

## THE UTILIZATION OF HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL TOURISM BY CHINESE IN THAILAND

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### Abstract

The Thai government's temporary visa-free policy for Chinese citizens, initiated on September 25, 2023, has been a strategic move to elevate Thailand's health tourism and medical services, positioning it as a leading ASEAN hub. This study conducts descriptive research to understand the healthcare service utilization and medical tourism behavior of Chinese nationals residing in Bangkok and its vicinity. A random sample of 100 Chinese nationals was selected, and the sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. The research utilized a questionnaire validated by experts and demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.975. Data analysis was performed through mean and percentage calculations. Key findings indicate that 93% of Chinese nationals in the sample had no chronic diseases, 64% were not sick in the past 3 months, and 36% in the past 6 months. Most accessed healthcare independently, with a preference for outpatient services (73%), primarily at private hospitals (75.64%), followed by private clinics (15.42%) and public hospitals (8.94%). Information on healthcare service quality was mainly sourced from Chinese peers and social media. The study reveals a high perception of healthcare service quality in Thailand among Chinese nationals ( $\bar{x} = 3.70$ ,  $SD = .50$ ), with coordination ( $\bar{x} = 3.24$ ,  $SD = .64$ ) and information provision ( $\bar{x} = 3.27$ ,  $SD = .64$ ) at a moderate level. The research underscores the importance of utilizing healthcare facility data to enhance services and streamline delivery processes to reduce complexity, particularly in service coordination. It also highlights the need for educational institutions to improve medical interpreters' proficiency, especially in specialized Chinese medical terminology, to strengthen Thailand's preparedness as a medical hub in the ASEAN region.

**Keywords :** health service utilization behaviors , medical tourism behavior, Thailand-China Free Visa Policy

### Introduction

The Thai government's visa-free policy for Chinese citizens since September 25, 2023, has significantly increased healthcare tourism, especially for fertility treatments and cosmetic procedures. Despite a decrease from the pre-COVID-19 era, the Ministry of Public Health predicts 7-10 million Chinese travelers in 2023, signaling a positive trend for the tourism and healthcare sectors.

Thailand's private hospital sector has rebounded since 2021, with an 8-10% revenue growth projected in 2023. The country's competitive medical costs and natural attractions make it an attractive medical hub, with 62 Joint Commission International (JCI) accredited institutions, ranking fourth globally and leading in ASEAN.

However, cultural differences and language barriers pose challenges in healthcare service delivery, with a noted deficiency in Chinese language proficiency among hospital staff. The growing trend of elderly escort services in hospitals also presents operational challenges.

China's eased travel restrictions post-COVID-19 have made Thailand a top destination for Chinese tourists, including students, professionals, and business investors, with healthcare seekers forming the largest group. The approach to managing health and medical tourism involves tailored guidelines for elderly tourists, health-focused services, strategic market management, and eco-friendly community development to ensure sustainable growth.

This research from the Public Health Care in Service Industry Program at Sanmenxia Polytechnic, China, aims to study the healthcare service utilization of Chinese tourists in Thailand, using observational studies for data collection. Despite satisfaction with physicians, communication challenges persist due to language barriers, leading to the adoption of AI translation tools.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine how Chinese residents residing in the Bangkok metropolitan area and its surrounding provinces utilize healthcare services.
2. To study the quality of healthcare services for medical tourism in Thailand

### **Literature review**

These literary reviews offer a comprehensive perspective on the utilization of health services and medical tourism, particularly in the Chinese context. They underscore the importance of traditional medicine, sustainable tourism development, and the growing body of academic research on medical tourism in China. Yan, Y. (2020). Medical Tourism in China: Traditional Medicine Serving as an Emerging Tourism Resource. In Y. Luo, J. Jiang, & D. Bi (Eds.), *Tourism Product Development in China, Asian and European Countries*. Springer, Singapore. The paper delves into how traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is becoming a prominent aspect of the tourism industry, thanks to its increasing global recognition. It provides insights into the evolution, present scenario, and potential future growth of tourism

