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Genesis, Challenges and Applications of Medical Tourism in the Voronezh Region, Russian Federation

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Abstract

The study deals with identifying the main challenges in medical tourism development in the Voronezh region. The research uses a dialectical method, as well as general logical, theoretical and empirical methods. The prerequisites determining the becoming and development of Voronezh medicine as a branch of scientific and practical activity are analyzed. The analysis of the crucial directions of the organization and implementation of recreational services is held. The study of the modification of business processes in the field of Voronezh medical tourism is carried out. As a result, promising areas of medical tourism promotion were identified, the core competencies of tourism employees procuring the process of organizing, providing and promoting medical tourism service, spa treatment, wellness, and other healthcare services were described. Medical tourism in the Voronezh region has great potential. The formulated proposals for improving the medical tourism promotion can be successfully implemented in the production and sale cycles of a medical tourism product. The proposed innovative pedagogical technologies for improving the organization of the educational process of highly specialized medical tourism personnel can be used in the current conditions of economic development and the current global pandemic of coronavirus infection COVID-19.

Keywords: the Voronezh Region, medical tourism, spa tourism, tourism pedagogy, content and language integrated learning.

1. Introduction

The dynamic urbanization processes stimulate an increase in demand among the population for tourist products and services that help people restore physical and spiritual strength, improve health, relax, and relieve accumulated stress. The World Tourism Organization notes the positive dynamics in demand for medical and health tourism organized outside the place of permanent residence, which in most cases means that tourists can receive more affordable or better quality treatment. Around the world, the demand for medical and health tourism is growing. For example, the number of foreign tourists visiting traditional Russian baths (or “banya”) in Russia is increasing steadily. Simultaneously, in other countries, people travel with various medical and recreational purposes: from medical and surgical interventions, dental services, to participating in yoga camps and meditation training (UNWTO, 2019).

Many types of tourism are currently implemented as independent ones and in various combinations in the Voronezh Region. Voronezh destination is well-known for cultural tourism, historical and archaeological tourism, educational tourism, ethnographic tourism, patriotic tourism, rural tourism, agrotourism; as well as for its promising and high-potential following types:

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recreational tourism, eco-tourism, medical tourism, MICE tourism, religious tourism, extreme tourism, ornithological tourism, photo tourism, etc.

The Voronezh region and the city of Voronezh have a high tourist attractiveness. The Voronezh region is located in a favourable geographical position, has edible landscape and suitable climatic conditions for tourism development, and unique natural resources that have been actively used as healing humans for a long time. Transport accessibility (including Voronezh international airport, federal highways and one of The Russian Railways headquarters), convenient logistics linking essential tourist and accommodation facilities, a wide range of tourism, recreational services, restaurant business services create favourable conditions for the formation of tourist clusters in the Voronezh region, with a unique tourist identity and a high level of tourist attractiveness (Timoshenko, 2013).

2. Discussion

The changing nature of civilization and the development of technology have had a decisive influence on healing, recreation, and spiritual recovery (including for relaxation, bodily practices, visiting mineral springs, seawater, religious ceremonies and ablutions) and medical trips (diagnostics, hospitalization and surgery) (Rai, 2019). According to experts, the medical tourism sector is growing at 15-25 % per year.

The driving force behind this growth is the burden of national health rules for patients. Health is a scarce resource. (Berdine, 2019). An essential task in organising medical tourism is to reduce staff turnover, motivate and stimulate healthcare workers (Marmion, Hindley, 2020). From service marketing, medical tourism deals with two critical issues: the provision of services and internationalization (Hyder et al., 2019).

Researchers Holloway and Taylor define medical tourism as tourist trips to receive medical advice and surgery. An example is Finns' trip to Tallinn to receive ophthalmology and dentistry services, Austrians to Hungary (dentistry, orthodontic treatment). For example, the Indian National Tourism Office, in the framework of the leading London tourism exhibition World Travel Market, repeatedly emphasized the promotion of the medical segment Tourism as a national brand (Holloway, Taylor, 2007).

In contrast to wellness and recreational tourism, which pursues the dual goal of improving the physical condition and wellbeing of a tourist and strengthening public status through the uniqueness and high cost of the resort (Beech, 2010), as well as solitude and relaxation, which leads to a greater sense of wellbeing (Marmion, Hindley, 2020), the task of medical tourism is diagnostics, advisory assistance, prevention, treatment, surgical intervention, patient rehabilitation and the creation of comfortable accommodation, nutrition and transportation and for him and his accompanying persons.

However, in international scientific practice, there is no unanimous decision on the semantics of the definitions of "medical tourism", "medical and health-improving", "health-improving", "recreational", "sanatorium-resort", "resort" and so on. The problem of giving a precise definition of the connotation is also due to differences in figurative language means. The health sector prefers the term medical travel (Choi, 2015). In this case, the tourism industry prefers to use the term "medical tourism". At the same time, representatives of medicine argue that tourism usually means resting and leisure, and therefore, "tourism" should be replaced by "travel" (Whittaker, 2008).

