

# HALAL MEDICAL TOURISM: EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

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## ABSTRACT

Islam is not just a religion but a way of life. Searching for *halal* (lawful) and avoiding *haram* (prohibited) is obligatory upon every Muslim. The obligation does not only limit to consumption of halal food and beverages, but almost in every aspect of daily life such as halal pharmaceutical, halal cosmetic, Shariah compliant outfit, Shariah compliant Islamic finance and products, and it also extended to finding Shariah compliant or halal medical and services. This is in line with the goals or objectives of Shariah (*maqāṣid al-sharī'a*), which defined by Imam Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi as "the attainment of good, welfare, advantage, benefits and warding off evil, injury, loss of the creatures". According to al-Shatibi, the legal ends of Islamic law "are the benefits intended by the law. Muslims live guided by the Shari'ah (an Islamic law) that derived primarily from the Holy book of the Quran and the Sunnah (life, actions, teachings, and sayings) of the prophet Muhammad (SAW) which recorded in the books of Hadith that included the traditions that emphasizes the prophetic tradition of Islam and the sanctions of Muslim jurists who represents the Muslim community. Halal tourism is related to traveling that has been encouraged by Allah SWT in the Quran to learn through experiences to improve knowledge. Halal medical tourism on the other hand, refers to the environment, core values, ways of operations and environment in the hospital industry that are in line with Islamic principles, and suitable for Muslim patients. The main purpose of this paper is to raise awareness about the growing Halal medical tourism market segment and identify the fundamental needs of this segment. What is Halal medical tourism? What are the sources that inform about Halal medical tourism? What is the potential of Halal medical tourism? How does one attract this potential segment? These are some of the questions to which a response is

provided in the paper. The methodology is largely reliant on secondary information. The paper also makes some recommendations which have implications for the practitioners and service providers.

**Keywords:** *Maqāṣid Al-Sharī‘a*, Medical tourism, halal medical tourism, world top medical destination, why Malaysia

## INTRODUCTION

Seeking health treatment away from home is not a new trend for many people especially the privileged of developing, and also the advanced countries. For this group, seeking healthcare treatment overseas is part of a general pattern of consumption of foreign goods and services, which either cannot be found, or are deemed of lower quality, in their home countries. The private hospitals are the indirect beneficiaries of the initiatives that have been announced by the government for medical tourism (Heng Leng Cheng, (2007). In 2017, the healthcare tourism had been identified for growth under the National Key Economic Area (NKEA) plan due to its vast potential. Malaysia earned RM1.3 billion (US\$314 million) in medical travel revenue in 2017, with an estimated RM4 billion (US\$967 million) from other non-related healthcare expenditures such as transportation, accommodation and tourism activities (IMJT Team, 2020). In 2017, one million medical tourists visited Malaysia with 600,000 were from Indonesia. The Indonesian remained Malaysia's biggest medical tourism market with its people coming for all kinds of treatment. Malaysia was targeting to get at least one million health tourists from Indonesia by 2020. Nevertheless, this was not achievable due to Covid -19 pandemic beginning March 2020 to year 2021. The Malaysian government imposed the closed border policy which stopped foreign tourists from coming to Malaysia in order to curb the spreading of Covid-19.

Among the top medical travel contributing states are Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Melaka and Sarawak. Penang was the top destination of the healthcare tourists with 60% visiting the island for treatment. The state's healthcare travel industry generated US\$121 million in revenue in 2017. Among the medical fields that Penang is known for are cardiology, orthopaedics, oncology, neurology, in-vitro fertilisation, ophthalmology and dentistry (IMTJ Team, 2018).

Tourists from China came for pregnancy and fertility treatment, while those from Australia came for services not covered by their insurance policies. Private hospitals in Malaysia, to name a few, such as Sunway Medical Centre, National Heart Institute, Mahkota Medical Centre, Melaka, KPJ Damansara Specialist Hospital have become the choice of these group of people (The Star online, 2017).

### ***Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'a***

Maqasid (Arabic: مقاصد, lit. goals, purposes) or maqāṣid al-sharī'a (goals or objectives of sharia) is an Islamic legal doctrine. Together with another related classical doctrine, maṣlaḥa (welfare or public interest), it plays an increasingly prominent role in modern times (Dederija, (2014), Brown (2009), Gleave (2012). Imam al-Ghazali defines the maqasid of shari'ah as a goal to maintain five basic things in human life (usul al-khams), namely, preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage and property. In this case, according to Al-Ghazali, any act which is aimed at protecting usul al-khams is known as maslahah (good), while every act which may harm usul al-khams is known as mafsadah (damage)(Azman,. M.,N,. Ainatul,. A.,K.,Muhamad,. N.,H.,).