products centered around TCM. The discussion covers the interplay between medical tourism and TCM tourism, underscoring the distinctive elements and benefits that Chinese medicinal practices offer to travelers. Moreover, the paper tackles the obstacles and strategic approaches to nurturing Chinese medicine tourism, suggesting that there is a considerable opportunity for TCM to draw the interest of tourists from both within China and abroad who are looking for health and wellness opportunities. Yuly Andrea Ramírez Sierra. (2022). Challenges of medical and health tourism: a literature review from 2009 to 2020, This literature review examines the challenges within the domain of medical and health tourism, providing insights gathered from studies between 2009 and 2020. It underscores the factors that contribute to the satisfaction of medical tourists and the strengthening of a destination's appeal. The review points to the importance of understanding consumer behavior, service quality, and the organizational structure that supports medical tourism, which is particularly relevant for China's burgeoning health tourism sector. Chun, C. (2017). Literature Review of Related Research on Medical Tourism. DEStech Transactions on Social Science, Education and Human Science (ssme). the concept and research status of medical tourism, contextualized within China's "healthy China" strategy and the rapid development of its medical tourism industry. The paper collates and comments on existing literature to provide a foundation for academic research on medical tourism in China. It emphasizes the need for further studies to understand the dynamics of health services utilization and the role of medical tourism in the country's tourism and healthcare sectors.

This research aims to study the healthcare service utilization behaviors of Chinese residents living in the Bangkok metropolitan area and its surrounding provinces, who have experience in utilizing healthcare services in Thailand, for a period of at least 9 months. Variables under investigation include healthcare service utilization behaviors for medical tourism and the perception of Chinese residents towards the quality of Thailand's public healthcare services.

The Thailand-China visa-free travel policy, initiated to stimulate economic growth, aims to increase tourism and trade, benefiting businesses and tourist attractions in both countries by enhancing revenue and economic ties. HealthCare service utilization behavior reflects individuals' health maintenance attitudes and influences their overall health. Medical tourism involves traveling for superior healthcare services, often seeking specialized treatments or rehabilitation, with the goal of improving healthcare efficiency and long-term health outcomes. This policy facilitates visa-free travel between Thailand and China, boosting tourism and trade, and stimulating economic growth, benefiting businesses and tourist spots in both countries.

The review examines China's "healthy China" strategy within the context of medical tourism, highlighting the sector's rapid development and the need for scholarly research into health services utilization and the role of medical tourism in China's industries. It emphasizes

traditional medicine's importance and advocates for sustainable tourism growth, providing a holistic perspective on health services utilization and medical tourism's impact on economic and healthcare development in China.

## Methodology

This research employs a descriptive methodological approach to examine the healthcare service utilization and medical tourism behaviors of Chinese nationals in Thailand. The study is titled "Health Service Utilization and Medical Tourism Behaviors of Chinese in Thailand."

### 1) Population

The research focuses on the Chinese population in Thailand, including tourists, students, and residents in the Bangkok metropolitan area and nearby provinces. Preliminary Tourism Statistics 2023 indicate a total of 258,586 individuals, as recorded in the "International Tourist Arrivals to Thailand" data for the period from January to December 2023.

### 2) Sample

A random sample group of 100 Chinese nationals, residing in the Bangkok metropolitan area and its suburbs—Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, and Samut Prakan—was selected using Taro Yamane's formula to determine the sample size. The questionnaires were validated by experts and had a reliability coefficient of 0.975, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha with IBM SPSS Statistics. The analysis included calculating means and percentages. Participants, who have experience with healthcare services in Thailand, either personally or through acquaintances, voluntarily took part in the study.

### 3) Tools Used in the Research

The researchers developed a questionnaire on healthcare service utilization behaviors for foreigners, adapting Day's framework of healthcare service satisfaction. The framework is divided into three main components as follows:

**Part 1 : General Information** - The self-administered questionnaire with multiple-choice and includes a self-administered questionnaire with 14 items, covering nationality, ethnicity, age, gender, education, marital status, city of residence in China, occupation, reasons for visiting Thailand, accommodation, duration of stay, intended healthcare stay, healthcare facility type, and health insurance coverage.

**Part 2: Health Information features** a self-administered questionnaire with 6 multiple-choice items: chronic illnesses, health insurance, experience with healthcare in China and Thailand, personal health perception, and follow-up post-healthcare in Thailand.

**Part 3: Perceptions of the Quality of Healthcare Services and Medical Tourism in Thailand** - The self-assessment questionnaire comprising 28 items. The response

format of the questionnaire is a 5-level Likert scale, including the options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

**Part 4: Consumer Behavior** - The study explores Chinese nationals' healthcare behaviors in Thailand, focusing on how they become aware of services, make decisions based on factors like reputation and cost, utilize a variety of services, exhibit certain behavioral patterns, face challenges such as language barriers, and contribute to Thailand's economy and social dynamics. It also looks at Thai policies affecting medical tourism, how tourists engage in activities post-treatment, and the evolving trends in their behavior.