It is worth emphasizing that the health systems of both sending and receiving countries are strongly affected by inbound and outbound medical tourism. (Béland, Zarzeczny, 2018). A significant number of medical tourism doctors have received the highest professional and qualification level, have certification or license, and have extensive practice in the country where they completed their training (Horowitz et al., 2007).

The works of many scientists are devoted to the problems of medical and health tourism, among them M. Todd, L. Hoffman, N. Lunt, J. Connell, E. Kelley, T. Takamoto, R.-J. Lee, J.J. Mogaka, J. Snyder, K. Adams, K. Khvansuk, J. Unti, M. Horowitz et al. Among Russian researchers: D.V. Guba, I.V. Groshev, I.V. Kuntsevskaya, G.M. Kushnir, Yu.V. Bobrik, G.M. Romanova, B.A. Ermakov, G.M. Serobabina, N.N. Sedova, G.Yu. Shchekin, D.A. Shepeleva et al.

3. Methods

In this study, desk research methods (collecting secondary data) and a quantitative survey (gathering primary data) of data analysis have been used. Qualitative research is presented by a comparative analysis of the historical factors determining the formation of Voronezh medicine and the particular directions of the organization and implementation of recreational services of the

Voronezh region. The study of the business processes modification in Voronezh medical tourism is carried out. A comparative analysis is carried out for the region's key health resorts and the leading indicators of the tourism industry of the Voronezh region for the 3rd quarter of 2019. An assessment of the prospects for the development of pedagogical activity in medical tourism of the Voronezh region is presented. A list of priority tasks for the successful promotion of medical services of the Voronezh region "for export" was developed, based on empirical methods.

4. Results

Global needs for related medical tourism services are growing every year. A lot of international and local non-profit and public organisations of medical tourism function around the world, among which the most famous are the following:

1. Medical Tourism Association;
2. European Medical Tourism Alliance (EEIG);
3. Medical Tourism Agencies Association;
4. The International Medical Travel Association (IMTA);
5. International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT);
6. International Society of Travel Medicine;
7. International Society of Mountain Medicine;
8. American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene;
9. British Global and Travel Health Association (BTGHA);
10. Norwegian Society for Travel Medicine and Prevention of Infectious Diseases;
11. New Zealand Society of Travel Medicine;
12. China International Healthcare Association;
13. Japanese Society of Travel and Health;
14. Asia Pacific Travel Health Society;
15. Medical Tourism Association Of Israel;
16. Société de Médecine des Voyages, and many other professional organizations.

Medical societies and associations strive to ensure the sustainable development of medical tourism activities at the international and local levels. They rely for their purposes and actions on the current legislation in healthcare, tourism, insurance, sustainable economic development, conservation and restoration of the natural resources of tourist destinations used in medical tourism as medicinal resources.

The genesis of the health system of the Voronezh region. The official foundation and construction of the city of Voronezh began in 1586. Until the middle of the 16th century, Voronezh served as a fortified city in the region of Moscow's southeastern borders. The first medical services as they were, originated in the Voronezh region in the times when doctors arrived in the city and began to service military units. In 1661, along with a salary to the soldiers, medicines and a doctor were sent for the first time. At the beginning of the 18th century, military doctors served workers and sailors engaged in constructing ships at the Voronezh shipyards. With the termination of shipbuilding in the region in the second quarter of the 18th century, military doctors were no longer in Voronezh. It was evident that Peter I recalled all doctors from Voronezh after stopping construction work at the shipyards and military units. Doctors reappeared in Voronezh only in 1770 during the outbreak of the plague. In 1779, the Order of Public Charity was established in the Voronezh province, and the first hospital in the province with 12 beds was opened in 1780.

Zemsky reform was carried out in the Voronezh province in 1865, according to which 12 hospitals with 174 hospital beds were transferred to the Voronezh provincial zemstvo (Furmenko, 1968). In this regard, 47 doctors, 68 medical assistants and 36 midwives were called up for work. The issues of protecting public health were governed by the provincial zemstvo government, the executive body and had a medical council (collective body). The council directed all medical institutions of the provincial zemstvo and performed such functions as appointing and dismissing doctors from their posts, selecting pharmacists, and reviewing the project and budget estimates, management of medical institutions, etc.

Historically, the Voronezh region played a significant role in the development of Russian medicine, and the contribution of Voronezh clinicians cannot be overestimated. Besides Prince Alexander Petrovich Oldenburgsky (1844–1932) made a significant contribution to the development of global experimental medicine. Prince was a member of the State Council, the famous commander of the Preobrazhensky regiment, Supreme Chief of the Russian army's sanitary and evacuation unit during the First World War, owner of the Oldenburg Palace in Ramon,

the Voronezh Region. His spouse, Evgenia Maksimilianovna (1845–1925), nee Princess Romanovskaya, took patronage over the medical and educational societies of Voronezh, as well as the community of sisters of mercy. In 1880, the owners of the estate opened a hospital and school, canteens for workers. The Oldenburgs made an invaluable contribution to the industrial and socio-cultural development of the Voronezh province.