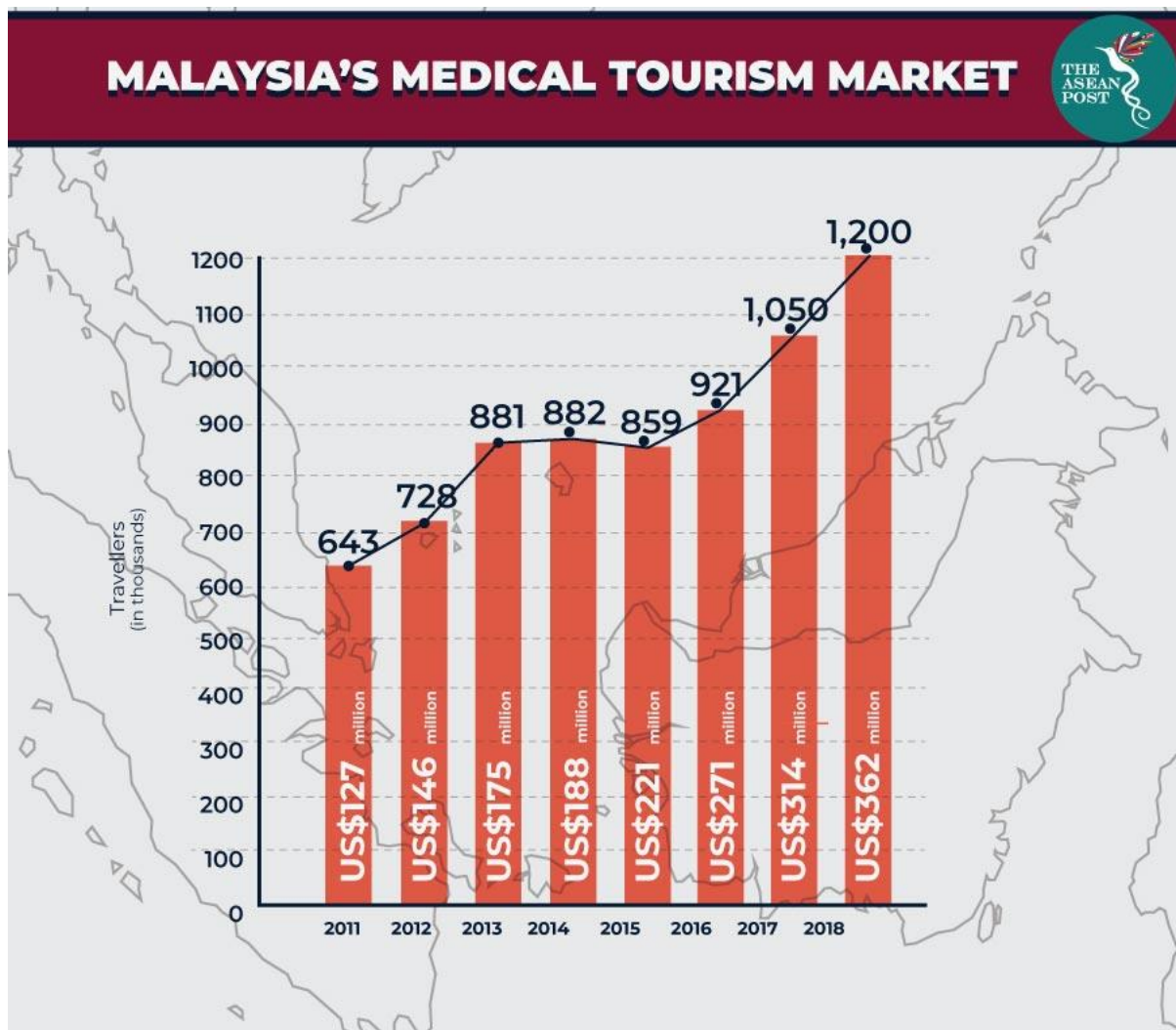
The Shari'ah generally is predicated on benefits to the individual and the community, and its laws are designed to protect these benefits and to facilitate the improvement and perfection of the conditions of human life. The Qur'an is expressive of this when it points to the main purpose of the prophethood of Muhammad (SAW): "We have not sent you but as a Mercy to the worlds" (Qur'an 21:107). This can also be seen in the Qur'an's characterization of itself as "a healing to the (spiritual) ailments of the hearts" and "a Guidance and Mercy" for the believers and mankind (Qur'an 10:57). The objectives of *rahmah* (mercy or compassion) mentioned in these two verses are further substantiated by other provisions in the Qur'an and Sunnah (the Traditions of the Prophet) that seek to establish justice, eliminate prejudice, and alleviate hardship (Kamali, 2022).

