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Cross-border healthcare access in south Asian countries: Learnings for sustainable healthcare tourism in India

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Since the 19th century affluent patients from less developed parts of the world travelled to major European Medical Centers and United States for treatment unavailable in their own countries and for cutting edge healthcare facilities. From the early 1990's there has been a reverse flow of patients from highly developed nations to less developed countries circumventing the health care services offered in their own land, where they are inaccessible, undesirable with overburdened public health systems and long waiting periods. In the past decade the global healthcare market has grown exponentially in the South East Asian countries whereby patients accessing health care services beyond their borders are more than 5 million. This cross border access to health care is reaching proportions of US \$60 billion with an annual growth rate of 20 percent by the year 2015 where South Asian countries like Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines and India are at the forefront primarily due to availability of manpower both skilled and unskilled, lower healthcare infrastructure and treatment costs. This paper entails the study of Singapore, Thailand and India, reflecting the best practices in these countries in terms of stakeholders' perspective associated with international health tourism. India is at a horizon ranking second for health tourism in the world, approximately where the country grosses half of the revenue of health care tourism. However, with countries like Thailand and Singapore competing for a larger share of the pie in health tourism, this paper discusses best practices in these countries and suggests methods of sustaining accessible cross border healthcare in India.

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Open vial policy in India

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Universal immunization program in India is one of the key cost-effective interventions cited in modern days. However the newer strategies are adopted, this program continues to reach and target most vaccine preventable diseases in below five years children at the community level. Many new initiatives have been started in immunization since the inception of National Health Mission. Open Vial Policy is one of them in the recent years. This policy takes care to reduce open vial wastage as documented in various studies. OVW can be reduced with appropriate dose size of vials which has led to introduction of multi-dose vials. This paper focuses on the details of the open vial policy in India along with enabling and disabling factors that can make this policy useful both for reduction of open vial wastage and providing quality immunization services at the community level.

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