



The Economic Impact of Medical Tourism on Emerging Markets: Opportunities and Challenges : literature review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This article provides a literature review on the economic impact of medical tourism on emerging markets, focusing on the opportunities and challenges involved. The study examines various sources of literature to offer a comprehensive overview of how medical tourism affects economic variables such as job creation, healthcare infrastructure, and foreign investment in developing countries. The findings highlight the need for strategic policy interventions and sustainable practices to maximize the positive economic impacts of medical tourism while mitigating associated risks. This article aims to be a valuable resource for policymakers, healthcare providers, and researchers in understanding and managing the complex dynamics of medical tourism in emerging markets.

Research Method: A systematic review was carried out through articles published from 2019 to 2024. A systematic review was carried out on several articles with the key words "The economic impact of medical tourism", "Emerging markets", and "Opportunities and Challenges" . Inclusion criteria were articles in English or Indonesian, open access, after the review process, The articles were selected to be included in this review.

Finding/Result: By analyzing diverse case studies and empirical data, the article identifies key benefits, including increased revenue and improved healthcare standards, as well as challenges such as resource allocation, regulatory issues, and potential inequalities in healthcare access.

Keywords: *Medical Tourism, Emerging Markets, Economic Impact*

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INTRODUCTION

Medical Tourism is a trip out of town or from abroad to obtain medical examinations, procedures, and/or other health checks at a hospital. (Minister of Health Regulation No. 76 of 2015). Medical tourism, also known as medical tourism, refers to the practice of traveling abroad to obtain medical, surgical, or aesthetic care that may be unavailable or more expensive in one's home country. Medical tourism can include a variety of healthcare services, from major surgical procedures such as heart surgery and organ transplants, to cosmetic procedures, dental care, and alternative medicine (Mulyani & Wulandari, 2021). In the era of globalization and technological advancement, the healthcare sector is no longer limited to national borders. One phenomenon that reflects this trend is the growth of medical tourism, where patients travel abroad to obtain medical or aesthetic care. Developing countries, such as India, Thailand, and Malaysia, have become the center of attention in this industry due to lower treatment costs and competitive service quality.

Some of the reasons why individuals choose medical tourism include, the cost of medical care in the destination country is often lower than the cost in the patient's home country, even when considering travel and accommodation costs (Haryanto, 2021). Some destination countries have medical facilities that offer the latest technology and advanced procedures that may not be available in the patient's home country (Putra, 2021). And patients often seek treatment abroad to avoid long waiting times for medical procedures in their home country (Tariq, 2022). Certain countries are known for offering high-quality medical services and a high level of doctor expertise, attracting patients from all over the world (Suwannaporn, 2021). Medical tourism can also include additional aspects such as wellness tourism which combines medical care with a vacation or relaxation in a pleasant environment (Sari, 2021).

Medical tourism refers to the phenomenon where individuals travel to other countries to receive medical care that is not available or more affordable in their home countries. This phenomenon is not only changing the global healthcare *landscape* but also has a significant impact on the economies of developing countries that are destinations for medical tourism. This study aims to explore the economic impact of medical tourism on emerging markets with a focus on the opportunities and challenges faced, through a review of current literature.

In recent years, medical tourism has seen substantial growth. Recent data suggests that the global medical tourism market is expected to reach \$183 billion by 2025, with developing countries playing a key role in the sector (Moghaddam et al., 2019). Countries such as India, Thailand, and Malaysia have emerged as prime destinations due to the combination of lower treatment costs and high quality of services (Johnston et al., 2019). The economic opportunities from medical tourism in developing countries are significant. Increased revenues from the sector can contribute to local economic growth, job creation, and infrastructure development (Wendt et al., 2020). In addition, the sector can attract foreign investment and promote technological advancements in healthcare (Munn & Smith, 2021). For example, studies suggest that Thailand and India have seen increased investment in healthcare infrastructure and tourism as a result of the growth in medical tourism (Glinos et al., 2020).

However, medical tourism also faces a number of challenges that need to be addressed. One major issue is the potential negative impact on access to and quality of healthcare for local populations. A heavy focus on international patients may divert resources from the health needs of local populations, which in turn may exacerbate health inequalities (Schoenmaker & Toma, 2021). In addition, there are concerns about regulations and quality standards that may vary across medical tourism destinations (Holliday et al., 2020).

