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The identity and role of stakeholders in the medical tourism industry: state of the art (Review)

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Abstract

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Purpose: This paper aims to address and identify the major stakeholders in the medical tourism industry, based on their participation in medical tourism activities and their support for medical tourism development.

Design/methodology/approach: This paper systematically reviews the content of medical tourism studies from literature to identify key stakeholders and address the roles they play in the medical tourism industry. **Findings:** This study shows that the key stakeholders in the medical tourism industry are eight, namely, medical tourists, health-care providers, government agencies, facilitators, accreditation and credentialing bodies, health-care marketers, insurance providers and infrastructure and facilities. These stakeholders strongly influence medical tourists' decision-making process in seeking medical treatment abroad. Besides, a successful medical tourism development depends greatly on the excellent partnership between all stakeholders. **Practical implications:** This paper sheds light on the crucial role of these stakeholders that can be an important consideration in medical tourists' decision-making process and industry growth. The study can facilitate policymakers in designing and developing policies to improve medical tourism practices. **Originality/value:** This paper expands the knowledge about medical tourism literature by identifying and explaining the significant role of each stakeholder in the industry. The results of this paper are quite revealing to all practitioners in terms of the potential strategies and medical tourism growth. The study establishes a foundation for future medical tourism research in the rapidly growing industry. © 2020, Emerald Publishing Limited.

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