#### **4) Validity and Reliability**

Researchers ensured the questionnaire's quality by consulting three experts (one Thai, two Chinese), revising it based on their feedback, and pilot testing it with 30 Chinese individuals in Thailand. The tool's reliability was confirmed with a high Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.975 using IBM SPSS Statistics.

#### **5) The research period**

June 2023 - January 2024

#### **6) Data Collection Process**

Researchers from Sanmenxia Polytechnic in China secured approval for their proposal from a public health funding source. A team of two Chinese researchers and two Thai assistants underwent training for online data collection, obtained consent, and surveyed 100 participants using questionnaires. Data was recorded and analyzed with computer software.

#### **7) Data Analysis**

In Part I, General Information, the study collected personal data encompassing demographics, reasons for travel, accommodation details, stay duration, healthcare facility utilization, and insurance coverage. The analysis of this data was performed using frequency distributions and percentages.

In Part II, Health Information, the study evaluated satisfaction with Thai health services using averages and standard deviations. Ratings are categorized as follows: 1.00-1.50 for high dissatisfaction, 1.51-2.50 for dissatisfaction, 2.51-3.50 for neutral to moderate satisfaction, 3.51-4.50 for high satisfaction, and 4.51-5.00 for the highest satisfaction. The questionnaire covered six topics: chronic illnesses, health insurance, experience with Chinese healthcare, experience with Thai healthcare, personal health perceptions, and post-treatment follow-up in Thailand.

In Part III, Perceptions of Healthcare and Medical Tourism in Thailand, data was analyzed using averages and standard deviations. The questionnaire used a five-point scale for responses, ranging from; 5 = Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3: Uncertain, 2: Disagree and 1: Strongly Disagree.

Data analysis in Part IV, the studies synthesizes Chinese nationals' engagement with Thai healthcare through diverse recruitment, in-depth discussions, meticulous transcription, thematic categorization, and both quantitative and content analyses. It compares findings with established theories, integrates data for a holistic understanding, validates insights, and compiles a comprehensive report on consumer behaviors and recommendations.

## Research Findings

The research findings reveal that most of Chinese nationals residing in the Bangkok metropolitan area and its suburbs are generally healthy, with 93% reporting no chronic illnesses, 64% not experiencing any illnesses in the past 3 months, and 36% reporting no illnesses in the past 6 months. Furthermore, 70.50% have utilized healthcare services in Thailand independently, predominantly seeking outpatient department services (73%) at private hospitals (75.64%) and private clinics (15.42%), with a smaller percentage accessing public hospitals (8.94%). The primary sources of healthcare service quality information in Thailand are peer recommendations and social media platforms popular among the Chinese community.

### Personal Information

The sample group of 100 individuals is predominantly male (64%). The age distribution is as follows: 31-35 years (21.88%), 36-40 years (50%), 41-45 years (21.88%), 46-50 years (3.13%), and 51-55 years and above 55 years (both 1.56%). In terms of marital status, 67.19% are married, and 32.81% are single.

The sample group consists of 64 male individuals, with the majority (76.19%) holding a bachelor's degree. Additionally, 44 individuals have a Master's degree, accounting for 21.43% of the sample, and 2 individuals have a Doctorate degree, representing 2.38% of the total sample.

The research sample of 64 individuals is primarily male and consists of various occupations: 57.81% are employees of Chinese companies in Thailand, 25% are business owners in Thailand, and 17.19% are residents of China or other countries. Geographically, the majority (37.5%) are from Yunnan province, followed by Henan (26.56%), Guangxi (25%), Guangdong (7.81%), and Fujian (3.12%) provinces.

The motivations for the 64 individuals choosing Thailand for medical check-ups are as follows: A small portion, 9.37%, trust the high standards of Joint Commission International (JCI) accredited hospitals. An additional 12.5% are drawn to the world-class facilities of Thai hospitals. Another 14.06% are intrigued by the option of combining tourism with medical treatment. The wellness and recovery environment in Thai hospitals is appreciated by 17.18%. The largest group, 35.93%, is attracted by the comprehensive medical packages available. Lastly, 10.93% value the personalized care provided by Thai hospitals. These factors collectively contribute to the appeal of Thailand as a destination for medical check-ups.