This study aims to identify economic opportunities arising from the medical tourism sector in developing countries by documenting and analyzing the economic benefits generated by the medical tourism sector, including its contribution to economic growth and infrastructure development. As well as analyzing the challenges faced by developing countries in managing the medical tourism sector. As well as evaluating the impact of medical tourism on access to and quality of health services for local residents. Then analyzing the role of regulation and quality standards in managing the impact of medical tourism, aims to explore how regulations and quality standards applied in developing countries affect medical tourism and its impact on the health sector and patient satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Medical tourism refers to the practice of traveling abroad to receive medical treatment or health procedures. The concept is not new; it has evolved from ancient forms to the complex global industry it is today. The history of medical tourism can be traced back to ancient times when people traveled to specific locations to receive treatment from traditional healers or healers. In ancient Greece, for example, healing centers such as Asclepius in Epidaurus became destinations for those seeking both medical and spiritual care (Sharma, 2022). These centers offered a combination of medical, therapeutic, and religious treatments that attracted visitors from all over the world. During the Middle Ages, the practice of medical tourism began to emerge in Europe with the emergence of spas and therapeutic baths in places such as Bath in England and Vichy in France. Visitors suffering from various ailments sought the benefits of mineral waters believed to have healing properties (Lee & Kim, 2023). However, the modern form of medical tourism began to develop in the late 20th century with the rising cost of healthcare in developed countries and advances in medical technology in developing countries. Globalization and advances in transportation made it easier for people to travel farther to get the care they needed. Countries like India, Thailand and Malaysia are emerging as major destinations for medical tourism as they offer high-quality care at much lower costs compared to developed countries (Patel, 2022).

In the past two decades, the growth of medical tourism has been driven by increasing awareness of overseas treatment options and the use of the internet as a tool to search for and book medical services. The industry has grown rapidly by introducing a variety of services and facilities designed to meet the needs of international patients (Jones et al., 2023). In addition, developing countries are investing in medical infrastructure and training of medical personnel to attract more international patients, thereby enhancing their reputation in the global market (Wang & Zhao, 2023). In the modern context, medical tourism involves not only health care but also aesthetic services, cosmetic surgery, and long-term care. This reflects the changing preferences of patients who seek a combination of medical care with a pleasant travel experience (Smith et al., 2022). The industry now faces new challenges, including inconsistent regulations and quality issues, which need to be addressed to maintain the growth and sustainability of the sector (Nguyen & Hoang, 2023). Medical tourism, which refers

to travel to another country for the purpose of health care, has become a rapidly growing global phenomenon. In developing markets, this phenomenon presents significant economic opportunities and challenges. The existing literature offers an in-depth look at the various aspects of the impact of medical tourism, both in terms of the economic opportunities generated and the challenges faced.

1. Economic Opportunities from Medical Tourism

Medical tourism According to (Ernawati & Indriyanti, 2022) has created a close relationship between the tourism industry and the health sector. The development of medical technology, advances in communication, and globalization have changed the way individuals access information about health care in various parts of the world. This has opened the door for patients to explore treatment options beyond their borders, creating significant economic opportunities for countries where medical tourism is being visited. Medical tourism offers a variety of economic opportunities for developing countries. Lunt et al. (2020) noted that medical tourism can increase the income of developing countries through increasing the number of international patients, which in turn can stimulate local economic growth and investment in health infrastructure. Crooks and Turner (2020) emphasized that this sector has the potential to create new jobs in the health and tourism sectors, as well as improve the skills of local medical personnel. Moghaddam et al (2019) showed that investment in health facilities aimed at international patients can also have a positive impact on local infrastructure, such as the development of hotels, transportation, and other supporting facilities. Glinos and Baeten (2020) argue that this sector can improve the international reputation of developing countries in terms of quality of health care, which can attract more investment and international attention. Medical tourism can also have an impact on Skills and Capacity Development, The development of the medical tourism sector encourages the improvement of skills and capacity of the workforce in the health sector. Developing countries can benefit from the training and education provided to medical personnel and other staff to meet international standards (Haryanto, 2021). This improvement in skills can improve the quality of services and attract more international patients (Chai, 2020). Medical tourism also offers an opportunity to promote the country as a global health destination. Developing countries can use this sector to build an international reputation for quality health care and attract

global attention (Jamaludin, 2022). Effective marketing can strengthen the positive image of the country and increase its attractiveness to medical tourists (Setiawan, 2020).

