

Health Care Destination Switzerland

The Flying Patient

瑞士医疗保健游

乘着飞机去看病



Due to Switzerland's enormous popularity as a tourism destination, a newer trend - less fun, though - tends to be buried in oblivion: Switzerland's growing popularity as a health care and wellness destination. Can Switzerland also lure affluent Chinese into its hospitals? A study reveals that there is potential for Swiss clinics to become a health care destination of choice for Chinese patients.

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In 2010, more than 30,000 foreign patients from all parts of the world were seeking some sort of medical treatment in Switzerland, generating values worth more than CHF 850 million (RMB 5.5bn). However, the Association of Swiss Hospitals, which represents 370 public and private health institutions, estimates that currently less than 2% of all patients come from outside Switzerland. The share of patients from China is marginal. The number of foreign patients in Switzerland could further increase due to high demand coming from Asia, and predominantly from China. While Singapore has established itself as a premier market for health tourism years ago (see box), affluent Chinese are just starting to become a main customer group of Swiss health care service providers.

Switzerland and Swiss brands in general enjoy an excellent reputation for quality and reliability in China. As China's population is becoming richer and aging more (over 9% of the 1.3 billion inhabitants are over 65 years of age), the demand for outstanding health care services is on the rise.

Of crucial importance is the rising number of people who could possibly afford medical treatment in Switzerland. Let's take a look at the numbers. China now has 1300 billionaires and more than one million millionaires, and is only second to the United States in this ranking. This shows that there is a (large enough) target group who could afford medical treatment in Switzerland for themselves or for relatives.

Stiff Asian competition

China's main health problems are mostly stemming from the resource intensive industrialization process and pollution, but also from excessive tobacco consumption, and increasing obesity. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that non-communicable diseases account for about 80% of leading-to-death causes among the Chinese population.

So far, Chinese predominantly go to South Korea, Taiwan, Japan or Singapore for receiving medical treatment or wellness services. The distance to Switzerland is an obvious disadvantage that Swiss health centers have to deal with compared to its Asian competitors. However, the advantage is that Switzerland has the reputation of belonging to the leading medical expert countries when it comes to complex medical cases and surgeries. Also, Switzerland offers a state-of-the-art infrastructure for premium quality medical care and counts among the best for second opinions and health checks.

The study suggests that, given all the above mentioned favorable circumstances, the Swiss (private) hospitals and health centers need to coordinate their activities in the Chinese market. Organizations such as Swiss Leading Hospitals, Swiss Health or Lucerne Health would need to actively promote their services towards their Chinese target groups. This not only includes the end consumer (the patients), but also doctors, industry media and publications, as well as cooperation partners with strong ties to the Chinese government.

The study "Health tourism destination Switzerland - a study on the potential of the Chinese patient market and its impact on Switzerland as a health tourism destination", by Sarah Baumgartner, supported by CBC Marketing Research, can be obtained via: thebridge@sha.swisscham.org

Singapore Eyes Chinese Market

Singapore is a top destination for Chinese patients. More than 40,000 mainland Chinese citizens traveled to the city state in 2011 to receive medical treatment. Most demanded services included classic plastic surgery, eye surgery, heart and cancer treatment. According to the Singaporean government, these services generated revenue in the amount of RMB 4 billion last year. For Chinese citizens seeking treatment, the Singaporean government allows Chinese to apply for a special visa, which is easier to obtain than normal visas.

作为旅游圣地，瑞士正出现一种新的、不为多数人所知的潮流：医疗保健游。瑞士在医学界的盛誉能否将中国富人吸引过来呢？研究发现瑞士诊所很可能会成为中国病患治疗疾病的圣地。

2010年，来自世界各个国家的3万多名病患来到瑞士寻求治疗的方法，为瑞士创造了85亿瑞士法郎的收入。不过，拥有370家公立与私立医疗机构的瑞士医疗协会估计目前只有2%的病人来自海外，来自中国的病患更是微乎其微。

来自亚洲尤其是中国病患的需求将使瑞士的海外病患进一步增加。新加坡在多年前就奠定了其作为高端医疗市场的地位，而中国富人正成为瑞士医疗服务机构的主要顾客群。

瑞士和瑞士品牌在中国享有很高的质量和可靠性声誉。随着中国富人的增加及人口老龄化——目前13亿人口中超过9%是65岁以上的老人——人们对高质量的医疗保健服务的需求正不断提高。

最重要的是能够支付在瑞士治疗的病患人数越来越多。目前中国有1,300人资产超过十亿，100多万人资产超过百万，在富豪排名上仅次于美国。这意味着有大量的目标人群能够支付得起他们自己或亲人前往瑞士治疗的费用。

亚洲市场竞争激烈

中国人的主要健康问题主要由过快的工业化进程、污染以及过量的烟草消费、越来越多的超重人群和肥胖症引起。因此，非传染性疾病导致的死亡案例占总体死亡案例的80%也就不足为奇了。

迄今为止，中国人接受海外治疗或保健的主要目的地是韩国、台湾、日本和新加坡。与亚洲国家相比，距离是瑞士医疗中心在病患选择中处于不利地位的最主要因素。不过，瑞士在复杂医疗案例和手术方面居于世界领先地位。此外，瑞士拥有最顶级的设备为病患提供高质量的医疗保健服务，是病患进行二次诊断和健康检查的最佳去处。

研究表明，虽然瑞士在医疗领域有以上优势，私立医院和保健中心仍须在中国市场调整其相关活动。像瑞士优质医疗联盟、瑞士康健中心和疏森保健等机构也须针对中国目标群体积极宣传其服务。这不仅仅包括目标消费者（病患），也包括医生、媒体和出版物、合作伙伴等。

“瑞士医疗保健游——关于中国病患市场及其对作为医疗目的地的瑞士的影响的研究”，作者：Sarah Baumgartner，由佳瑞咨询有限公司支持，读者可通过以下联系方式获得研究全文：

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新加坡看准中国市场

新加坡是中国病患进行海外治疗的首选目的地。2011年，有4万名中国内地患者前往新加坡接受包括整形手术、眼睛手术、心脏和癌症治疗等在内的治疗。新加坡政府称，这些服务带来了约40亿元人民币的收入。对于寻求治疗的中国病患来说，他们可获得新加坡政府特批的签证，申请程序比普通签证更为便捷简单。



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