

**MEDICAL TOURISM IN INDIA - CHALLENGES AND SCOPE IN KAUMARBHRITYA**V. K. Kori<sup>1</sup>, Renu Rani<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Kaumarbhritya Department, IPGT & RA, Jamnagar, Gujarat, India<sup>2</sup>Ph. D Scholar, Kaumarbhritya Department, IPGT & RA, Jamnagar, Gujarat, IndiaEmail: [drvkkori@yahoo.co.in](mailto:drvkkori@yahoo.co.in)<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj1608082020>

(Published online: August 2020)

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Article Received: 04/07/2020 - Peer Reviewed: 27/07/2020 - Accepted for Publication: 27/07/2020

**ABSTRACT**

As a tourist destination, India gets a highest place in the world. Foreigners arrive to India not only to sight seen or pilgrims, but also for education, medical treatment, and employment. According to the FTA data Indian tourism is being increased annually. Medical tourism is also one of them and India is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular country in this. Especially Man, Materials and Money are the important factors there. India is rich in skilled human resources like medical specialists, paramedical and supportive staffs and laborers. Materials also can be found easily due to developed industries and lots of natural resources. High availability of all these factors lessens the cost. As far as medical tourism is concerned, most sub fertile European couples come to India for the help of Assisted Reproductive Technology, where Indian women are used for surrogacy. They select the Indian women for this purpose due the loose-fitting of rules and regulations in India. But after implantation, those mothers are brought to countries like Dubai as anti-natal sex detection is prohibited in India. So, the process becomes reversed. Ayurveda can help to prevent those incidents because Ayurveda has an excellent methodology to make a better progeny with *Rasayana*, *Vaajeekarana* and especially in the field of Kaumarbhritya. Ayurveda Acharyas have mentioned the infertility management, *Garbhadhana Samaskara*, *Garbhini Paricharya*, *Punsawana Karma* etc. to have a healthy child with a desired. Hence necessary steps can be taken by the relevant authorities like AYUSH in order to change the Assisted Reproductive Technology in to Ayurvedic Reproductive Technology.

**Keywords:** Assisted Reproductive Technology, Medical tourism

## INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, the costs of medical treatment or health care have scored high in industrialized nations and developed countries. And with this rise in health care costs, people from USA, Europe, Canada and Australia are seeking alternatives to reduce their expenses and build financial savings. This has prompted the people of developed countries serve as medical tourists. Among all the nations where people are going for low cost medical treatments, India has emerged as a significantly favorable destination or a top hot spot. India is, now, one of the leading countries promoting medical tourism. With an increasing number of outside patients flocking to India for low cost medical treatments, India's medical tourism industry is doing pretty fine. India is also home to a number of alternative medicine techniques such as Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, Acupuncture and Homeopathy which are very popular among foreigners. Such treatment opportunities give India the edge over its competitors like Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, and UAE<sup>1</sup> It is noticed that, most of the visitor from foreign countries come to India for the stress relieving treatments like Kerala Spa Therapy but this wide community is ignorant about the power of Ayurveda which is equally effective to treat the conditioned like infertility, recurrent abortions etc. Also, people from outside the Ayurveda fraternity have no idea about Ayurveda therapeutics which helps to produce a healthy progeny. This is due to lack of advertisement and incomplete globalization of Ayurveda therapies.

Transfer of knowledge regarding good progeny is not proper or insufficient and due to lack of knowledge health quality of progeny is declining. Adverse influence of medicines and other factors like stress, trauma etc. during early life creates lifelong effect on organ, structure and function.

### Medical Tourism and Indian Healthcare Industry

The focal attraction for the medical tourists is the price factor or medical costs. Medical tourists believe that, in India, the cost of surgery or other treatments is one tenth of what it is in European countries or in developed nations. The concept of medical tourism is

new to many people and it is up to them whether or not they will find the desired medical treatment at a minimum cost. Medical technology has improved drastically in Indian hospitals and their standards have increased too, being a part with American and European countries. Among all the various treatments that are done in India, the commonest are heart surgery, Lasik eye surgery, cosmetic surgery, neurosurgery and dental care. India has some of the best hospitals and treatment centers in the world with the best facilities. Infrastructure, technology advancement, outstanding doctors and medical staffs, world-class hospitals, all these have made India the prime location or the top choice for medical tourists seeking overseas health care.

The highlights of medical tourism in India are as follows:

- India has world-class medical facilities, with excellent staff in all areas of medical care.
- Consultation with leading doctors or specialists.
- Indian hospitals are equipped with the latest electronic and medical diagnostic equipment's.
- Low cost medical treatment or health checkups.
- Luxurious rooms within affordable ranges.
- Accommodation for attendants or accompanying family members is also provided.
- Ayurveda Therapy and Spa resorts available for relaxing and refreshing.
- Exclusive Indian cuisines, Indian movies, Indian music and Indian dance.
- Diversified cultural heritage in the different states.
- Some top tourist destination spots like Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Qutab Minar etc.
- Holidaying, family reunions, festive occasions and medical checkups—all in one tour to India.