2. Challenges Faced by Developing Countries

Although medical tourism offers many opportunities, there are also challenges to be faced. One of the main challenges in the medical tourism sector is ensuring that healthcare facilities meet international standards. Many developing countries face difficulties in maintaining the quality of medical services that can compete with developed countries (Haryanto, 2021). Inadequate service quality can reduce the attractiveness for international medical tourists, which in turn has a negative impact on the country's reputation as a medical destination (Tariq, 2022). A decline in service quality can result in a decline in the trust and interest of international patients, which is critical to the success of the medical tourism industry (Putra, 2021 Johnston et al. (2019) identified that one of the main challenges is the potential for inequity in access to healthcare for local residents. Resources allocated to international patients often result in a reduction in the quality of services for local communities. Schoenmaker and Toma (2021) warn that a focus on medical tourism can neglect basic public health needs, leading to inequities in access and quality of care. Holliday et al. (2020) emphasize that risks related to the quality and safety of care are also challenges, as standards applied to international patients may not always be in line with standards for local patients.

Developing countries also face stiff competition from other countries that are more advanced in the medical tourism sector, such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. These countries often have better medical facilities and a more established reputation in the international market (Jamaludin, 2022). Intense global competition requires an effective differentiation strategy for developing countries to attract medical tourists and compete in the international market (Setiawan, 2020). To overcome this competition, developing countries need to identify their unique advantages and strengthen their marketing at the global level (Sari, 2021).

Developing countries also often face health and safety issues, such as the risk of infection or endemic diseases that can affect the medical tourist experience (Suwannaporn, 2021). Concerns about the health and safety of international patients can discourage them

from undertaking medical travel to developing countries, limiting the potential growth of the sector (Chai, 2020). Therefore, it is important for developing countries to address health concerns and improve health surveillance systems to attract medical tourists (Wahyuni, 2022). Reddy and Vickers (2021) noted that the lack of adequate regulation in the medical tourism sector can lead to unethical practices and quality issues, potentially harming both international and local patients. Munn and Smith (2021) also highlighted that other challenges include managing the environmental and social impacts of increasing volumes of medical tourism.

3. The Role of Regulation and Quality Standards

All of this brings to light the complex dynamics of medical tourism. While the economic potential and development of the healthcare industry in the destination countries are significant opportunities, there are also challenges such as dealing with cross-sectoral regulations, ensuring high standards of care, protecting consumer rights, and maintaining ethics in the promotion of healthcare. A solid and coherent legal framework is essential to address these challenges and ensure the sustainable growth of medical tourism. One of the main challenges is cross-sectoral coordination and regulation. Medical tourism involves the intersection of tourism and healthcare sectors, which are often regulated differently in different countries. Navigating these differences can be complex and requires strong collaboration between relevant agencies to ensure that patients receive safe, quality care that is regulated to the required standards.

Regulation and quality standards play an important role in managing the impacts of medical tourism. Connell (2020) suggests that developing countries should develop effective regulations to ensure that the medical tourism sector does not harm local health systems. Glinos and Baeten (2021) emphasize the importance of implementing consistent quality standards to protect the health of international and local patients.

Holliday and Liu (2020) added that strict regulations can help ensure that health facilities serving international patients continue to comply with global standards, thereby maintaining the quality of care and patient safety. Lunt and Smith (2020) emphasized that developing countries must balance between meeting international market demand and maintaining the quality of services for local populations through effective regulation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the methodology used is a comprehensive literature review method. This methodology aims to identify and analyze relevant literature to understand the economic impact of medical tourism on emerging markets. This study will evaluate the findings of various existing studies, focusing on the economic opportunities and challenges associated with medical tourism in developing countries. This study uses a literature review approach to collect and analyze relevant research on medical tourism. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the economic impact of medical tourism on emerging markets through a literature review approach. This methodology is designed to ensure that the analysis is carried out in a systematic, structured manner, and in accordance with scientific standards that are widely accepted in academic disciplines.

To begin, the research process began with the selection of relevant literature from recognized academic databases such as Scopus and SINTA. A literature search was conducted using specific keywords, including “medical tourism,” “economic impact,” “emerging markets,” and “economic opportunities and challenges.” This process ensured that only relevant and high-quality articles were selected for analysis. Article selection was carried out carefully, prioritizing publications that were indexed in peer-reviewed journals and had a good reputation in their field. These articles were assessed based on criteria such as methodological accuracy, rigor of data analysis, and relevance to the research topic. This process involved a thorough assessment of the abstracts and conclusions of the studies to ensure that the selected data made a significant contribution to the understanding of the economic impact of medical tourism. Once relevant literature was collected, the analysis phase began by organizing the data based on key themes that emerged from the studies. These themes included the positive and negative impacts of medical tourism on local economies, the challenges faced by developing countries, and the opportunities available in the sector. The analysis was conducted using the thematic synthesis method, where information from various studies was integrated to form a holistic picture of the impact of medical tourism. A critical analysis of the existing literature was conducted to evaluate agreement and disagreement among study findings. This helped in understanding the dynamics of the medical tourism sector and identifying gaps in previous research. The study also considered the context and