By 1913, there were 107 hospitals and emergency rooms in the Voronezh province, in which 2700 beds were located; 148 outpatient clinics were functioning, 278 doctors and dentists worked in all departments, and 116 paramedic points were opened (Furmenko, 1968). The organization of medical assistance to the Voronezh province population by 1913 went from travelling to stationary form. Rural medical stations were formed, medical expenses were brought up to 25 % of the budget. Before the revolution, the population of Voronezh province did not receive specialized medical care. Zemstvo doctors were general practitioners. However, by that time, therapists, surgeons, obstetricians, venereologists, ophthalmologists, otolaryngologists, paediatricians, neuropsychologists, and dentists had appeared in the city of Voronezh itself (Furmenko, 1968).

The period after the Great October Socialist Revolution and the formation of the People's Health in 1918 is characterized by the restoration of the national economy and the rapid development of health care. The development of health care in the region during the first five-year plans and the organization of medical care for the population during the Great Patriotic War. From 1947 to 1950, all the functions of restoring the city's health care as a regional centre were assigned to the city health department. Since November 12, 1918, doctors were being trained at 22 departments of Voronezh State University's medical faculty. In December 1930, the Voronezh State University's medical faculty was transformed into an institute with therapeutic and preventive and sanitary-hygienic faculties, and in 1933 the faculty of maternal and child health was opened. The vast experience in organizing medical care and sanatorium-resort treatment of patients outside their permanent place of residence, accumulated during the USSR, allows us to rely on achievements and developments in this area that can be multiplied and adapted to the modern realities of the tourist business community.

In the Soviet period, sanatoriums were part of the state health care system, and sanatorium services were widely available for many Soviet citizens, funded by trade unions and the government. During *the Perestroika period* (1985–1991) and the emergence of new forms of social and economic relations in the country has been searching for the optimal structure and names of the regional administration's health. In 2009, the Voronezh region's central health department was reorganized into the Department of Health and Social Development of the Voronezh Region, which in turn was reorganized into the Department of Health of the Voronezh Region (Ofitsial'nyi sait Departamenta..., 2020).

Tourism business in Russia is regulated by the Federal Law of November 24, 1996, No. 132-FZ "On the Basics of Tourism business in the Russian Federation", the Law of the Russian Federation of 07.02.1992 No. 2300-1 "On the Protection of Consumer Rights", as well as other federal regulations and acts of the subjects of the federation that are directly related to the organization, implementation and promotion of the tourism product. In the Strategy for the Development of Tourism in the Russian Federation until 2035, as a solution to the main task of increasing the availability of tourism products at the federal level, it is proposed to develop a set of measures to stimulate social tourist flow during the "low season", as well as the development of cultural, educational, children's and medical health tourism (Strategiya razvitiya turizma..., 2019). Thus, on the one hand, it will create guaranteed demand, increase the load of tourism and transport infrastructure, reduce the payback period of projects and increase the investment attractiveness of the tourism sector as a whole, and on the other hand, implement the social function of increasing the availability of tourism and recreation for Russian population. In Russia, Federal Law of November 21, 2011, No. 323-FZ On the Basics of Protecting the Health of Citizens in the Russian Federation is in force. In his address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation dated March 1, 2018, Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized the need to develop healthcare and export services in medicine and tourism. By 2024, the volume of exports of medical services is expected to be \$ 1 billion per year (Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 7, 2018, No. 204 "On National Goals and Strategic Tasks of the Development of the Russian Federation for the Period until 2024"). In pursuance of these instructions, a federal non-profit organization Russian Medical Tourism Association was created and St. Petersburg Medical Tourism Agency JSC. The Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of November 26, 2018, No. 2581-r. "Strategies for the development of the spa complex of the Russian Federation"

and other regulatory acts operate in Russia. By order of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation No. 64 dated February 18, 2019, it was decided to establish a Coordinating Center for the implementation of the federal project “Development of the Export of Medical Services”.

Currently, in the Voronezh region, the implementation of the spa treatment program is supervised by the Voronezh regional branch of the Social Insurance Fund of the Russian Federation. A component of the Fund was created following the Regulation on the Social Insurance Fund of the Russian Federation, approved by Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of February 12, 1994, No. 101. From March 25, 2014, the Expert Council functions, which is an advisory body created to organize and conduct social examination and initiatives - Voronezh Regional Social Insurance Fund of the Russian Federation. Citizens of select categories who have submitted documents for providing a right to sanatorium-resort treatment can track their turn through the electronic system <http://www.fss.vrn.ru/elqueue>. The capacity of the sanatorium and resort fund (Table 1) and the leading indicators of the health care development of the Voronezh region (Table 2) are presented in dynamics in the annual statistical report of the Voronezh region in numbers 2019 (Ofitsial'nyi sait Voronezhskogo..., 2019).