The sample group of 100 individuals includes 36 females, constituting 36% of the total. Age distribution is: 31 to 35 years: 19 individuals (52.78%), 36 to 40 years: 9 individuals (25%), 41 to 45 years: 4 individuals (11.11%), 46 to 50 years: 1 individual (2.78%), 51 to 55 years: 1 individual (2.78%), 55 and above: 2 individuals (5.56%)

In the female sample group of 36 individuals, the majority, 21 individuals (approximately 58.33%), are married. The remaining 15 individuals (approximately 41.67%) are single.

Out of the 36 females, 9 (approximately 25%) have completed a Bachelor's degree. The majority, 26 individuals (approximately 72.22%), hold a Master's degree. Additionally, 1 individual (approximately 2.78%) has completed a Doctorate degree in Thailand.

The 36-person sample group is predominantly composed of Chinese company employees in Thailand, totaling 23 individuals (63.89%). One individual is a housewife married to a Thai man (2.78%). Eight are Chinese language teachers (22.22%), and three are business owners (8.33%). Additionally, four individuals reside in China or abroad (11.11%).

In the 36-female sample group, the majority, 11 individuals (30.56%), are from Yunnan Province. Guangxi Province has 10 individuals (27.78%), Henan Province has 9 individuals (25%), and Guangdong Province has 6 individuals (16.67%).

In a 36-person female sample, 36.11% (13 individuals) are confident in Thailand's world-class hospital facilities. Only 2.78% (1 individual) trusts the JCI standard and advanced procedures. 27.78% (10 individuals) appreciate the tourism and medical treatment combo. The wellness and recovery environment is valued by 5.56% (2 individuals), and the comprehensive packages appeal to another 27.78% (10 individuals). Additionally, 19.44% (7 individuals) appreciate the personalized care provided by Thai hospitals.

The research findings indicate that the majority of Chinese nationals residing in Bangkok and its vicinity (Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Samut Prakan) had no chronic diseases (93%), had not been sick in the past 3 months (64%), and had not been sick in the past 6 months (36%). Most had independently utilized healthcare services in Thailand (70.50%), mainly outpatient services (73%). The most frequented healthcare facilities in the past 6 months were private hospitals (75.64%), private clinics (15.42%), and public hospitals (8.94%). Information on healthcare service quality in Thailand primarily came from fellow Chinese peers and Chinese social media platforms.

### **Health Information**

In a sample group of 100 individuals, which includes 64 males and 36 females, the following observations were made: 1) Chronic illnesses are reported by 40.63% of males and 8.33% of females, totaling 29.67% of the sample group. 2) Health insurance coverage is provided to approximately 96.88% of males and 83.33% of females, with a combined total of 85% of the sample group. 3) Experience with healthcare services in China is universal for both males and females, at 100%. 4) Experience with healthcare services in Thailand is

reported by approximately 93.75% of males and 83.33% of females, totaling 90% of the sample group.5)The perception of personal health status is positive for approximately 96.88% of males and 97.22% of females, with a combined total of 96.5% of the sample group. Follow-up after receiving healthcare services in Thailand is conducted by approximately 93.75% of males and 83.33% of females, totaling 90% of the sample group.

**The study on perceptions of the quality of healthcare services and medical tourism in Thailand;** used a 28-item Likert scale questionnaire. It revealed that Chinese nationals rate Thai healthcare services highly, with an average score of 3.70. However, coordination and information provision scored moderately at 3.24 and 3.27, respectively, with higher standard deviations. The professional behavior of providers scored the highest, from 3.52 to 4.09, indicating satisfaction. Concerns were noted with service complexity and communication, and the use of translators for English and Chinese received moderate scores of 2.92 and 2.65, suggesting areas needing improvement.

#### Average score, standard deviation

##### Level of the quality of health services in Thailand (N=100)

Healthcare services in Thailand	$\bar{x}$	SD	Level
<b><i>Quality of healthcare services</i></b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>.50</b>	<b>high</b>
1. convenient of healthcare services	4.60	.93	high
2. comfortable in receiving healthcare services	4.06	.91	high
3. coordination in receiving healthcare services	3.24	.64	high
4. health service facility closes the residence	4.09	.79	high
5. health services of every type as needed	3.93	.82	high
6. environment of healthcare services is safe	3.83	.81	high
7. environment of healthcare services is facility	3.84	.82	high
8. health service facility has good air ventilation	3.90	.90	high
9. health service facility is clean and orderly.	3.96	.85	high
10. are you satisfied with the waiting time for service?	3.68	.99	high
<b><i>Coordination of health care services information provision</i></b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>.64</b>	<b>moderate</b>
11. various units coordinate well in providing services	3.76	.81	high
12. health service process is complicated	2.93	.97	moderate
13. health service documentation is complex	2.96	1.00	moderate
<b><i>Provision of information</i></b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>moderate</b>
14. Healthcare providers have communication problems when using English	2.60	1.10	moderate