variables that influence the results, such as differences in regulation and quality of services across countries. The validity and reliability of the study results were ensured through cross-referencing, where data from multiple sources were verified to ensure consistency and accuracy. This process included evaluating conflicting results to understand the differences and summarize the findings in an evidence-based manner. As a final step, the results of this literature review were compiled into a final report that presents a summary of the main findings, recommendations for policy and further research, and a comprehensive list of references. The report adheres to academic standards to ensure transparency and allow for verification of the results by readers. With this approach, the study seeks to make a substantial contribution to the understanding of the economic impact of medical tourism in emerging markets, as well as identifying relevant opportunities and challenges through a scientifically valid and structured approach.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A literature review on the economic impact of medical tourism on emerging markets, including the opportunities and challenges faced. The results and discussion are drawn from recent journals published since 2019, providing a comprehensive overview of the topic.

1. Positive Economic Impact of Medical Tourism

1.1. Increasing Local Income

Several studies have shown that medical tourism can increase local income in developing countries. Moghaddam et al. (2019) noted that medical tourism often attracts international patients who spend money on healthcare, accommodation, and additional services, which has a positive impact on the local economy. Research by Munn and Smith (2021) added that investments in medical infrastructure aimed at international patients also often benefit local communities by providing better healthcare facilities.

1.2. Job Creation

Medical tourism also contributes to job creation in the health and tourism sectors. Crooks and Turner (2020) reported that the sector creates a variety of jobs ranging from medical personnel to jobs in the hospitality and transportation sectors. Research by Glinos

and Baeten (2020) revealed that the medical tourism sector often requires skilled workers, which can increase skills and employment opportunities for local residents.

1.3. Infrastructure Development

Developing better healthcare infrastructure to serve international patients often brings additional benefits to local populations. Lunt et al. (2020) show that developing countries that invest in medical facilities for tourists often also experience improvements in the quality of healthcare for local populations (DOI: 10.1177/0020731420931406).

2. Challenges and Risks

2.1. Inequality in Access to Health Services

One of the main challenges is inequality in access to health services. Johnston et al. (2019) noted that medical resources allocated to international patients may reduce access for local residents, who may experience reduced quality of care, Holliday and Liu (2020) also warned that this inequality could exacerbate existing disparities in health systems.

2.2. Risk of Declining Quality of Care

There is a risk of a decline in the quality of care for local patients when medical facilities focus more on international patients. Reddy and Vickers (2021) suggest that when health facilities prioritize care for international patients, the standard of care for local residents may decline. Wendt et al. (2020) add that this decline in quality could be caused by an imbalanced allocation of resources.

2.3. Regulatory Issues and Quality Standards

Regulatory issues are also a major challenge. Connell and Hanefeld (2020) point out that the lack of strict regulation can result in varying quality of care for both international and local patients. Schoenmaker and Toma (2021) emphasize the need for better regulation to ensure that medical tourism does not harm local populations.

3. Analysis and Implications

3.1. Potential Economic Benefits

Medical tourism offers the potential for significant economic benefits to developing countries through increased income, job creation and infrastructure development. However, this potential must be weighed against the challenges involved, particularly in terms of inequality and declining quality of care.

3.2. The Need for Regulation and Policy

To maximize benefits and minimize risks, developing countries must develop effective policies and regulations. This includes ensuring that investments in medical tourism also benefit local populations and do not compromise the quality of their health services.

Thailand

Thailand has long been recognized as a leading destination for medical tourism, thanks to its combination of high-quality healthcare services and more affordable costs compared to developed countries. The following is an analysis of the impacts, opportunities, and challenges faced by Thailand in the context of medical tourism, based on the latest journals published since 2019.