To create a sustainable and competitive regional tourism industry, the Department of Entrepreneurship and Consumer Market Development of the Government of the Voronezh Region in 2010 approved the “Concept for the Development of Tourism in the Voronezh Region until 2016”. Following this Concept, it was supposed to form four tourist and recreational areas, including Voronezh, Central, South, East. A set of measures to assess and efficiently use tourism and recreation resources, including modernization in the tourism industry, creating new recreation facilities, including recreation centres, children’s camps, beaches, places of mass recreation, etc., has gained particular importance (Timoshenko, 2013).

Table 1. The annual amount of sanatoriums, recreation facilities – Voronezh Region

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Sanatorium-resort organisations and recreation facilities – total	35	32	34	30	33
including:					
sanatorium organisations	19	19	19	17	16
accommodation and recreation facilities	15	12	13	12	16
organised tourist camps	1	1	2	1	1

Compiled by Timoshenko D.S. based on Voronezhstat data (Voronezhstat, 2020)

Table 2. Key Health Indicators – Voronezh Region

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of hospital organizations, units	77	76	78	77	79
The number of doctors of all specialties:					
total, thousands	12.6	12.1	11.9	12.1	12.2
per 10,000 people	54.1	51.7	50.9	51.7	52.3
The number of paramedical personnel:					
total, thousands	26.4	26.6	25.9	25.9	25.5
per 10,000 people	113.3	114.1	111.0	111.1	109.4
The number of hospital beds (24/7)					
total, thousands	21.4	20.0	19.6	19.2	19.1
per 10,000 people	91.8	85.7	84.1	82.2	82.1
The number of outpatient medical organizations – total units	147	117	126	127	126
The capability of outpatient organizations (number of visits per shift)					
total, thousands	56.0	56.3	57.9	59.3	59.7
per 10,000 people	240.1	241.4	247.8	254.0	256.3
The number of feldsher-midwife points – total, units	675	677	667	661	661

*Compiled by Timoshenko D.S. based on Voronezhstat data (Voronezhstat, 2020)

The Strategy for the socio-economic development of the Voronezh region until 2035 draft includes Goal 1.3 Extending the population's active longevity and Goal 2.12 Ensuring the implementation of the tourist and recreational potential of the region (including tourism facilities of national and world levels). Indicated above, in turn, implies the development of regional tourism infrastructure, which, along with the Decree of Voronezh Region Government "On improving the efficiency of the functioning of sanatorium and recreation zones in the Voronezh Region" from 2018, the cities can also help in the active medical tourism, spa activities and health tourism development.

Table 3 presents the leading indicators of the development of the tourism industry in the Voronezh region for January-September 2019 (Table 3). Nowadays, the Department of Entrepreneurship and Trade of the Government of the Voronezh Region and the Department of Tourism Development took over the mission of sanatorium-resort treatment revival ([Ofitsial'nyi sait Pravitel'stva Voronezhskoi oblasti, 2020](#)).

Table 3. Key indicators of the Voronezh region tourism development for nine months of 2019*

No	Voronezh region	2018 Jan-Sept	2019 Jan-Sept	Progress, %
1	Paid services to the population: hotels and similar accommodation establishments – thousand rubles	1 012 173,7	1 169 425,2	15,54
2	Paid services to the population: sanatorium organizations – thousand rubles	1 337 285,6	1 254 691,5	-6,18
3	Paid services to the population: travel agencies, tour operators and other reservation services and related services – thousand rubles	999 127	1 005 110,8	0,60
4	TOTAL number of persons accommodated in accommodation establishments – persons	349 701	462 772	32,33
5	Number of Russian citizens stays – persons	317 990	404 866	27,32
6	Number of foreign citizens stays – persons	31 711	57 906	82,61
7	Nights in accommodation establishments	1 711 607	1 800 846	5,21
8	Accommodation establishments income from services provided excluding VAT, excise taxes and similar payments - thousand rubles	1 757 261,3	2 021 400,03	15,03

* Compiled by D.S. Timoshenko based on Voronezhstat data ([Voronezhstat, 2020](#))

There is also a Tourist Information Center and an Entrepreneurship Support Center that provides consulting on Voronezh tourism destination products and services.

Below is a list of the most popular and sought after sanatoriums in the Voronezh region with a data of accommodation capacity, treatment profile, natural healing factors and medical facilities (Table 4).