According to Al-Shatibi (2004), the maqasid of Shari'ah refers to God's command that has set the main goal of His tenets in giving benefit (maslahah) to mankind and avoiding any damage (mafsadah) from occurring to them. He concluded his discussion on the maqasid of shari'ah in the three categories: *dharuriyyat*, *hajiyyat* and *tahsiniyyat*.

## **MEDICAL TOURISM MARKET OVERVIEW**

According to the Medical Tourism Global Market Report 2021, medical tourism market includes revenues generated by healthcare service providers by diagnosing and treating the patients who travel across international borders to obtain medical treatment. In this situation, patients usually travel from countries lacking healthcare infrastructure, or having high healthcare costs to major medical centres in developing countries (Medical Tourism Global Market Report, 2021). It is further reported that, the global medical tourism market is expected grow from \$19.79 billion in the year 2020 to \$21.93 billion in year 2021 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.8%. The growth is mainly due to the companies resuming their operations and adapting to the new normal while recovering from the COVID-19 impact. The market is expected to reach \$40.03 billion in the year 2025 at a CAGR of 16%.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak is to act as a major restraint for the growth of the medical tourism industry during 2020 and 2021. According to the World Health Organization's report, 213 countries are affected by the COVID-19 outbreak including countries with a high number of medical tourists such as the USA, China, Japan, and South Korea. The government of various countries has banned travellers from affected countries, barred flights to certain countries, and changed the visa requirements. The American Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicted that the situation could last into 2021 and is likely to impact the medical tourism industry significantly. Therefore, the coronavirus outbreak and travel bans are expected to restrict the growth of the medical tourism industry in the near future.



Source: *Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council*

In 2019, the revenue from medical tourism in Malaysia was about 1.7 billion Malaysian ringgit. The revenue from medical tourism in Malaysia has increased by more than one billion Malaysian ringgit since 2011.

## WHAT IS HALAL MEDICAL TOURISM?

As opposed to the ordinary meaning of medical tourism, although it may contain similarity in several components, halal or Islamic medical tourism is defined as a short-term journey of individuals to destinations, outside their usual atmosphere, primarily seeking health benefits at

hospitals that practice Islamic principles in the delivery of their health services (Muhammad Khalilur Rahman, Moniruzzaman Sarker, Azizul Hassan, (2021).

With the growing market demand worldwide, hospitals around the world are increasingly equipping themselves to serve Muslim tourists who have specific needs and requirements. Providers of Islamic medical tourism is required to have a sound understanding of Islamic medical service components to ensure the satisfaction of patients who come from different nations. The main purpose of this chapter is to search the predominant medical tourism-related aspects of the Islamic perspective that will contribute to the niche market of Islamic medical tourism industry in the local and global process. This study employs a search method and synthesizes the relevant literature in the discipline of medical tourism services and highlight that Islamic medical tourism is a promising tourism concept with huge business prospects. This chapter explores the concepts, development, and challenges of Islamic medical tourism services, and finds that its development depends on good infrastructure, environment, 2 technology, investment and marketing strategy. The study proposes some strategies, policy and managerial recommendations for the provision of Islamic medical tourism.

### **MALAYSIA WORLD TOP MEDICAL TOURISM DESTINATION?**

This paragraph highlights the achievements of Malaysia as one of the world's top medical tourism destinations. The information is taken from several reports on world top medical tourism destinations.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Award/Year</b>	<b>Remark</b>
<b>MALAYSIA</b>	Medical Travel Awards <b>2020</b> by winning the highly coveted 'Health and Medical Tourism: Destination of the Year'.	the fourth time that Malaysia has claimed the title, having previously won it thrice in a row from <b>2015 – 2017</b> .