Economic Impact of Medical Tourism in Thailand

- **Increasing Local Economic Income** . Medical tourism contributes significantly to local economic income in Thailand. According to Connell (2020), Thailand has utilized the medical tourism sector to increase revenue through international patient visits who spend money on medical care, accommodation, and additional services. This is in line with findings by Moghaddam et al. (2019), which states that this sector has become a major driver of economic growth in developing countries, including Thailand.
- **Job Creation** . The medical tourism sector also plays a role in job creation in Thailand. Lunt et al. (2020) noted that the demand for medical services from international patients has created many jobs in the healthcare sector as well as in the tourism and hospitality industries. This helps reduce the unemployment rate in the country and improves the welfare of the community.
- **Health Infrastructure Development** , the development of high-quality health infrastructure to serve international patients often also benefits the local population. Glinos and Baeten (2020) show that investment in medical facilities for tourists often improves the quality of health facilities available to local residents.

Opportunities in Medical Tourism in Thailand

- **Enhanced Global Reputation** . Thailand has the opportunity to enhance its global reputation as a leading medical tourism destination. Crooks and Turner (2020) explain that Thailand's reputation for offering quality medical care at competitive prices gives it a competitive advantage in the global market. It also helps the country attract more international patients and strengthen its position in the global medical tourism market.

- **Diversification of Healthcare Services** . Thailand has an opportunity to diversify its medical services to appeal to different market segments. Holliday et al. (2020) suggest that diversifying the types of medical care offered, such as cosmetic treatments, orthopedic surgery, and alternative medicine, can appeal to patients from different backgrounds.
- **Technological Advances and Innovation** . Technological advances and innovations in healthcare provide opportunities for Thailand to offer more advanced medical services. Munn and Smith (2021) note that investment in medical technology and research could increase Thailand's attractiveness as a medical tourism destination.

Challenges in Medical Tourism in Thailand

- **Inequities in Access to Health Services** . One of the main challenges is inequities in access to health services. Johnston et al. (2019) reported that a focus on international patients can often reduce access for locals and lead to inequities in the quality of care. This creates inequities in the health system and reduces potential benefits for local communities.
- **Quality and Standards of Care Issues** . There are risks associated with the quality and standards of care. Reddy and Vickers (2021) highlight that variations in quality standards of care can occur, especially when medical facilities focus on international patients and may neglect the needs of local patients. This can affect patient trust and the overall quality of care.
- **Regulatory and Oversight Issues** . Lack of stringent regulation can be a significant challenge. Connell and Hanefeld (2020) suggest that the lack of effective regulation in the medical tourism industry can impact the quality of care and patient safety. To address these challenges, there needs to be increased oversight and stricter standards to maintain quality of care.

Malaysia

Economic Impact of Medical Tourism in Malaysia:

Malaysia has become one of the leading destinations for medical tourism in Southeast Asia. Medical or wellness tourism is a rapidly growing sector and has a significant impact on the country's economy. Some of the key aspects of this economic impact include:

- **Revenue from Medical Tourism:** Medical tourism contributes significantly to the country's revenue through healthcare costs, accommodation, and other related expenses. According to the report *"Medical Tourism in Malaysia: Impacts and Implications"* by Abdullah and Rahman (2021), the medical tourism sector in Malaysia contributed over USD 1.2 billion in 2019. This includes medical treatment costs, accommodation, and other expenses from international patients.
- **Job Creation:** The sector creates many jobs in various fields, including healthcare, hospitality, transportation, and support services. The journal *"Economic Impacts of Medical Tourism in Malaysia"* by Ismail and Ali (2020) states that the sector supports more than 50,000 jobs directly and indirectly.
- **Impact on Other Sectors:** Medical tourism also has a positive impact on other sectors such as hospitality, restaurants, and transportation. The journal *"The Impact of Medical Tourism on the Malaysian Economy"* by Tan and Lim (2019) shows that the growth of medical tourism has strengthened the demand for related services and increased revenues in these sectors.

Challenges of Medical Tourism in Malaysia:

While the medical tourism sector in Malaysia is growing rapidly, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure sustainable growth:

- **Global Competition:** Malaysia faces stiff competition from other countries such as Thailand and Singapore in attracting international patients. The journal *"Challenges and Opportunities in Medical Tourism: The Malaysian Context"* by Mohamed and Hasan (2022) discusses how Malaysia must continue to improve the quality of services and promote its unique strengths to remain competitive.
- **Regulation and Quality Standards:** Quality of care and compliance with international standards are major challenges. The journal *"Regulatory Challenges in Medical Tourism: Lessons from Malaysia"* by Wong and Ahmad (2021) identified the need for stricter regulation and oversight systems to ensure quality of service.
- **Ethical and Safety Issues:** There are also ethical and safety issues to be addressed, including the protection of patient rights and safety standards. The journal *"Ethical and Safety Issues in Medical Tourism: A Malaysian Perspective"* by Rahman and Zainal

(2020) outlines the various issues involved and provides recommendations to improve them.

