

ABSTRACT

Thailand has long time been witnessed in earning its revenue from tourism. Nowadays, there is another kind of tourism, which is catching the eyes of countries in Southeast Asian region and even well known in the European and American zones. This remarkable tourism is called Health Tourism or it can be called Health Vacation.

This research was conducted in responding to the potential growth of this type of tourism. The study examines the relationship between the selected health- vacation attributes and the international tourists' selection of Chiang Mai as their health- vacation destination. The case study of this research is Chiang Mai Ram Hospital, Chiang Mai Province.

The study seeks to identify the relationship between health- vacation factors: top quality medical care, compelling value for money, foreign- trained certified doctor, access to specialized services and side trips for recreations, as the independent variables, and the international tourists' selection, as the dependent variable.

In this study, 322 international tourists in Chiang Mai Ram Hospital were selected as the respondents who were screened based on their purpose of visit to be both health improvement/ treatments and leisure. Using the statistic tools analysis of Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient in the SPSS program, it was found that the null hypotheses in the hypothesis statement were rejected and all of the selected health- vacation attributes had positive relationship with the international tourists' selection of Chiang Mai as their health- vacation destination. The significantly strongest correlations among these variables with the tourists' selection were the factor of access to specialized services and side trips for recreations. This means that the international tourists who considered factor of access to specialized services and side trips for recreations important have a higher tendency to select Chiang Mai as a health- vacation. However, the correlation results of all pairs showed the strength of r- value in the level "weak" and "very weak". Therefore, the independent and dependent variables varied together at a certain level, in the positive direction.

This study also found the most determinant factors among the selected five main factors. Interpreting the mean value of each variable, it was found that the most determinant factors that influenced the international tourists' selection of Chiang Mai as a health- vacation destination were foreign- trained certified doctors and top quality medical care, respectively. The findings suggested that the international

tourists see foreign- trained certified doctors and top quality medical care important for healthcare- related destination.