Healthcare services in Thailand	$\bar{x}$	SD	Level
15. Healthcare providers have communication problems when using Chinese	2.60	1.10	moderate
16. received sufficient information while receiving the service	3.63	0.83	high
17. received information in various formats while receiving the service	3.52	0.85	high
<b><i>Courtesy of the Service Provider</i></b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>high</b>
18. are you greeted very well at the health service facility?	4.06	0.82	high
19. Thai doctor or nurses are friendly in providing care	4.14	.75	high
20. Foreigners receive good attention in care	3.97	.80	high
21. Chinese receive good attention in care	3.95	.78	high
<b><i>Quality of Care</i></b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>.61</b>	<b>high</b>
You have trust in Thailand's health services	3.79	.86	high
22. You are confident that patient information is kept confidential	3.69	.90	high
23. Thai nurses are competent in providing nursing care	3.89	.72	high
24. You are confident in the quality of care provided by Thai doctors	3.83	.83	high
25. Health personnel are honest and polite	4.10	.72	high
26. The service meets global standards	3.78	.75	high
27. The Thai public health system meets global standards	3.85	.80	high

In findings of this research, it was found that the perception of Chinese nationals towards the overall quality of healthcare services in Thailand is at a high level ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.70, SD = .50), with coordination ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.24, SD = .64) and information provision ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.27, SD = .64) being at a moderate level.

Focus group analysis of Thai healthcare services involves steps from recruitment to reporting about consumer behavior, that a diverse group of 6 individuals, including 3 males and 3 females aged 25 to 50, from various occupations and with different healthcare needs, was carefully chosen from a sample of 100 to participate in a study on Thai healthcare services. All participants had prior experience with the services.

**Male A** (36 years old) , from Guangdong Province, lives in Rama IX and has worked for a Chinese company in Thailand for two years. He has used a private hospital's services three times: for a pre-employment check and two annual check-ups through employee benefits. He was impressed by the staff, short wait times, and shuttle service. The hospital felt more like a hotel. Communication was easy due to staff who spoke Chinese. He suggests that private hospitals in Thailand could improve by hiring more staff fluent in foreign languages, particularly Mandarin and Cantonese, to better serve international clients.

**Male B** (46 years old), from Henan Province, resides in Pattanakarn and runs a business with his Thai wife. He has utilized both private hospitals and clinics in Thailand. His first visit was to a clinic for a physical exam to get an international driver's license. He prefers hospitals over self-medication when ill. Medical costs are reasonable, and doctors provide comprehensive checks. He faces no communication barriers as he understands some Thai, and his wife accompanies him to the hospital. He has recommended Thai hospitals to family in China for their detailed exams, short waits, and pleasant environment. The hospital offers tasty, affordable food and convenient parking. His eldest son was born there, and he and his wife have annual health check-ups. Insurance paperwork is simpler than in China. Medical costs in Thailand are generally lower than in Western countries and some areas in China, making it a cost-effective option. Thai hospitals also maintain high standards and skilled staff, instilling confidence in their services.

**Male C** (27 years old), from Yunnan Province, he resides in the Ram-Inthra and works for a Chinese company on Rama IX Road. He and his wife sought infertility treatment in Thailand, recommended by a friend, and were very satisfied with the service. The costs were comparable to private hospitals in China, but the Thai service was notably superior. Thai hospital staff offered diligent follow-up, checking on them 2-3 days post-treatment and reminding them of appointments a week ahead. The diagnosis was precise, and he had faith in the hospital's renowned specialists with international expertise in reproductive medicine. The treatment integrated conventional procedures with traditional Chinese medicine, such as acupuncture.

