

THE PHILIPPINES CHECKS IN FOR medicalTOURISM

While Thailand and Singapore (and more recently Malaysia) have long been destinations of choice for tourists from Asia and the West looking for affordable medical treatments, these days it's impossible to overlook the unique offerings coming from the Philippines. Joint Commissions International (JCI) accredited hospitals specialise in all the major procedures and some sophisticated technologies pushing the border of medical science, while the country is already renowned for the genuine care that patients receive at the hands of Filipino nurses, at home and abroad.

when looking overseas for surgeries and other medical treatments a typical patient's checklist notes expert doctors, the latest technology and facilities, English speaking professionals and procedures that are a fraction of the cost at home. In the Philippines it's check, check, check.

St Luke's, Medical City, Makati Medical and hospitals outside Manila, like Chong Hua and Cebu Doctors' Hospital, are all carrying the flag in the Philippines' mission to become Asia's medical tourism hub by 2015. Experienced doctors, many with education and years of practice gleaned from stints overseas, often in the United States, offer excellence in conventional procedures like cardiology, oncology, neurology and more, and they all offer executive check-ups. But Usec Carrion of the DOT is really passionate about their progress in stem cell technology. "We want to be considered the centre for the storage of stem cells. It's labour-intensive but the Philippines has the technology and one of Asia's cheapest labour forces," she says. "After all, medical tourism today is really about prevention and investing in your health."

With the government working hard on practical issues like facilitating overseas insurance to cover procedures within the country, prompt visas and coded immigration, private companies contribute with elements like medical butlers, to look after overseas patients who don't have time to organise details like transport, accommodation and groceries. And it is partly this convenience, alongside



the natural warmth of the Filipinos, which is attracting patients to the Philippines. "Here you'll get better service," promises Usec Carrion. "You'll be a human being with a name and will be under the care of truly compassionate nurses. Plus there are many Filipino medical professionals in the west, which is great for following up."

One of the country's leading hospitals, and the first to attain the all-important JCI accreditation, St Luke's is not only a leading medical centre it is also embracing the concept of merging hospital and hospitality, becoming more like a hotel than a hospital.

As Thailand has international hospitals in Bangkok and Phuket, so parallels can be

drawn with the hospitals in Manila and Cebu, with patients keen to book procedures in the holiday destination for ease of checking straight into resorts before, during or after treatment, for the ultimate in relaxing recovery. In Cebu, for example, Chong Hua or Cebu Doctor's Hospital can deliver patients to resorts like the Shangri-La Mactan Island, Abaca, Alegre, Badian and Plantation Bay, which all serve up relaxation on the beach, (see p. 36).

While hospitals are one route for medical tourism, medical spas play their part pinpointing issues that are currently serious or will be serious if lifestyle changes aren't made through blood screening and other tests. They can refer serious cases on or even treat diseases in-house, including cancers, with less invasive therapies than conventionally offered in a hospital. And there are an increasing number of patients who are looking for exactly that kind of care.

Amezcu Wellness in Manila includes live blood analysis and screenings, following up any uncovered issues with treatments that aid healing in the body and mind, while The Farm in Batangas offers similar testing and therapies but in the comfort of a destination resort. Nurture Spa in the highlands of Tagaytay offers several programmes to help with weight loss and de-stressing, for example, and more significantly, their on-site doctor, Dr Sam Dizal accepts cancer patients, and treats them with a journey that takes them through detoxification and strengthening treatments and supplements.

St Luke's Medical Centre, Quezon City www.stluke.com.ph

- JCI accredited
- Specialises in cardiovascular, neurology, neurosurgery, cancer, ophthalmology, digestive and liver diseases.
- 650 beds within suites, birthing rooms and wards

St Luke's Medical City, Global City, Bonifacio

- JCI accredited
- Specialises in cardiovascular, neurosciences, cancer, ophthalmology, digestive, liver diseases, pediatric and geriatrics.
- 600 beds in wards and suites, free internet connection, restaurants and shopping

Manila Doctors Hospital, www.maniladoctors.com.ph

- ICO certified
- Specialises in nuclear, industrial medicines, radiology, rehabilitation, cardiology, cosmetic surgery and more.
- 300 beds

Chong Hua Hospital Cebu City, www.chonghua.com.ph

- JCI accredited
- Specialises in cardiology, endoscopy, neurophysiology, radiology and sleep disorders, with an eye institute, women's health centre and executive check-ups.
- 660 beds

The Medical City, www.themedicalcity.com

- JCI accredited
- Specialises in anti-ageing, cardiovascular, neuroscience, stem cell, regenerative, dermatology, aesthetics and plastic surgery, dental and more.
- 800 beds and numerous facilities

for more information

- www.philippinesheartofasia.ph
- www.tourism.gov.ph/Pages/MedicalTourismPortal.aspx
- www.medicaltourismphilippines.rxpino.com
- www.philmedtourism.com
- www.discovermedicaltourism.com/philippines
- www.health-tourism.com/philippines-medical-tourism
- www.medicaltourismphil.com
- www.cebuphilippines.net/medical-tourism-in-the-philippines.html



THIS PAGE: Live Blood Analysis at The Farm in Batangas. OPPOSITE PAGE: Amezca's staff focus in on inner health.

“Medical tourism today is really about prevention and investing in your health”

Alternative medicine in the Philippines can also be added to the mix, in the form of Hilot, the traditional healing philosophy that dates back centuries, which treats not only the physical body but also the all-important mind and spirit. It is a tradition that is still practiced, not only in the villages where conventional medicine is far away or too expensive, but also in

modern day Manila, with manghihilots as important a part of the nation's wellness as any doctors (p. 28).

No matter your medical issues, whether already serious, or simply preventative, from high-tech stem cell technology to luxury destination spas and grass roots hilot practitioners, the Philippines is on track to take the medical world by storm. 🌿

comparative costs for selected procedures

(All prices are in US dollars)	PHILIPPINES	SINGAPORE	MALAYSIA	THAILAND
Coronary Artery Bypass Graft	\$12,000 - \$17,000	\$16,300	\$12,000	\$22,000
Hip Replacement	\$6,000 - \$8,000	\$12,000	\$7,500	\$12,700
Knee Replacement	\$6,000 - \$8,000	\$9,600	\$12,000	\$11,500
Breast Augmentation	\$2,700 - \$4,200	\$8,000	\$3,600	\$3,000
Breast Lift/Reduction	\$3,200 - \$4,200	\$8,000	\$3,800	\$3,800
Tummy Tuck	\$2,800 - \$4,000	\$4,200	\$4,000	\$3,800

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