	<p>Won the Number One spot in the International Medical Travel Journal's award for "Health and Medical Tourism Destination of the year" in <b>2015</b> and <b>2016</b>;</p> <p>Malaysia ranks among the best providers of healthcare in all of South-East Asia</p>	<p>Malaysia ranks among the best providers of healthcare in all of South-East Asia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-excellent patient comfort with five-star rooms that look more like hotel suites than hospital rooms.</li> <li>-Support facilities: (such as lounge and concierge services to medical tourists to ensure their comfort from the very minute they arrive in Malaysia. (Penang international airports and Kuala Lumpur airports)</li> <li>-Health travellers who visit Malaysia save 65% to 80% on health cost compared to the cost in the US</li> </ul>
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## **MEDICAL TOURISM MALAYSIA**

The medical tourism industry has become one of the most profitable industries around the world, wherein most of the countries exploit every effort to attract medical tourists to take advantage of its medical care benefits. Malaysia's medical tourism has been growing between 16% and 17% year-on-year over the last five years (2014-2018). From 643,000 medical tourist arrivals in 2011 to over 1.2 million in 2018, Malaysia has grown its health tourism industry to become a leading global destination for international patients in Asia and beyond (Medical Tourism Magazine, 2018). International Living magazine's Annual Global Retirement Index had voted Malaysia as the "Best Country in the World for Healthcare" in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019, ahead of France, Thailand, Ecuador, Mexico and Costa Rica (Rahimi Yunus, 2019).

From a revenue of USD 127 million in 2011, the medical tourism business generated over \$362 million from the market in 2018 (Medical Tourism Magazine, 2018). Based on analysis made, it was identified that governmental participation in the market, and formidable public-private healthcare collaboration, was the main factor that contributed to the promising growth in this industry. It was further said that, the secret lies in the creation of the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC), which responsible for promoting Malaysia as a medical tourism destination

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by revamping its international healthcare brand. Besides, the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) is actively expanding its Market Base in Medical Tourism, targeting more international patients particularly from the United Kingdom, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, Australia, China, India, and the United States. The MHTC is also actively looking to set up strong market ties with the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and countries in the Middle East (Medical Tourism Magazine, 2018). Among the areas that Malaysian hospitals excel at are cardiology, oncology, fertility, orthopaedics and cosmetic surgery (Rahimi Yunus, (2019). However, the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) estimates that there has been a 75 per cent drop in medical tourism for Malaysia due to the pandemic Covid-19.

Malaysia has become a preferred medical treatment destination globally due to its high treatment quality, accessibility and competitive costs. Besides, Malaysia's cutting-edge technology and state-of-the-art facilities in the fields of cardiology and fertility have propelled the country into a hub for both these treatments (Rahimi Yunus, 2019). However, due to Covid-19 pandemic, and spikes in the Covid-19 cases in Malaysia and virus mutations, will dampen domestic medical tourism sector into the second half of the year 2021. Medical tourism, which generated RM1.7 billion to Malaysia in 2019, will be able to recover by end 2021 when the country achieved her immunity as according to the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (NCIP)), (John Gilbert, 2021).

## **WHY MALAYSIA IS THE BEST FOR MEDICAL TOURISM?**

The government has taken numerous steps to make Malaysia a reputable choice for medical travellers. For instance, the inception of the Malaysian Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) in 2005. The MHTC is an agency under the Ministry of Health (MoH) tasked to facilitate and promote the healthcare travel industry of Malaysia by coordinating industry collaborations and building valuable public-private partnerships, at home and abroad. Through their efforts and initiatives, Malaysia seeks to establish itself as a leading medical destination for medical travellers from all over the world. The country's efforts were even recognised numerous times, including its win of the "Health and Medical Tourism: Destination of the Year" title at the 2020 International Medical Travel Journal (IMTJ) Medical Travel Awards.