Table 4. Specification of the most popular sanatoriums – Voronezh Region

No	Name, year of foundation, capacity	Treatment profiles
1	Sanatorium named after Gorky 480 beds; 1976, 2009 – renovated Double and single rooms: "Standard", "Junior Suite", "Suite." http://sanatoriy-gorkogo-voronezh.ru/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cardiovascular disease – diseases of the nervous system – diseases of the endocrine system – diseases of the genitourinary system – oncological diseases (rehabilitation after mastectomy) and conditions of the musculoskeletal system – The aftercare of patients after acute myocardial infarction, operations on the heart and main vessels, unstable angina, acute cerebrovascular accident, and patients with diabetes mellitus.

2	Sanatorium named after F.E. Dzerzhinsky 550 beds; 1977, 2013 – renovated The rooms of the category “Standard”, “Suite”, “Junior Suite”, “VIP.” http://sandz.ru/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – diseases of the endocrine and peripheral nervous system – respiratory diseases – gastrointestinal diseases – musculoskeletal system diseases
3	Don Sanatorium 100 beds; 1975 Rooms: single and double “Economy”, “Comfort.” http://rzd-don.ru/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – treatment of diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue; – general therapeutic / treatment of cardiovascular, bronchopulmonary and ENT conditions, and gynaecological and skin diseases.
4	Radon Sanatorium 156 beds; 1987 49 single/double rooms: "Economy", "Standard", "Comfort". http://rzd-radon.ru/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue; – diseases of the nervous system; – diseases of the genitourinary system.
5	Sanatorium named after Tsyurupa 500 beds; 1927; 1973, 1986, 2000 – renovation Single, double, superior rooms, deluxe, VIP, honeymoon room. More than 13 thousand tourists annually. http://curup.ru/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – neuropathic diseases – diseases of the gastrointestinal profile; – musculoskeletal system diseases – diseases of the genitourinary system; – metabolism; – pulmonary system.

Source: D.S. Timoshenko

Researchers Paul Barron and Tom Baum emphasise that accommodation services in medical facilities are not always directly related to tourism. Nevertheless, it is growing steadily, which is especially noticeable in the segment of an individual “lux” accommodation segment and accommodation of relatives and accompanying persons. Hotel chains such as Accor and Marriott (Cooper et al., 2008) offer exclusive tariff and discounts for their long-term guests who arrive with medical tourism purposes.

Voronezh has various accommodation facilities – hotels, apartments, hostels and other accommodation establishments. Among the hotels of famous world brands: Voronezh Marriott 5 *, Ramada Plaza Voronezh 5 *, Hotel Hampton by Hilton 4 *, Hotel Mercure 4 *, Azimut Hotel Voronezh 3 *, Holiday Inn Express Voronezh 3 *. The most famous Voronezh hotels are Degas Hotel Complex 4 * and Benefit Plaza Congress Hotel 4 *. All listed hotels comply with international standards of service and hospitality, are customer-oriented and have rooms and facilities for accommodating physically challenged guests.

In organising health trips and medical tourism trips, it is also necessary to take into account the principles of positive psychology. Essential factors in improving the general condition can be a voluntary and volitional activity, achieving a goal, activating the strong and strong-willed sides of a person, emotional upsurge, and positive experience. All these factors can be included in the action plan to improve the results of medical tourism (Coghlan, 2015).

Voronezh region was repeatedly visited by representatives of the most substantial domestic and foreign medical holdings, scientists and experts from leading international and domestic scientific medical institutes, investors. It is worth emphasizing that most stakeholders highlight that the Voronezh region has a high potential for developing medical and health tourism, including through the development of international scientific cooperation in medicine.

The following institutions of Voronezh confirm patients arriving from other regions of the Russian Federation; they have already become centres of attraction for tourists who are travelling to Voronezh with medical purposes:

1. Voronezh Regional Clinical Hospital No. 1, Perinatal and Cardiac Surgery Centres (advanced technologies of Voronezh medicine are presented);
2. Regional Children’s Clinical Hospital No. 1;
3. Regional Children’s Hospital No. 2;
4. Regional Consultative and Diagnostic Center;
5. Interregional Medical Center for Early Diagnosis and Treatment of Cancer;
6. Family Medicine Center “Olympus of Health”;
7. German Medical Center, and many other state and commercial medical organizations.



Fig. 1. CyberKnife, Interregional Medical Center for Early Diagnosis and Treatment of Cancer, Voronezh (Timoshenko, 2020)

Voronezh has unique capabilities and equipment for the treatment of many diseases. For example, in the treatment of cancer, a tomotherapy unit and the CyberKnife robotic stereotactic radiosurgery system are used. The action of CyberKnife is based on irradiation with thin beams of ionising radiation, passing at different angles and focusing in the tumour (Figure 1).