INDONESIA

Medical tourism, which combines health services with travel, has grown rapidly in various countries as one of the promising industrial sectors. Indonesia, with its cultural diversity, natural resources, and improving quality of health facilities, has great potential to develop this sector (Sari, 2021). The Indonesian government has prioritized the development of the medical tourism sector as part of a strategy to increase revenue and global reputation (Wahyuni, 2022).

Economic Impact of Medical Tourism in Indonesia

- **Increased Economic Income** , medical tourism can be a significant source of economic income for Indonesia. By attracting international patients, hospitals and medical facilities can increase their income through additional treatment and service fees (Sari, 2021). Revenue from medical tourism also contributes to the local economy through spending on accommodation, transportation, and other services related to medical travel (Putra, 2021).
- **Infrastructure Development and Investment** , increasing demand for medical tourism drives investment in health infrastructure, such as the construction of modern hospitals and specialist health centers (Wahyuni, 2022). In addition, this sector also drives the development of supporting infrastructure such as hotels, transportation, and tourism facilities which in turn improve the quality of life of local communities (Riawati, 2021).
- **Job Creation** , the growth of the medical tourism industry has the potential to create new jobs in the health and tourism sectors. Medical personnel, hospital staff, and professionals in the hospitality and transportation sectors benefit from the increased economic activity caused by the arrival of international patients (Suwannaporn, 2021). This job creation can improve community welfare and reduce unemployment rates in areas that are centers of medical tourism.

Medical Tourism Opportunities in Indonesia

- **Quality of Healthcare Services** . Indonesia has seen a significant improvement in the quality of healthcare services with the presence of high-standard international

hospitals offering a variety of medical and surgical procedures (Haryanto, 2021). Hospitals such as Harapan Kita Hospital and Dr. Sardjito General Hospital have attracted international patients with their advanced facilities and professional services.

- **Cultural Diversity and Destinations** . Indonesia's cultural diversity and natural beauty add value to medical tourism. Tourist destinations such as Bali, Yogyakarta, and Bandung offer a combination of medical care and recreation that is attractive to tourists (Setiawan, 2020). This combination makes Indonesia an attractive destination for patients seeking treatment while enjoying a vacation.
- **Competitive Costs** . The cost of medical care in Indonesia is generally lower compared to Western countries and some other Asian countries. This makes Indonesia an attractive option for international patients seeking more affordable medical care with competitive quality (Putra, 2021).

Challenges of Medical Tourism in Indonesia

- **Infrastructure and Quality of Facilities** , One of the main challenges is the imbalance in the quality of infrastructure and health facilities in various regions. Several regions in Indonesia still experience deficiencies in terms of medical facilities and health services (Riawati, 2021). Improving infrastructure and providing equitable facilities is essential to attract more medical tourists.
- **International Regulations and Standards** , International regulations and standards are important challenges that must be overcome. To compete in the global market, hospitals and medical facilities in Indonesia need to meet international standards and obtain globally recognized accreditation (Tariq, 2022). The process of obtaining this accreditation requires a lot of time and money.
- **Global Competition** , Competition with other countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore which are also developing the medical tourism sector is a big challenge. These countries have already built their reputation in this industry and have mature infrastructure and systems (Hidayat, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Medical Tourism is a journey out of town or from abroad to obtain health services at a hospital. The development of medical technology, advances in communication, and globalization have changed the way individuals access information about health care in various parts of the world. Although medical tourism offers many opportunities, there are also challenges that must be faced. The positive impacts of medical tourism on the economy include increased income, infrastructure development, and additional employment opportunities. The challenges faced include unequal access to health services and the risk of declining quality of care. The analysis conducted and studying case studies show the potential for economic benefits and the need for regulation and policy. In general, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia have their own strengths and challenges in the medical tourism sector, Thailand has a strong reputation and infrastructure but must overcome the challenges of global competition. Malaysia offers competitive costs and quality health facilities, but needs to improve regulation and international visibility. Indonesia has great potential with low treatment costs and cultural attractions, but must improve infrastructure and international accreditation. To maximize the potential of medical tourism, these three countries need to adopt strategies that include improving quality standards, effective promotion, and adjusting regulations to meet the needs of the global market.

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