No	Reason	
1	Pioneering Medical Advances	<p>constantly keeps up with the newest breakthroughs in medical technology. One such example is the National Heart Institute's (IJN) successful implantation of the Micra AV pacemaker, used to treat irregular heartbeats, in 2020. IJN would be the first hospital outside of the United States to perform this surgical procedure.</p> <p>Malaysia is also one of a few countries that is taking concrete steps to consolidate both modern and traditional medical practices as part of the healthcare industry. The Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&amp;CM) Act 2016 is one such move to better incorporate traditional and complementary medicine in the country by establishing legislation, policies and guidelines on T&amp;CM. This helps T&amp;CM to provide high standards of quality care, ensures practitioners are properly registered and trained and helps contribute its growing influence to medical tourists seeking safe, alternative methods to treat their illnesses.</p>
2	Strategic Location	Malaysia as a gateway to Asia itself, with its location bordering many Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, while also still accessible to travellers from other Asian

		countries like Japan, South Korea and China.
3	Affordability	Not only do they save a significant sum for equally excellent treatment procedures at a fraction of the cost, but they will also still have enough funds on the side to enjoy a vacation in the country. There are even collaborations between hotels and hospitals, where the hotels offer customised stay packages that are touted as “post-treatment friendly” while providing accessibility, excellent service, and other benefits that can be enjoyed at the hotel or the hospital.
4	Internationally Recognised Hospitals	The combination of international accreditation, bolstered by the medical industry’s high-quality services provided, has enabled a number of our hospitals to achieve international recognition, winning prestigious awards that serve to boost our country’s desire to become a renowned medical hub. Among the accolades won include “2019 Medical Tourism Hospital of the Year in the Asia Pacific” for Sunway Medical Centre; “2019 Hospital of the Year Malaysia” for both Prince Court Medical Centre and Subang Jaya Medical Centre; and “2019 Cardiology Service Provider of the Year” going to IJN.
5	A Leader in Medical Research	

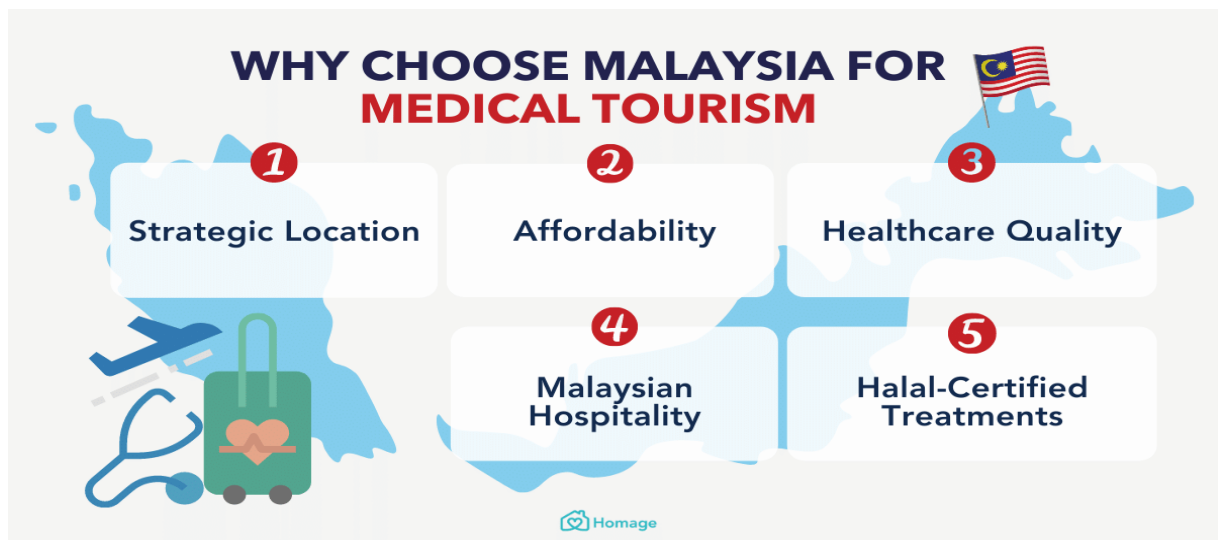
		Malaysia takes clinical research very seriously and has various systems in place to ensure all medical research that takes place meets the highest standards. One such system is the National Medical Research Register, a web-based system that “streamlines the application, review and approval process to conduct research in the MOH.” This helps the government and relevant organisations to keep track of ongoing medical research in Malaysia, and to review their methodology and ethical concerns before their approval.
6	Great Hospitality	Part of this excellence comes from a desire to provide personalised care for each person undergoing treatment or recovering from it. This translates not only to the diagnosis and treatment they can or will receive, but to the service they receive while warded, or when waiting for the test results. Nurses and doctors pay close attention to the needs of those under their care, offering help where needed, making special arrangements that benefit their care recipients, and going the distance whenever they can
7	Excellent Healthcare Quality	Keeping up with medical breakthroughs allows for newer surgical treatments that are less invasive and have a faster recovery time than open surgeries.