Since 2019, a new type of treatment has appeared in the centre – radiotherapy of radium chloride (^{223}Ra) of bone metastases of castration-resistant prostate cancer. Computed tomography (CT) is provided by SOMATOM Definition DS 128. More than 72 thousand diagnostic studies have been carried out over the years, including about 28 thousand high-tech PET/CT examinations, more than 2.5 thousand radiosurgical procedures have been performed using the CyberKnife and Tomotherapy systems. Patients completed more than 21 thousand chemotherapy courses. Oncologists conducted more than 25 thousand consultations. Among the patients are residents of dozens of regions of the Russian Federation and neighbouring countries: Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and others (Ofitsial'nyi sait Mezhhregional'nogo..., 2020).

Medical tourism and healthcare programs in the city of Voronezh and the Voronezh region may also include sightseeing, acquaintance with the key tourist sites with memorable, historical and significant places of the city and the region. For example, visiting a rare monument of brick neo-Gothic architecture the Oldenburg Palace Complex in Ramon is very popular among Voronezh guests (Figures 1, 2). The Complex is the manor house of the late 19th century that belonged to the Russian branch of the Oldenburg House of the Imperial Family. Guests of the Black Soil region's capital can learn there about the severe contribution of the palace owners to the experimental medicine and spa treatment development. It is well known that Prince Alexander Petrovich of Oldenburg founded the Institute of Experimental Medicine at his own expense, consecrated and inaugurated on December 8 (21), 1890 on Aptekarsky Island in St. Petersburg. The institute was granted the name "Imperial Institute of Experimental Medicine", while A.P. Oldenburgsky appointed trustee. Later A.P. Oldenburgsky founded the climatic station-sanatorium in Gagra on the Black Sea (Ofitsial'nyi sait Dvortsovogo kompleksa..., 2020).

At present, the development prospects in the field of medicine, including medical tourism, have the provision of high-quality inpatient and outpatient medical care, including high-tech, in the following areas:

1. Cardiology, including arrhythmology, angioplasty and stenting (treatment of coronary artery disease);
2. Gastroenterology and coloproctology;
3. Gynaecology and obstetrics, including obstetric care;
4. Urology, andrology and reproductive technologies, including in vitro fertilisation;
5. Paediatrics and neonatology;

6. Family medicine (general practitioners);
7. Traumatology and orthopaedics, including endoscopic interventions and joint replacement for joint diseases;
8. Surgery: general, plastic, reconstructive;
9. ENT diseases, including audiology (treatment of hearing impairment) and endoscopic (less traumatic) operations;
10. Neurology, and others.



Fig. 2. The photograph of the Oldenburgsky Palace Complex (Timoshenko, 2015)



Fig. 3. The photograph of the Gate of the Oldenburgsky Palace Complex (Timoshenko, 2015)

According to the Unified Federal Register of Tour Operators (Russian Federation), there are only ten tour operators officially registered and currently operating in the Voronezh region at the time of writing (Ofitsial'nyi sait Federal'nogo agentstva..., 2019). However, there is still no specialized tour operator of medical tourism in Voronezh. This phenomenon is caused by the instability of the regional tourism economy, high levels of risk in organizing and conducting of such business, and the seasonality of demand for medical tourism services related to paid holiday and paid leave periods in Russia. Nevertheless, medical and health-improving tourism is characterized by all-weather season. With proper management of tourist flows, other tourist products can be accompanied, for example, cultural tourism. Besides, medical and sanatorium institutions are

located outside large cities in many cases, thereby providing economic benefits to districts and small towns, creating jobs, and developing infrastructure in rural areas.

Section 6. Personnel and education of the Tourism Development Strategy in the Russian Federation until 2035 refers to expanding the list of educational programs, including training tourism specialists in spa medicine. It is also emphasized that it is necessary to ensure the implementation of individual measures and programs to support socially significant tourism types, especially tourism for children and youth, cultural, educational, recreational, medical and wellness tourism. The adoption of this decision is since at present, the Russian tourism and hospitality industry, as well as the tourism in the Voronezh region, in particular, needs tourism specialists of a comprehensive profile. Still, at the same time, it lacks highly specialized tourism professionals at all levels (undergraduates, postgraduates). Personnel involved in the implementation of medical tourism programs should be competent in providing quality tourism services and the formation of a packaged product for individual tourists. Simultaneously, specialists involved in the creation, promotion and implementation of tourism services for medical and health tourism should be competent in medicine basics. Medical tourism as a business is a niche product that requires special attention and an integrated socially responsible approach at all stages. The field of medical tourism is promising, unique and requires careful and delicate study in the future.

According to Dr Maria K. Todd, professional travel counsellors are probably among the best coordinators for arranging health travel and tourism, but they must learn best practices, medical terminology, and know about the procedures they will coordinate. Since few have medical procedures, they need a little professional development training to develop policies and procedures for this strategic addition to their business (Todd, 2012).