**Female A** (23 years old), Chinese student from Henan Province, lives in Lat Phrao and uses orthodontic services from a private clinic on Ratchada Road. She chose to get braces for dental alignment, finding the cost in Bangkok 30-35% cheaper than in Zhengzhou, China. The dentist communicates effectively in English, but staff communication can be difficult, sometimes necessitating a translation app. She wishes the staff could speak some English or Chinese for ease. She selected the clinic based on reviews on Dou-Yin (Chinese TikTok) and opted for treatment in Thailand while pursuing a Master's degree in fine arts and design at a Thai university. She believes well-aligned teeth will improve her professional appearance, beneficial for her future career, particularly when meeting clients.

**Female B** (40 years old), A Chinese woman from Guangxi Province, fluent in Thai, resides in The Scene Town on Ladprao Road and works for a Chinese advertising company in Thailand. She relocated to Thailand with her husband and secured employment. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, she remained in Thailand, working as normal. She utilizes annual health check-ups and has been treated for COVID-19. She is particularly impressed with a private hospital on Phetchaburi Road, near RCA, which boasts JCI accreditation and offers outstanding service. The doctors are proficient, compassionate, and have strong interpersonal skills. Medical interpreters facilitate communication in Chinese and assist with appointment scheduling and ensuring a convenient visit. She intends to have her parents and in-laws visit Thailand for health check-ups. The hospital has a shopping mall-like atmosphere, featuring live piano music and attractive dining options.

**Female C** (26 years old) ,from Yunnan Province, a Chinese student uses facial cosmetic services at a private hospital on Charansaniwong Road. She trusts the hospital's long-standing reputation, which is well-known among many Chinese people. Initially, she visited the hospital to buy medicine, vitamins, and skincare products to sell in China. After frequent visits, she decided to try medical procedures for acne, freckles, and laser treatments, all performed by specialized doctors. The treatment costs are 30% cheaper than in China. Currently, she works as an interpreter at the hospital, assisting Chinese clients with medical services. Unfortunately, the skilled doctors are usually available only in the evenings and not every day, as they also work as teaching doctors in state hospitals.

Chinese residents in Thailand praise the Thai private healthcare system for its excellent service, cost-effectiveness, and welcoming atmosphere. They are particularly impressed by the staff, short wait times, and the hotel-like settings of hospitals. The affordability of medical services, including lower costs compared to Western countries and some regions in China, is a significant advantage. Infertility treatments and orthodontic services are notably superior and more economical than in China. The integration of conventional and traditional Chinese medicine in treatments is also valued. The communication primarily relies on English, supplemented by translation apps when needed. Chinese social media reviews heavily influence clinic selection. The quality of hospital services, international accreditation, and the expertise of doctors receive high acclaim. Medical interpreters play a crucial role in facilitating communication and appointment scheduling.

## **Conclusion:**

The study investigates Chinese residents' use of healthcare services in the Bangkok area and its provinces. They commend Thai private healthcare for its quality service, affordability, and pleasant environment, with staff praised for efficiency and hospital settings likened to hotels. The cost of medical services is significantly lower than in Western countries

and some Chinese regions, with infertility and orthodontic treatments being particularly favored for their quality and economy. The blend of conventional and traditional Chinese medicine in treatments is also appreciated.

The study on Chinese nationals in Thailand after the visa-free policy highlights their healthcare service use and medical tourism behavior. It shows that adapting services to Chinese tourists seeking medical care is crucial for Thailand's healthcare and tourism sectors. Key points include frequent use of outpatient services influenced by recommendations and social media, high satisfaction with services, and the need for improved interpreter training and service processes to solidify Thailand's position as an ASEAN medical hub. Popular services are infertility treatments and cosmetic procedures. Understanding these behaviors helps healthcare providers customize services, policymakers maximize benefits, and researchers identify areas for further study. The aim is to effectively manage the health tourism demand from Chinese tourists and new migrants who primarily visit for tourism but also access medical services. The private sector must be prepared for this, as residents plan to bring parents for health check-ups and students show interest in cosmetic services, attracted by lower costs and skilled doctors, including interpreters, enhancing overall satisfaction with Thai healthcare services.

### Suggestions

A strategy to improve healthcare for Chinese residents in Thailand with economic and social benefits includes: 1) Expanding the market to the Chinese community for increased revenue through specialized treatments. 2) Enhancing brand value with multilingual staff to improve patient satisfaction and reduce errors. 3) Stimulating the economy through increased demand for related services and knowledge exchange. 4) Diversifying services to boost competitiveness and ensure long-term growth. 5) Attracting investment and promoting cultural exchange with quality care and accreditation. 6) Strategically positioning hospitals for sustainable development in healthcare catering to Chinese residents.

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