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Perception, Practice and Cost Burden of Medical Tourism Among Physicians in Public Tertiary Health Facilities in Oyo State, South-West, Nigeria

Perception, Pratique et Fardeau Financier du Tourisme Médical Parmi les Médecins dans les Établissements de Santé Tertiaires Publics de l'État d'Oyo, Sud-Ouest, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Physicians are key to the clinical decision-making of their clients. Their perception and practice of medical tourism could influence their clients' uptake of the same. This study assessed the perceptions about medical tourism among physicians practising in public tertiary health facilities in Oyo state. We then assessed its practice and cost burden among physicians who had ever engaged in medical tourism.

METHODOLOGY: This cross-sectional study conducted in 2019 involved 360 physicians working in two public tertiary health facilities in Oyo State, selected via a two-stage simple random sampling technique. Quantitative data was collected using a semi-structured pre-tested self-administered tool. Data collected was analysed using STATA 17.0 with statistical significance inferred at $p < 0.05$.

FINDINGS: The physicians' mean score on knowledge of medical tourism was 4.0 ± 0.8 of 5 marks obtainable. Organ transplant was the most commonly known reason for engaging in medical tourism. Destination country hospital facilities and equipment ranked highest and cost considerations ranked least of perceived factors promoting it. Twenty-four (6.7%) of the physicians studied ever engaged in medical tourism, while 258 (71.7%) intend to if the need arose. The most popular destination country was India. The mean direct cost of engaging in medical tourism was $\$3,351 \pm \$4,357$. The mean indirect cost was $\$2,389 \pm \774 , while the mean total cost was $\$5,739.6 \pm \$4,841.8$. The majority of the 24 physicians (83.3%) who engaged in medical tourism suffered catastrophic health spending from it.

CONCLUSION: High burden of medical tourism on the physicians. Funds spent on medical tourism by them could be used to strengthen the delivery of health services, such as ensuring children are fully immunised.

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KEYWORDS: Medical tourism, Knowledge, Practice, Cost burden, Health services, Catastrophic health expenditure, Drivers of medical tourism, Medical tourists.

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE: Les médecins jouent un rôle clé dans la prise de décision clinique de leurs patients. Leur perception et leur pratique du tourisme médical pourraient influencer l'adoption de cette pratique par leurs patients. Cette étude a évalué les perceptions concernant le tourisme médical parmi les médecins exerçant dans des établissements de santé tertiaires publics de l'État d'Oyo. Nous avons ensuite évalué sa pratique et son coût parmi les médecins ayant déjà eu recours au tourisme médical.

MÉTHODOLOGIE: Cette étude transversale menée en 2019 a impliqué 360 médecins travaillant dans deux établissements de santé tertiaires publics de l'État d'Oyo, sélectionnés par une technique d'échantillonnage aléatoire simple en deux étapes. Des données quantitatives ont été recueillies à l'aide d'un outil semi-structuré pré-testé et auto-administré. Les données collectées ont été analysées à l'aide de STATA 17.0, avec une signification statistique déduite à $p < 0,05$.

RÉSULTATS: Le score moyen des médecins en termes de connaissance du tourisme médical était de $4,0 \pm 0,8$ sur 5 points possibles. La greffe d'organes était la raison la plus souvent citée pour recourir au tourisme médical. Les infrastructures et équipements hospitaliers du pays de destination étaient les facteurs les plus influents, tandis que les considérations de coût étaient les moins perçues. Vingt-quatre (6,7 %) des médecins étudiés avaient déjà eu recours au tourisme médical, tandis que 258 (71,7 %) avaient l'intention de le faire en cas de besoin. Le pays de destination le plus populaire était l'Inde. Le coût direct moyen du recours au tourisme médical était de $3\,351 \$ \pm 4\,357 \$$. Le coût indirect moyen était de $2\,389 \$ \pm 774 \$$, tandis que le coût total moyen était de $5\,739,6 \$ \pm 4\,841,8 \$$. La majorité des 24 médecins (83,3 %) ayant eu recours au tourisme médical ont subi des dépenses de santé catastrophiques à cause de cela.

CONCLUSION: Le fardeau du tourisme médical sur les médecins est élevé. Les fonds dépensés pour le tourisme médical pourraient être utilisés pour renforcer la prestation des services de santé, comme assurer que les enfants soient entièrement vaccinés.

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MOTS CLÉS: Tourisme médical, Connaissance, Pratique, Fardeau des coûts, Services de santé, Dépenses de santé catastrophiques, Facteurs déterminants du tourisme médical, Touristes médicaux.

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