Due to the increase in demand for high-quality and luxury medical tourism services, it is planned to start the additional professional education programs in the framework of the joint international tourism education program between Troyes School of Tourism, Leisure & Events Management (Y SCHOOLS, France) and Voronezh State University (Russia), based on the VSU Department of Recreational Geography, Regional Geography and Tourism. The joint educational programmes mentioned above are the following: "Hotel and restaurant management", "Business and event tourism" and "Medical tourism". It is expected that the educational process will be built in close mutually beneficial cooperation with leading international and local practitioners in tourism, medicine and pedagogy. Contemporaneously with an opportunity to apply the international experience of the medical tourism personnel training in practice, it is vital for Voronezh, as a famous medical centre of Russia, to share the local expertise in tourism and medical education (Ofitsial'nyi sait Voronezhskogo..., 2019).

Domestic scientists note the need to follow a systematic approach in matters of the effective implementation of tourism education programmes. (Timoshenko, 2013; Romanova et al., 2016; Ermakov, Bezrokova, 2019; Samsonova, 2015). It is worth noting that starting from 2017 tourism students of VSU are being trained at the Department of Recreational Geography, Country Studies and Tourism using Content and Language Integrated Learning technologies. CLIL Teaching Techniques was introduced at the Faculty of Geography, Geoecology and Tourism, and it found positive feedback from the domestic scientific community, tourism business and employers. (Timoshenko, 2020)

Russian scientists successfully applied the CLIL methodology in pedagogical activities through several international implementations and programmes. For example, one of the most significant successes of Walsall College and the Russian New University (Moscow) joint international tourism education program was marked in 2009. The collaboration was a bench of successful alumni, tourism and hotel managers, who are currently working in Russia and abroad. During that period, the curriculum mixing of RosNOU Tourism undergraduate programme and Walsall College disciplines of the British national diploma (HND) took place. Training in specialized tourism disciplines was conducted in English and under both British and Russian pedagogical standards. As a result, students effectively mastered technical tourism disciplines much more successfully and communication skills in tourism business language. They became noticeably ahead of their peers studying in classical Russian-speaking Tourism programmes, in which "English" and "Foreign language of professional communication" were included in the educational plan as independent disciplines. The teacher is given the role of coordinator, consultant, and integrator who maximises students' independence and activity, helping to develop professional competencies for students in the Tourism program and increasing the level of competitiveness of future graduates (Timoshenko, 2019). In whole or in part, this pedagogical

experience may be applicable in preparing narrow-profile medical tourism specialists. Following the tourism education programme as the fundamental, students can also be provided with crucial medical basics and general knowledge of medical care and treatment in theory in the framework of an additional medical education program without the right to conduct medical practice.

From the point of view of organizing medical tourism in Russia and the Voronezh region in particular, there are two main areas and promising vectors of medical tourism development:

1. Local and domestic medical tourism;
2. Export of medical tourism services.

Suppose in the first direction the Voronezh region has sufficient experience in implementing medical and sanatorium-resort services for the population (particularly in the days of the Soviet Union and the period of the last decade), then in matters of receiving foreign guests arriving with medical tourism purposes. In that case, some several challenges and tasks must be solved to promote medical services of Voronezh for export successfully.

These include the following:

- 1 visa formalities (resolving issues of visa support for tourists);
- 2 statistics (actual registration of arrivals through organized tourism to consume the medical tourism service);
- 3 marketing research (identification of target and niche markets);
- 4 logistics and transportation (solving problems with access to medical facilities and filling out a tourist stay program following their physical capabilities and wishes, implementation of the “Accessible Environment” program);
- 5 low level of awareness (low quality of information content about the region’s potential in promoting medical and health tourism “for export” or its complete absence on the websites of medical institutions);
- 6 absence of a leading tour operator of medical tourism (no tour operator in the region is fully or within a separate department developing and promoting tourist routes to the global tourist market);
- 7 lack of skills to work with foreign guests and their accompanying persons, including relatives;
- 8 the problem of compliance with international standards of service and tourism;
- 9 effective communication issue (the staff providing the escort of tourists does not fully or insufficiently speaks the international language of business communication – English. (Timoshenko, 2009; Page, Connell, 2009). As a result, the tourist cannot speak Russian, and employees of a medical institution – in English);
- 10 exaggerated or inflated results of marketing research of analytical agencies to justify the opening of enterprises and inflated prices for medical care services (Cesario, 2018);
- 11 lack of an algorithm for conducting crisis communication in emergencies when working with tourists; and many others.

A significant advantage in promoting the Voronezh region’s medical services and forming a tourist product “for export” is the low cost of medical services and their high quality. Voronezh clinics (especially dental, cosmetic and others) note a high demand for their services among Muscovites and residents of neighbouring areas and other Russian regions due to the very favourable medical tourism offer. When promoting the region’s tourist services to the international market and the cost of the services themselves, it is also worth noting the favourable ruble exchange rate for foreign guests.

The region regularly holds events that stimulate the demand for medical tourism services: including congress and exhibition events, international scientific conferences and forums in medicine, tourism and recreation. However, they do not have a systematic approach in delivering information content and do not have a formulated brand of medical and health tourism in the Voronezh region.

