

Memorandum

To: Magdalena Berry

From: Katherine Wertz

Subject: *Proposal for Documented Research Report*

Date: Monday, April 9, 2012

For my research paper, I chose to focus on medical tourism. More specifically, I will analyze the way medical tourism companies format their websites, focusing in particular on to what extent they present the information ethically. Medical tourism is the practice of going abroad for cheaper medical services, both necessary and elective. Due to the increasingly high cost of medical care in the United States (as well as undoubtedly many other factors), medical tourism is becoming more and more common among those capable of taking advantage of it. In this memo, I will address the relevancy of this issue as well which sources I might use and problems I might encounter as I write the upcoming research paper.

Relevancy

Medical tourism is a growing field trend around the world, especially among those who have enough money to do so. As a result, medical tourism companies may feel the urge to draw in as many customers as possible, sometimes blurring the line between patient safety and profit. Therefore, it is especially important to examine the ethics of industry websites, especially in the interest of patient protection.

Sources

For this essay, I will use three primary types of sources: current scholarly research on medical tourism, scholarly research on medical tourism websites, and medical tourism websites themselves. After reading through the academic sources, I would rhetorically analyze the medical tourism websites. In this analysis, I would focus on what kinds of information these sites include, their tone, their graphics, etc. and their potential effect on viewers. Afterwards, I will evaluate whether or not these sites are ethical and what might be done to make them more so.

Citations of Some Potential Sources

Connell, J. Medical tourism: Sea, sun, sand and...surgery. *Tourism Management*. 2006; 27: 1093-1100. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2005.11.005.

Mason, A., Wright, K. B. Framing medical tourism: An examination of appeal, risk, convalescence, accreditation, and interactivity in medical tourism web sites.

Journal of Health Communication. 2011; 16: 163-177. doi:
10.1080/10810730.2010.535105.

Penney, K., Snyder, J., Crooks, V.A., Johnston, R. Risk communication and informed consent in the medical tourism industry: A thematic content analysis of Canadian broker websites. *BMC Medical Ethics*. 2011; 12: 1-9.

Turner, L. Canadian medical tourism companies that have exited the marketplace: Content analysis of websites used to market transnational medical travel. *Globalization and Health*. 2011; 7: 1-16.

Potential Problems and Solutions

Given the amount of attention directed at this topic, the biggest difficulty I could potentially run into is sifting through a truly massive quantity of information. However, by focusing specifically on medical tourism company website ethics, I will be able to narrow down the information sufficiently. Otherwise, I do not foresee any particular problems hindering my completion of the research assignment.

Conclusion

Medical tourism is an ever-growing field, one encouraged by increasing domestic health costs and prolific advertising. Therefore, evaluating the ethics of how medical tourism companies present their information online needs to be done in order to protect patients from misleading or otherwise harmful information. As writers in a field which particularly values high levels of ethics, this is an increasingly important topic.