8	Highly Trained Medical Professionals	As part of efforts to strengthen the medical industry and safeguard patients as well as doctors, entities such as the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) and the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) exist to make sure that the healthcare given to care recipients is of the highest quality without any compromise, and that all healthcare professionals are to be registered with the government, must maintain ethical standards set by the government (and as per the Hippocratic Oath), and consistently improve their practice through continuous learning and research.
9	Halal-Certified Medications and Treatments:	The offering of new halal-certified, or Shariah-compliant, medications and treatments is a rapidly expanding field in Malaysia, with the need to cater to Muslims looking for such products and services. the “MS2424: 2012 Halal Pharmaceuticals – General Guidelines” was developed and implemented in 2012, the world’s first Halal pharmaceutical standard. The standard was devised as a way to effectively address the complexities of the pharmaceutical industry while ensuring the safety, quality and efficacy of certified medications and treatments. This is in tandem with the recent introduction of the MS2636 standard for halal medical

		<p>devices, further widening the net for Muslim-friendly medical tourism in Malaysia.</p> <p>Malaysia has also created halal-certified medical products of its own, including the GranuMas synthetic bone graft. GranuMas is also internationally recognised, earning accreditation by the British Standard Institution and enabling its sales in the European market. The MoH has also implemented guidelines for the use of non-halal medications or treatments for Muslims, making sure that Muslim medical travellers are aware of the medications and procedures that are used in the event that they may not be halal-certified.</p>
10	A Wonderful Tourist Destination	Medical tourists may come to Malaysia for its top-notch and affordable healthcare, but they will also find themselves staying a while longer for its rich diversity as a tourist destination.

Ten reasons why Malaysia is the preferred medical tourism destination

Source: homage, <https://www.homage.com.my/resources/malaysia-best-medical-tourism/>



Source: Calvyne Ee, homage, <https://www.homage.com.my/resources/malaysia-best-medical-tourism/>

## WHAT IS HALAL MEDICAL TOURISM?

Muslims are obliged to observe the Shari'ah in all aspects of their lives. Shari'ah compliant healthcare services is designed to provide Muslim patients with medical treatment that abides by Islamic principles which also includes halal medicine. Many Muslims are concerned with the manner in which they treated when seeking medical attention in hospitals and this has resulted in the demands for Shari'ah compliant healthcare services (Majdah Zawawi and Khadijah Othman, 2018). There are several issues that arise when discussing this type of healthcare services. For example, Muslim patients face significant challenges in receiving treatment in conventional hospitals, which includes privacy issues during treatment, cross-gender interactions between patients and medical practitioners as well as the status of the pharmaceuticals provided as treatment. Hence, many Muslims are concerned with the manner in which they treated when seeking medical attention in hospitals and this has resulted in the demands for Shari'ah compliant healthcare services (Sharif SM, Rahman ARA, (2016).

Increasing interest and demand in seeking Shariah compliant or Muslim friendly medical products and services among the Muslims in Malaysia primarily, provides the opportunity for Malaysia in positioning itself as a Muslim preferred halal medical tourism destination.



As opposed to the ordinary meaning of medical tourism, although it may contain similarity in several components. Halal or Islamic medical tourism is defined as a short-term journey of individuals to destinations, outside their usual atmosphere, primarily seeking health benefits at hospitals that practice Islamic principles in the delivery of their health services (Muhammad Khalilur Rahman, Moniruzzaman Sarker, Azizul Hassan, (2021); (Muhammad Khalilur Rahman, Suhaiza Zailani & Ghazali Musa (2018).