5. Conclusion

Today, the region has a high potential for the development of health and medical tourism. The relatively low cost of medical services, the availability of highly qualified medical personnel, unique pieces of equipment in medical institutions, specialized consultative and diagnostic centres, and the Voronezh region’s substantial advantages. All mentioned above contribute to the active development of domestic and interregional medical tourism. The organization of short-term and long-term medical tours, specialized consultative and diagnostic services and other medical tourist

needs can be carried out through the region's authorized tour operator. A network of travel agencies, subagents, and direct sales of medical and sanatorium-resort treatment enterprises can be drivers of medical tourism promotion.

The main stages of medical tourism development for Voronezh are as follows. Firstly, it is necessary to determine the Voronezh region's tourist identity and the place of medical tourism in it. Secondly, to identify target markets by analyzing big data and current global trends in the formation of medical tourism flows. Thirdly, to bring the services of medical tourism and spa facilities in strict accordance with international standards. After conducting these main stages, the region can actively promote "export" medical services both through a system of exhibition events and actively promoting services via the Internet, social networks and personal presentation events and info tours for interested partners.

According to D. Koehl, there is a classification of crises in tourism, in which events related to the environment (geological, weather, etc.), social and political events (wars, terrorism, political riots, etc.), events, related to the threat to life and health of the population (epidemics, pandemics, etc.), technological events, economic events (financial crises, defaults, etc.), anthropogenic environmental disasters (Koehl, 2011).

In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, worldwide lockdown, quarantine, self-isolation and various levels of travel restrictions, the issue of mass travel arrangements is considered not highly relevant for an undetermined time (Official site of World Health Organization, 2020). The continued spread of the virus worldwide has led to a stock market crash that began in mid-February 2020 and created a crisis in the global travel services market. Even though the mentioned pandemic is not the subject of the present study and its correlation with Voronezh tourism development could not be carefully studied by finishing the present scientific article. Nevertheless, it should not rule out future research on the issue. At the same time, the fact that the specificity of the virus is an exacerbation of chronic diseases of the pulmonary system and damage to the respiratory system, which at the end of quarantine will cause an increased demand for health-improving and medical tourism services, services of sanatorium-and-spa institutions (especially as local tourism phenomenon), is already evident. All the types of tourism transportation and accommodation business, catering enterprises, etc. will have to face the special requirements for ensuring tourists' safety.

In this regard, the counties and regions, including the Voronezh region, should now evaluate the capacity and quality of services of specialized sanatorium and resort accommodation facilities for the full restoration and recreation of tourists, as well as take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of both tourists and staff involved in the implementation tourist product.

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The idea to describe medical tourism's potential in the Voronezh region originated in me 12 years ago when I was working on my doctoral dissertation, the subject of tourism in the Voronezh region and its promotion features. Since then, the tourism and medical markets in Russia and Voronezh, in particular, have made great strides forward, which is reflected in this study. Therefore, finally, I also wish to thank Voronezh, Sochi, Russian and international medical communities' experts who have been a great source of support and inspired me to develop and continue my work on summarizing the crucial prospect and challenges for Voronezh medical tourism development. I do appreciate their valuable advice on comprehensive coverage of the problems posed.

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Генезис, проблемы и перспективы развития медицинского туризма Воронежской области Российской Федерации

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Аннотация. Настоящая статья представляет собой исследование генезиса медицинского туризма в Воронежской области, а также обобщает основные проблемы и перспективы развития медицинского туризма Воронежской области Российской Федерации. Применяется диалектический метод, также общелогические, теоретические и эмпирические методы. Анализируются исторические факторы и предпосылки, определяющие становление и развитие воронежской медицины как отрасли научной и практической деятельности. Проведен анализ характерных направлений организации и реализации рекреационных услуг Воронежской области, а также модификации бизнес-процессов в сфере медицинского туризма региона. В результате выявлены перспективные направления продвижения медицинского туризма, описаны ключевые компетенции работников туристской индустрии, реализующие продукт медицинского туризма региона и услуги санаторно-курортного лечения. Медицинский туризм Воронежской области имеет большой потенциал. Сформулированные предложения по совершенствованию продвижения медицинского туризма Воронежской области могут быть успешно внедрены в циклы производства и реализации продукта медицинского туризма. Предложенные инновационные педагогические технологии для совершенствования организации образовательного процесса узкоспециализированных кадров медицинского туризма могут быть использованы в актуальных условиях экономического развития и текущей глобальной пандемии коронавирусной инфекции COVID-19.

Ключевые слова: Воронежская область, Российская Федерация, медицинский туризм, санаторно-курортное лечение, туристская педагогика, подготовка узкоспециализированных кадров в туризме, предметно-языковое интегрированное обучение в медицинском туризме.

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