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**Tourism and related services —  
Medical tourism — Service  
requirements**

*Tourisme et services connexes — Tourisme médical — Exigences de  
service*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 228, *Tourism and related services*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

The number of people travelling from one country to another searching for healthcare has quickly increased in recent years. Some of the reasons for this are the competitive prices that certain countries offer, the unavailability of treatment in medical tourists' home countries and the desire of medical tourists to skip long waiting lists. Furthermore, the growing demand within this global market has benefited from the ease and affordability of international travel as well as technological progress and the possibilities that the internet offers. Treatments include cosmetic surgery, dentistry, laser surgery for eyes, spinal disc replacement, brain surgery (e.g. cerebral valve adaptation), oncologic surgery (e.g. tumorexeresis or complete organ removal), bariatric surgery (e.g. gastric bypass) and cardiac bypass surgery.

Multiple stakeholders are involved in the medical tourism value chain, including facilitators, healthcare providers (e.g. clinics and hospitals), professionals (e.g. doctors) and other interested parties (e.g. insurance companies and consulates). The development of medical tourism faces many challenges, such as simplifying the administrative tasks, enhancing and adapting healthcare procedures and post-treatment care, and coordinating travel arrangements. These might present some difficulties for healthcare providers in meeting medical tourists' expectations.

There is an obvious need, therefore, to define, at an international level, the minimum quality requirements for providing medical tourism services, considering the different stakeholders involved, in order to meet the expectations of medical tourists.

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# Tourism and related services — Medical tourism — Service requirements

## 1 Scope

This document establishes the requirements and recommendations for facilitators and healthcare providers in medical tourism.

This document intends to ensure quality service provision for tourists in order to meet the expectations of tourists travelling for medical reasons as a primary motivation.

This document does not apply to thalassotherapy centres, medical spas or wellness spas.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/e0ef9aaa-c4a5-46a3-8c62-651aad0ca4b8/iso-22525-2020>

### 3.1

#### **concierge service**

service provided by the *facilitator* (3.2), the *healthcare provider* (3.4) or both to enhance the medical tourist's experience

EXAMPLE Pick-up or return to the airport, medical and leisure activity escort, parking services, translation services, babysitting, cleaning staff, drivers, 24-h personal attention, accommodation rental.

### 3.2

#### **facilitator**

medical-tourism-specialized intermediary which aids the medical tourist in the process of contracting medical services

Note 1 to entry: Some facilitators also completely or partly arrange concierge services, flights or accommodation for the medical tourist.

EXAMPLE Travel agency, medical cluster, the international department of a healthcare provider.

### 3.3

#### **healthcare**

activities to maintain and improve the health of individuals or the general population

[SOURCE: ISO 22886:2020, 3.11.2]

**3.4  
healthcare provider**

organisation where *medical tourists* (3.9) are given medical consultation, diagnosis, rehabilitation and medical or surgical treatment

EXAMPLE Clinic, hospital, rehabilitation centre.

**3.5  
healthcare staff**

qualified staff who provide clinical services to *medical tourists* (3.9)

EXAMPLE Nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, emergency medical technician, radiography staff, dietician.

**3.6  
medical procedure**

action intended to deliver *healthcare* (3.3)

EXAMPLE Diagnosis, treatment, therapeutics and tests.

**3.7  
medical staff**

graduates in medicine who meet the legal requirements for the practice of the profession

**3.8  
medical tourism**

international or national travel which has *healthcare* (3.3) as a primary motivation

**3.9  
medical tourist**

person travelling for *healthcare* (3.3)

Note 1 to entry: The reasons for such travel include medical consultation, diagnosis, rehabilitation and medical or surgical treatment.

**3.10  
temporary exit allowance**

permission given to the *medical tourist* (3.9) to leave the *healthcare provider* (3.4) and continue the *treatment* (3.11) afterwards, when the treatment is carried out in several stages

Note 1 to entry: In some treatments, such as oncology, the treatment is carried out over several periods.

**3.11  
treatment**

*healthcare* (3.3) given to the *medical tourist* (3.9) for an illness, injury or disease in order to make them healthy or to improve their quality of life

## 4 General requirements

### 4.1 General

This clause establishes the requirements for quality service in medical tourism and applies to both the facilitator and the healthcare provider.

The facilitator and the healthcare provider shall:

- a) provide the medical tourist with documented information about their specialties, the services offered and their field of expertise;
- b) cooperate with each other and with the medical tourist to facilitate the process, providing the medical tourist with the required information regarding both the travel and the medical procedure;



- c) have appropriate insurance for their activities;
- d) identify the legal requirements that apply to them (e.g. operating licence, authorization of the health authority, health transport, food safety, hazardous waste management, X-ray facilities) and ensure that these are taken into account when offering and providing the services;
- e) define and implement a documented procedure to identify the different job profiles of the organization managing the personal and clinical data of medical tourists and establish the level of permissions necessary to access that information for each job profile;
- f) ensure confidentiality and data protection for medical tourists (e.g. separate records for clinical data and administrative data); it is highly recommended that software systems are implemented which allow the management of and control the access to this information (e.g. tests, results, diagnostics);
- g) recommend contracting an insurance policy to cover possible complications of the treatment when this is not included in the given quotation, considering also other expenses for death and repatriation (for the medical tourist and their companions);
- h) implement a management system that evidences quality service provision and appropriate internal management.

