# Trade in Health Services and Medical Tourism

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Herberholz, C. & Supakankunti, S., 2013. *Medical tourism in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand*, background paper for the ANHSS/WBI Knowledge Event on "Engaging the Private Sector to Achieve Health System Goals - Private Hospitals and the Private Sector as Partners for Universal Health Care Coverage" (27 May 2013, CUHK, Hong Kong) [Online] Available at: http://www.anhss.org)

## Motivation



- Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are major destinations for medical tourism
  - Large private sector exists
  - Role of the private sector in the overall health system is different
- Controversial: Economic benefits Equity impact
  - Health services as a source of revenue
  - Private for-profit versus public provision of health services

# **Objectives**



- To compare the role of the private hospital sector in the overall health system and for medical tourism in particular, as well as the environment in which it operates
- To review the impact of medical tourism on destination countries' health systems
- To examine company strategies related to medical tourism of major health care companies in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand

## Method



- Combination of documentary research (based on existing literature) and analysis of in-depth interview data
  - Experts from academia and industry
  - o March 2013

# **International Patients & Revenues**



	Malaysia	Singapore	Thailand
International patients (2012)	728,800	850,000	2,500,000
	(ID, IN, JP)	(ID, MY, BD)	(JP, US, UK)
Revenues (USD)	125 million	600 million	4 billion
	(2011)	(2013)	(2012)

Data sources: International Medical Travel Journal March 15, 2013, Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council, The Nation June 22, 2015, The Straits Times May 8, 2015

## **Data Issues**

#### International Patients vs Medical Tourists



#### International patients

- Tourists
- Expatriates
- Medical tourists
  - \* "those who travel to another country with the purpose of consuming health care services, where the foreign country is not their country of origin" (Rosenmöller, et al. 2006)
  - **▼** GATS Mode 2
    - Intertwined dynamics across four modes

## Multiple visits

 Estimates likely far too high (Noree, Hanefeld and Smith, 2016)

#### **Data Issues**

Revenues: Medical Tourism Value Chain



#### Pre-procedure

- Information provision
- Check-up
- Travel logistics
- Visa
- Payment mode

#### **Procedure**

- Medical treatment
- Post-operative care
- Airport transfer
- Accommodation
- Bill clearance

#### **Post-procedure**

- Vacation in destination country or return to home
- Follow-up care
- Satisfaction measurement

## Decision

Patients (and family members and friends), providers, insurance agents, medical tourism facilitators, transport providers, tour operators, government agencies and hotel groups.

Yilmaz and Bititci (2006), Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (2011)

## **Data Issues**

#### **Medical Interventions**



- Wellness services as a preventive health service
- Elective health care services: both simple and complex

Procedure	USA	Malaysia	Singapore	Thailand
Heart bypass	130,000	9,000	18,500	11,000
Heart valve replacement	160,000	9,000	12,500	10,000
Hip replacement	43,000	10,000	12,000	12,000
Knee replacement	40,000	8,000	13,000	10,000
Spinal fusion	62,000	6,000	9,000	7,000

Source: Woodman (2007) in Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council 2012, as cited in Penang Monthly: Statistics-February 2013

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