The emergence of Shari'ah compliant hospital in Malaysia, and the development of the Malaysia Medical Device Standard MS 2636: 2019, have impacted the choice amongst the medical tourist. As a result, the Shariah compliant hospitals have become popular as medical tourism hospital in Malaysia. In research conducted, the findings showed that Shari'ah-compliant amenities and physicians' Islamic medical-services quality have significant positive relationships with Muslim medical tourists' satisfaction (Muhammad Khalilur Rahman, Suhaiza Zailani & Ghazali Musa (2018). The increased awareness of consuming only halal products and experiencing halal services among Muslim consumers has influenced them to also seek for Shari'ah compliant healthcare services. This encourages several service providers to include hospitals that adopt and implement Shari'ah compliant healthcare services in Malaysia. This includes, the Islamic Hospital Consortium (IHC) which comprises of several Shariah compliant hospitals such as AliSLAM Specialist Hospital, Pusrawi Hospital, Ar-Ridzuan Medical Center and An Nur Specialist Hospital was established with the main objective of providing services that complies with Shari'ah requirements to Muslim patients (Norafni@Farlina Rahim et. al., (2015). At present, most of the core values, ways of operations and the environment in the hospitality industry are based on a mass or western tourism which mainly by pleasure, encouraging hedonistic concepts of escape from daily life, permissiveness, lavishness, servitude that has contrary to Islamic belief (Henderson, 2003). The following paragraphs will discuss medical tourism in Malaysia, Halal Medical Tourism, Overview of Shariah Compliant Hospital in Malaysia, result and discussion, findings and conclusion.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/iHCMalaysia/>

Islamic Hospital Consortium Of Malaysia Logo

## **OVERVIEW OF SHARI'AH COMPLIANT HOSPITAL IN MALAYSIA**

Shari'ah compliant hospital did not get a good start in the beginning. Only a few private hospitals ventured into Shari'ah compliant services, among the earliest were Pusat Rawatan Islam (PUSRAWI) in 1984, Al-Islam Specialist Hospital in 2006 with additional concept of being "Ibadah Friendly Hospital". In 2005, the Islamic Hospital Consortium was established with an objective to establish contact and cooperation among its members in the field of healthcare services, strengthen ethical medical practice and hospital administration based on the principles of Islam (Islamic Hospital Consortium, 2016). Aside from that, the hospital organized a monthly workshop (Training of Trainers) in order to ensure their staff are well trained and equipped with knowledge related to Islamic principles and practices. For example, the staff should be able to help the Muslim patient to perform *tayammum* (is the Islamic act of dry Ritual purification using a purified sand or stone or Mud, which may be performed in place of ritual washing (wudu or ghusl) if no clean water is readily available or if one is suffering from moisture-induced skin inflammation or scaling). Other than that, a weekly *tazkirah* (religious talk and spiritual therapy) is also organised for the staff, which also extended to the inhouse patient.

Meanwhile, the services provided at those hospitals are in terms of facilities and accommodations. For instance, the hospital management have prepared prayer facilities such as ablution kit (pure dust for *tayammum*) and also water spray. Almost all the member hospitals

dedicate a *musolla* (prayer room) at all levels of the hospital buildings. This has also been adopted by some Government hospitals such as in Sultan Abdul Halim Hospital (Zaiton, 2014) and Selayang Hospital ((Zulaiha, 2014). Besides that, they also provide prayer outfit and mat, Qibla signage and also manual guidelines for prayer.

## **SHARI'AH COMPLIANT HEALTHCARE SERVICES**

An introduction to Shari'ah compliant healthcare services is necessary in order to enable readers to understand, appreciate, and analyse the value and importance of such services from the Muslim consumers perspectives. In general, Shari'ah compliant healthcare services can be defined as healthcare services, offered by the service providers (healthcare institutions), which suitable to the needs of Muslim patients while at the same time fulfilling the standards sets by the international organization for medical services. In the Malaysian perspective, the establishment of the institution must be based on the protection of the Maqasid al-Shari'ah (Majdah Zawawi and Khadijah Othman, 2018). Aside from that, the hospital management should also ensure hospital facilities, patient care, customer service, human resource, food and beverage products, drugs administration, and medical devices (if applicable and necessary), are in line with the Shari'ah requirements.

In Malaysia, certification for Shari'ah compliance is done under MS (Malaysian Standard) 1900 Shariah-Based Quality Management System. The standard specifies requirements for a Shariah-compliant quality management system. Thus, ensuring the incorporation of appropriate and universally-accepted values in the quality management process of organization. The standard also includes halal aspects of delivering products and services. Among others, the MS 1900 Shariah-based Quality Management System ensure that universal values of justice, honesty, truthfulness, sincerity, timeliness and discipline are integrated into your quality management practices; place greater emphasis on ethical standards in business processes; and receive independent assurance that your organisation's processes and practices are following Shariah principles (MS 1900).