## 4.2 Visa arrangements

The facilitator, the healthcare provider or both should identify and document the visa requirements for international medical tourists, where applicable and at least for those countries of origin where most of their medical tourists come from.

In some cases, the healthcare provider can write an invitation letter when requested by the medical tourist.

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## 4.3 Concierge services

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### 4.3.1 General

Concierge services can be offered either by the facilitator or the healthcare provider.

The facilitator or healthcare provider shall define the services offered for their medical tourists' convenience. For that purpose, it should analyse, for example:

- a) the treatments offered;
- b) the average stay of the medical tourists;
- c) the origin of the medical tourists;
- d) the languages and other cultural issues related to the medical tourists.

### 4.3.2 Foreign languages and translation services

The facilitator and the healthcare provider shall communicate and provide their services in at least one foreign language, which shall be determined considering the countries of origin of their medical tourists. When translation services are required, these services shall be provided.

The facilitator and healthcare provider shall have a list or access to contact details related to translation service providers.

### 4.3.3 Transportation services

Transportation services from from the main destination entrance points (e.g. airports) shall be offered. Appropriate vehicles and facilities for medical tourists with physical disabilities should be provided. The medical tourists shall be informed of applicable conditions in advance.

Transportation to the accommodation facilities at the destination shall be provided by the healthcare provider or the facilitator (upon request, if applicable). The transportation should be appropriate to the medical condition of the medical tourists.

### 4.3.4 Accommodation services

When, due to the type of treatments carried out by the healthcare provider (i.e. follow-up activities and recovery), an accommodation service outside the healthcare provider is needed, the facilitator and the healthcare provider shall cooperate with accommodation providers and other service companies at the destination in order to offer practical information. The accommodation should account for the needs and requirements of people with disabilities.

NOTE For additional information about accessibility requirements see ISO 21902<sup>1)</sup>.

The opportunity to book those services together with the treatment as a package should be available.

## 4.4 Medical tourist satisfaction monitoring and action plan

Both the healthcare provider and the facilitator shall measure and monitor medical tourist satisfaction with their own service. Also, concierge services, when applicable, shall be measured and monitored.

The results obtained from this evaluation shall be available for the staff involved so that the healthcare provider, the facilitator or both implement an action plan to improve medical tourist satisfaction. They shall also handle medical tourists' complaints.

The results obtained from the monitoring plan of medical tourist satisfaction as well as the actions taken to improve medical tourist satisfaction shall be recorded.

## 5 Requirements for facilitators

### 5.1 General

Medical tourism is divided into three major processes:

- pre-travel and pre-treatment;
- treatment;
- post-treatment, including return home and follow-up.

The facilitator shall:

- a) have specific knowledge of the healthcare sector;
- b) document its relationship with the healthcare provider through a contract, which includes the procedure to be followed by both parties; this contract shall also ensure the data protection of the medical tourists;
- c) keep documented information of the medical procedure.

The minimum competencies for facilitators shall be as specified in [Annex B](#).

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1) Under preparation. Stage at the time of publication: ISO/DIS 21902:2020.

## 5.2 Pre-travel and pre-treatment

The facilitator shall:

- a) collect general information from the medical tourist so the appropriate treatment can be offered by the healthcare provider and, when requested by the medical doctor, submit a form to be completed by the medical tourist to inform the medical doctor of his or her medical history;
- b) provide the medical tourist with the information needed regarding the medical doctor, healthcare provider and/or its own services and expertise;
- c) ensure that an application form is completed by the medical tourist; the application form shall include at least the medical tourist's contact details, language preference and submission of privacy policy, and shall allow the medical tourist to explain his or her needs or case;
- d) contact the medical tourist in order to get additional information to that previously provided through the application form, regarding his or her special needs, concerns and expectations, quotation and requested time frame for the treatment;
- e) request from the healthcare provider information regarding, for example, the medical staff, treatment, test benefits, possible general risks and complications of the treatment, length of stay and estimated time to discharge and recovery time, and inform the patient accordingly, referring the medical tourist to the healthcare provider for a medical process explanation;
- f) provide the medical tourist with general information regarding the travel arrangements offer (e.g. general visa information when needed, transfer information);
- g) ensure that the medical tourist has given formal consent for their personal information to be collected and disseminated to the medical staff;
- h) ensure that the requested medical data and tests (e.g. magnetic resonance imaging, X-rays, photos, clinical laboratory test results) are provided by the medical tourist when needed for the medical procedure;
- i) agree with the medical tourist about the most convenient travel dates;
- j) agree with the medical tourist about the accommodation facilities and other concierge services needed; the facilitator should suggest an accommodation provider which meets the medical tourist's needs (i.e. in terms of accessibility, nutrition and a companion person);
- k) request from the healthcare provider a quotation for the treatment;
- l) inform the medical tourist about the following:
  - the necessary travel documents, such as passport and visa acquisition and their estimated costs;
  - the possibility that the treatment might be cancelled for medical reasons once the medical tourist is at the healthcare provider;
  - the possibility that the selected doctor will not be not available due to unforeseen circumstance; in this case, an alternative shall be determined in consultation with the medical tourist;
  - the payment policy;
  - the responsibility of every party in the process (facilitator and healthcare provider);
  - the applicable legislation, which is the one in the country where the treatment is carried out;
- m) after receiving all the information (including the medical process as well as the concierge services), send a final quotation of all services to the medical tourist for approval; this quotation shall be clear enough to allow them to identify what is included and what is not; coverage in case of complications (if any) shall be determined;