INFLUENCE AND IMPACT OF OPINION LEADERS FOR THE GROWTH OF MEDICAL TOURISM IN INDIA

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Abstract: India’s total contribution from service sector to GDP is 57% and out of this 9.6% is from Medical tourism which may be due to the fact that the treatment and the facilities have got standards. For growth and development the role of social media has become inevitable in the present era and through that people are getting connected with in fraction of second and information sharing has become very quick and accurate and in time. The effect of Internet, awareness of social media and mobiles is one of the advanced means of communication.

An Opinion Leader is an Influential member of a community, group, or society to whom others turn to him for seeking his views, advice, and opinion since the opinion leader can influence others by virtue of his exposure and experience. The evolution of social media has proven how the technology is changing fast so as to fit to the requirements of end users and this is not an exception in the case of medical tourism where in people move from country to country for treatment due to several reasons and is a developing concept. For medical tourism people from all over the world visit India for their medical and relaxation needs. The reason India is a favourable destination is because of availability of established infrastructure and technology at par with USA, UK and Europe. In addition, India has some of the best hospitals and best treatment centres in the world with the best facilities coupled with most favorable tourist destinations Medication combines with tourism has come into effect, from which the concept of Medical tourism is derived.

In this paper attempt will be made to find out the growth of medical tourism in India and the contribution made by the opinion leaders the role played by Social Media. The study will be conducted in chennai in Tamilnadu in selected hospitals Respondents will be tourist patients, their attenders, doctors and administration staff of the hospitals and they will be identified through convenience sampling. Data will be collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data will be collected by contacting the respondents through a well-structured pre tested questionnaire and secondary data will be collected from the record of the hospitals and also from the journals and related secondary sources. The results of this study will be of use to the planners and policy makers since the development and growth of medical tourism in India will not only help the growth of medical tourism but also will help for the growth and development in all other sectors which are well connected to medical tourism.

KEY WORDS: Opinion Leaders, Medical Tourism, Medical Care, Global health care, Social Media.