Although there are many countries giving world-class medical assistance to the medical tourists who are seeking overseas healthcare or low cost healthcare, India attracts the most. Since it offers a beautiful holiday destination, apart from having a wide variety of low-cost medical treatments, good hospitals and medical staffs, it is the foremost choice among people. Medical tourism India or health tourism India is an

emerging concept whereby people from all over the world visit India for their medical and relaxation needs. India is a huge magnet for attracting foreign patients for medical treatments. With general tourism on the rise, according to the Medical Tourism association, about 14 million people in the countries in the search of medical care annually. It received 4.95 lakh medical travelers during the year 2017 as against 4.27 lakh in 2016 and 2.34 lakh in 2015. With an estimated growth rate of around 20 per cent over the next two years, India's medical tourism industry is expected to be worth \$9 billion by the year 2020 attracting additional visitors to the country<sup>2</sup>. Medical tourism, more broadly health and wellness tourism, refers to the industry in which people from across the globe travel to other countries to get medical, dental and surgical care, and at the same time, visit the local attractions of that country. While all trends point towards an increasing demand for medical services in India, some key factors will determine whether medical tourism becomes India's next crown jewel, like our Information Technology industry.

**Reproductive Tourism-** "Reproductive tourism is the travelling by candidate service recipients from one institution, jurisdiction, or country where treatment is not available to another institution, jurisdiction, or country where they can obtain the kind of medically assisted reproduction they desire."(Guido Penning's)

#### **Scope for Medical Tourism in Ayurveda- Kaumarbhritya**

Kaumarbhritya is the branch of Ayurveda that deals with child health. Now days, due to faulty lifestyle, dietary pattern, stress, educational pattern etc. many couples are troubled with the problem of infertility. In spite of tremendous advances in medical stream, Infertility is becoming a social stigma in India as well as other western countries. Fertility is the capacity to produce offspring, whereas fecundity is a woman's biological ability to reproduce based on the monthly probability of conception (Wood, 1989). Clinical infertility is defined as the inability to become pregnant after 12 months of unprotected intercourse. *Vandhyatva* (infertility) has been a long-standing problem since ancient times. Many herbals and herbo

– mineral formulations are mentioned as a treatment of infertility in the ancient Ayurvedic texts, but they are not categorized according to the responsible factor of infertility. *Acharya* Sushruta has described the essential factors for conception i.e. *Ritu* (season or ovulatory period), *Kshetra* (field i.e. reproductive organs), *Beeja* (seed i.e. ovum/sperm) and *Ambu* (water i.e. nutritive material & hormones) which are responsible to maintain the pregnancy and defect in either of these factors may result into infertility<sup>3</sup>. It has been estimated that approximately 15% of the population in industrially developed countries are affected with infertility (Healy et al., 1994). The causes of infertility are wide ranging including diagnosis such as, ovulatory disorders, tubal disease, endometriosis, chromosomal abnormalities, sperm factors and unexplained infertility. The impact of lifestyle on reproductive performance may vary depending on individual etiology and circumstances. Lifestyle factors have had a dramatic impact on general health and the capacity to reproduce. Lifestyle issues such as smoking, and obesity can affect general health and well-being. For example, studies have demonstrated that smoking in women significantly decreases the chance of conception (Hughes and Brennan, 1996; Augood et al., 1998). Post-industrial western society has created the potential for increasing the exposure to specific lifestyle factors and behaviors that can positively or negatively affect reproductive health.

#### **Recent advances in treatment modalities in infertility- Modern**

- Hormonal therapy
- IUI (Intra Uterine Insemination)
- IVF (In Vitro Fertilization)
- Surrogacy

**Hormonal Therapy-** Hormonal therapy is the use of hormones in medical treatment or in the treatment of infertility. For years, two types of hormones- estrogen and progesterone are used in the treatment of different conditions. These two hormones are also effective in treatment of infertility. As a woman goes through her menstrual cycle, oestrogen levels fluctuate before and after ovulation. These hormones also influence the

thickness of the uterus' lining, which in turn influences whether or not a fertilized egg can embrace in the uterine wall. Hormonal therapy can also be helpful in irregular cycles and bleeding. By administering hormones, it is possible to find a balance that allows a pregnancy to occur<sup>4</sup>.

**IUI (Intra Uterine Insemination)** - IUI is a fertility treatment that involves placing sperm inside a woman's uterus to enable fertilization. The goal of IUI is to increase the number of sperm that reach the fallopian tubes and thus increase the chance of fertilization. IUI offers the sperm an advantage by giving it a head start but still requires a sperm to reach and fertilize the egg on its own. It is a less invasive and less expensive option compared to In Vitro Fertilization<sup>5</sup>.

**IVF (In Vitro Fertilization)** - In Vitro Fertilization is an assisted reproductive technology (ART) commonly known as IVF. IVF is the procedure of fertilization by extracting eggs and sperms, and then manually combining both (an egg and sperm) in a laboratory dish. Then embryo is transferred to the uterus<sup>6</sup>. This technique is most commonly used for the treatment of infertility.