***Shariah Eligibility Criteria for Ms 1900 Certification Scheme:***

Under the MS1900 Shariah-based Quality Management System, Item 1.2 stated the criteria before any application for certification can be made. These are as follows:

The organization which core business is related to the following activities is NOT eligible to apply for MS 1900 certification:

- i) Manufacture or sale of non-halal products or related products for example selling liquor and pork;
- ii) Gambling and Gaming;
- iii) Pornography;
- iv) Entertainment activities that are non-permissible according to Shariah;
- v) Stockbroking or share trading in Shariah non-compliant securities/ companies;
- vi) Other activities deemed non permissible according to Shariah.

For organization which may also involve food, pharmaceuticals, it further stated that

a) For Food and Pharmaceutical industries, the products shall comply with Halal Standard in order to qualify for MS 1900 certification;

b) For the companies with activities comprising both permissible and non-permissible elements, two additional criteria are considered:

- i) The public perception or image of the company must be good and
- ii) The core activities of the companies are important and considered ‘*maslahah*’ (benefit in general) to the Muslim ummah (nation) and the country and the non-permissible element is very small and involves matters such as ‘*ummul balwa*’ (common plight and difficult to avoid), ‘*uruf*’ (custom) and the rights of the non-Muslim community which are accepted by Muslim (SIRIM QAS), 2017).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The growing concerned among the Muslim patient to choose a Sharia’h compliant products and services has created the venue for the halal medical tourism market. Malaysia being the pioneer in global halal industry has in place relevant infrastructure that could be used as a reference for the development of Halal medical tourism hospital. As such, stakeholders and the authorities should be proactive, and play an important role in establishing the halal medical

tourism segment in Malaysia. Halal medical tourism should be made as one of the National Key Result Area (NKRA) as well as the National Key Economic Area (NKEA). The Shari'ah compliant healthcare services should not just be made available at the private hospital, but also practice at government hospitals. The hospital management, on the other hand, should take into consideration several factors which are needed in order to build their reputation as a successful halal medical tourism hospital. It is believed that, the availability of certified and accredited halal medical tourism hospital, may offer a new medical tourism attraction to Malaysia. Figure 1 below, highlights certain attributes for halal medical tourism hospital.

NO	Attributes	Remarks	Related Documentation/Certification
1	Shariah Compliant Medical Etiquettes	Staff SOP Client's Charter	MS1900 Shariah-Based Quality Management System
2	Availability of Medical Staff of the Same Gender	*if/when requested by patient	MS1900 Shariah-Based Quality Management System
3	Muslim Friendly Staff (regardless whether the staff is a Muslim or Non-Muslim)	able to help Muslim patient to perform ablution  -able to provide Muslim friendly information	MS1900 Shariah-Based Quality Management System
4	Muslim Friendly Services (Already practice by many of private and government hospitals)	-Halal Menu -Prayer facilities -Spiritual support (Muslim Chaplin) -Janazah Management -counsellor/social worker	1.MS1500: Standards for Halal Food & beverages  2.MS1900 Shariah-Based Quality Management System  3.MS2610

5	Right Of Information: Halal status of medicine; and medical devices	**if/when requested by patient	<p>1.ISO13485: Medical devices – Quality Management Systems,</p> <p>2.MS2424: Halal Pharmaceutical</p> <p>3.Malaysia Halal Medical Device Standard MS 2636: 2019 (MS 2636 standard is a voluntary basis and a value-added guideline to the industry to serve the users requiring halal affirmation. This standard refers to halal medical device that based on organic material, chemical and biological that from animal origin. This new standard specifies the requirements in the manufacturing and handling of medical devices and covers products such as: surgical mesh, contact lens, dental floss, dialysis solution, water injection, suture, humidifier, wound wash, eye lubricant, bone graft.</p>
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Fig 1: Ideal Attributes of Shari'ah compliant Medical Tourism Hospital



## CONCLUSION

The growing concern among the Muslim patient to choose a Sharia'h compliant products and services has created the venue for the Shari'ah compliant healthcare services. This had resulted into the growth of halal medical tourism sector. Halal medical tourism industry has a big potential and may be able to attract more Muslim travellers, nevertheless, among the main challenge faced by these healthcare institutions is there is no coordination and standardization of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the staff and medical practitioners to rely on to ensure that they are actually complying with various Shari'ah requirements. Based on the current practice, each hospital developed its own standard for their internal usage. It is timely that the relevant authority should take to stream line the current practices.

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