

Dental Tourism: New Strategies For The Health Care In Indonesia

Fuad Husain Akbar, Fridawaty Rivai, Andi Zulkifli Abdullah, Abdul Hair Awang, Yoris Adi Maretta

Abstract: More often than not, privileged people from developing countries travel to developed countries for medical care purposes. However this trend is starting to shift in the other direction meaning more people from developed countries are traveling to developing countries for a better quality care but with a cheaper rate. These medical tourists search for variety of medical services classified as follows preventive care, operative care (e.g. knee, eye, and hip surgery), dental care (crown, dental bleaching, and dental implant), cosmetic surgery (e.g. tummy tuck/abdominoplasty and liposuction), organ, tissue, and cell transplant (e.g. stem cell, organ transplant), and cardiology.¹ Dental tourism is one of the services that can be found in medical tourism which characterized by medical tourists accessing dental care provided by other country in a cheaper rate compared to their own.² Media's portrayal of medical tourism, including dental tourism, suggest that this practice enables patient and provider to choose between many location and environment which has different systems to regulate or choose different treatment and working experience.^{3,4}

.Index Terms: Dental Tourism, Health Care.

1. INTRODUCTION

The number of patients crossing national borders in order to get dental health care in clinics with lower rate are increasing, reporters usually refers this phenomenon as 'dental tourism'. The increase of patient's mobility is the result of many social economy factors. First and foremost, in several countries, private dental care cost is quite lavish for some patient. Due to this high rate of local procedure, individuals are encouraged to find alternative passive dental care at a cheaper rate. Second, not all patient can get a quick access to local dental care provider considering their communities urge to get a dental treatment on the right time.¹ Third, patients understands that lower rate does not necessarily mean lower quality. Some patients come home feeling satisfied with the quality of care given in other places. 'Mouth-to-mouth' promotions encourage other patients to consider traveling for medical treatment. Fourth, Economic flights made transportation fare cost lower than a lot of dental procedures. Fifth, Internet holds a vital role in the increase of individuals traveling for dental care.^{5,9,10} In general, factors that influence tourists to do dental tourism are fee, time, regulations, medical choices and availability, quality, pleasure and availability of easily accessed information. Besides being provided with health care, some tourists include leisure tourism activities in new and exotic areas with their health care agenda. Dental health care can be done with several others recreational activities, visiting friends or

relatives, and attending cultural shows. Supporting services are another important factor where a bunch of providers recognize several aspects that can increase comfort and making sure the whole trip goes smoothly and with ease. Several medical procedures are only available by medical tourism providers. The essence of healthcare development is to achieve healthy life for every citizen so it can increase the citizen's health optimally. Henceforth, in order to evaluate healthcare development, one of the approaches is by examining which factor is most prominent during the delivery of health care.^{6,7} In 2011 about 57% foreign tourist came to Malaysia to get medical treatment, 332.437 of which are Indonesian. This piece of information is surely a very interesting topic to investigate further, why do a lot of Indonesian go to Malaysia just to access medical care. The motives behind Indonesian people choosing Malaysia as a medical tourism destination also need to be investigated further. Then again, high interest rate of Indonesian people doing medical tourism indicates that Indonesian is interested in such tourism. This means that probably most Indonesian doubt the quality of care provided by Indonesian clinicians, which eventually leads to them choosing to go to Malaysia to get health care. This phenomenon could lead to detriment in healthcare provision in Indonesia and become a hole in the economic sector. This could motivates dental health care provider in Indonesia to increase information access and healthcare quality so they can attract more patient and earn more trust from both Indonesian and foreigner who came for dental treatment. Reflecting on the opportunities and development of medical tourism in neighboring countries, this is a good opportunity for Indonesia especially Bali to be able to improve similar kind of tourism. Bali actually has a great potential to be one of the center of dental tourism in Indonesia. The president of Indonesia Dental Association (Persatuan Dokter Gigi Indonesia) regional office in Bali said that dental tourism practice in Bali started 4 years ago, 45% of Australian tourists chose to go to Bali to get dental treatment, furthermore there is actually one clinic, which 80% of its patients come from overseas, according to him, foreign tourist could see the quality of the care provided and also the lower rate given.⁸ Local wisdom that can easily be observed and enjoyed could be a strong foundation to be introduced to wider crowds as one of the attraction for foreign tourist especially dental tourists who come to Bali to get dental or other health care treatment.

- *Fuad Husain Akbar, Department Dental Public Health, Faculty of Dentistry, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia, Email : fuadgi2@gmail.com Phone Number +6281 2434 22362*
- *Fridawaty Rivai, Department of Hospital Management, Faculty of Public Health, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia*
- *Andi Zulkifli Abdullah, Department of Epidemiology, Faculty of Public Health, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia*
- *Abdul Hair Awang, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia.*
- *Yoris Adi Maretta, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia*

REFERENCES

- [1] Jaapar M, Musa G, Moghavvemi S, Saub R. Dental tourism: Examining tourist profiles, motivation and satisfaction. *Tour Manag.* 2017;61:538–52.
- [2] Turner L. “Dental Tourism”: Issues Surrounding Cross-Border Travel for Dental Care. *JCDA.* 2009;75(2):117–9.
- [3] Imison M, Schweinsberg S. Australian news media framing of medical tourism in low- and middle-income countries: a content review. *BMC Public Health.* 2013;13(109):1–12.
- [4] Qadeer I, Reddy S. Medical tourism in India: perceptions of physicians in tertiary care hospitals. *Philos Ethics Humanit Med.* 2013;8(20):1–10.
- [5] Turner L. Cross-border dental care: ‘dental tourism’ and patient mobility. *Br Dent J.* 2008;204(10):553–4.
- [6] Bahadori M, Raadabadi M, Ravangard R, Baldacchino D. Factors affecting dental service quality. *International J Heal Care Qual Assur.* 2015;28(7):678–89.
- [7] Narayanan A, Greco M. The Dental Practice Questionnaire: a patient feedback tool for improving the quality of dental practices. *Aust Dent J.* 2014;59(3):334–48.
- [8] Amanda Duffy, 2018, 5 facts about Bali Dental Tourism, Dental Departures, access 13 November 2019, <http://dentaldepartures.com/amp/article/5-facts-about-bali-dental-tourism/>.
- [9] Akbar FH, Ayuandika U. Gender and age differences in patient satisfaction with dental care in the urban and rural areas of Indonesia: Pilot pathfinder survey. *Pesqui Bras Odontopediatria Clin Integr* 2018; 18(1):e4093
- [10] Akbar FH, Pasiga BD, Samad R, Pratiwi R, Anwar AI, Djamaluddin N, et al. Evaluation of expectations and perceptions on quality of dental services in Bantaeng District, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. *J Int Dent Med Res* 2018; 11(3):938-44