**Surrogacy**- Surrogacy agreement is the carrying of a pregnancy for intended parents. It has been found that many couples from western countries visit India for the option of surrogacy. This is one of the vastest parts of medical tourism in India. Though the percentage is being increasing every day, the outlook of facilities for Ayurvedic management of infertility has not been changed. Ayurveda, the most ancient science of life does not only focus over fertility, but it has great concern towards a healthy progeny. That is why; *Sharira Sthana* of almost all Samhita occupies a great part regarding *Beejashuddhi* before conception, *Garbhini Paricharya*, *Masanumasika Vriddhi* and regimens to be used in every month etc. Concept of *Garbhopaghatakara Bhava* and *Dauhridya Avamana* is also the contribution of Ayurveda science. Surrogacy is one of the most recent advances being used by western couples, as a solution for infertility. But through Ayurveda, infertile couple can be treated, and an opportunity can be given them to be a real

parent. Every individual on this earth desires to have a healthy progeny. For this purpose, there is a great scope in *Kaumarbhritya* in this platform.

#### **Concept of *Shadabhava***

The six factors *Matruja*, *Pitruja* etc. are essential for the formation and growth of foetus. These together are responsible for the individual personality with physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual content. Here *Rasaja* and *Satmyaja Bhava* are mainly contributing the growth of foetus in utero whereas *Matruja* etc. is more associated with normal or abnormal formation of foetus. In other words, disturbance in these factors are responsible for large variety of condition from IUGR (Intra Uterine Growth Retardation) to congenital deformities including brain malformation.

#### **Concept of *Garbha Vriddhikara Bhava***

These are the factors mentioned for proper growth and development of foetus. Their *Vikruti* or *Viparyaya* may disrupt the appropriate environment in utero. Factors like *Matruja* etc. *Bhava* in their quality state, Good conduct by mother, Nourishment by *Upasneha* and *Upasweda* are necessary to be in favorable condition. Their disturbance is capable for hampering the ongoing process of fetal growth, deformity or even death<sup>7</sup>.

**Concept of *Garbhopaghatakara Bhava***- There are certain contraindications mentioned in *Garbhini Paricharya* for avoidance by pregnant women like *Ati Ushna-Tikshna Ahara*, *Abhighata*, *Vishama Asana*, *Kalaha* (quarrelling), *Shoka* (sorrow) etc. These are said capable for disturbance of physical, mental and emotional development of the fetus at short term or long term of course<sup>8</sup>.

***Sharira Vriddhikara Bhava***- This includes *Kalayoga*, *Swabhava Samsiddhi*, *Ahara Saushthava* and *Avighata*<sup>9</sup>. Here *Avighata* is the absence of all the factors or event which is injurious and causing disease or harm to the infant or child. Presence of those harmful or hampering factors may affect the successive and sequential growth of newborn. These are the factors for good quality of the process of growth and development at different stage of life comprising intra uterine period (*Garbha Avastha*) and extra uterine period

(Navajata, Shaishava and Kaumara Awastha). Appropriate level of these factors is expected for better outcome.

### Scope In Ayurveda Medical Stream For Better Progeny

1. Purificatory procedures for the infertile couple
2. Beeja Shuddhi of male and female before actual copulation.
3. Following Garbhini Paricharya in pregnant mother.
4. Psychological and nutritional care of pregnant mother.

Proper understanding and implication of Garbhavidhikara Bhava, Shadabhava, Garbhopaghatakara Bhava, Sharir Vriddhikara Bhavas etc.

### Pre-Requisite To Promote Ayurveda In Medical Tourism

1. To establish well equipped Ayurveda hospital.
2. To establish Hospitals with adequate facilities.
3. Communication system is not that much advanced so inconvenience for outsiders. So, to develop fully fledged communication forum.
4. To formulate strict rules in the sector of medical tourism especially for surrogacy.
5. To make world aware about this by proper advertising method i.e. printed to electronic media.

## DISCUSSION

Kaumarbhritya occupies broad vicinity which includes both mother and child healthcare<sup>10</sup>. Ayurveda can help to reduce the burden of infertility with proper correction of Ritu, Kshetra, Ambu, Beeja<sup>11</sup>. Pan-chakarma is proved to be best for making the couples ready for conception and also for having a healthy progeny<sup>12</sup>. Regulatory body, Ayurveda fraternity and stake holders of Ayurveda should take initiative in this background to make available a well-equipped Ayurveda hospital for infertility treatment with easy communication and adequate facilities. To achieve this target PPP MODEL i.e. Public Private Partnership should be adopted by the Ayurveda professionals. Thus, Ayurveda therapeutic interventions can help to become the infertile couples the real parents and ille-

gal things in surrogacy or other options can be minimized in this way.

## CONCLUSION

India is the place, where Ayurveda originates, and this time is the era of globalization. So, to take the benefit of this chance in globalized era to flourish the medical tourism and attract the needy peoples towards India. So, Medical tourism can help to reduce the disease burden all over the world and indirectly minimizes the financial burden of the country and it will increase the GDP of country.

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**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: V. K. Kori & Renu Rani: Medical Tourism In India - Challenges And Scope In Kaumarbhritya. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2020 {cited August, 2020} Available from: [http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/4138\\_4143.pdf](http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/4138_4143.pdf)