treatment with sun and sands of the famed kovalam beach or a ride in the back waters. ●



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\$40 in Dental Tourism countries. A Root Canal is \$3,000 in the West but only \$100 to \$200 in East. Dentures can cost \$1000 overseas but only \$200 in Dental Tourism countries.

Although the cost difference between treatment in India and Thailand is not much, India, esp Kerala offers what you call a language advantage - a patient would