

USING A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK TO ANALYZE MEDICAL TOURISM IN CROATIA

Christine A. Lai, SUNY Buffalo State, Buffalo New York, U.S.A.
Ingrid Prkacin, Clinical Hospital Merkur, Zagreb, Croatia

[dx.doi.org/10.18374/EJBR-16-1.2](https://doi.org/10.18374/EJBR-16-1.2)

ABSTRACT

Twenty years after Croatia's civil war and two years after its admission into the European Union, the Croatian medical industry is seeking to increase revenues needed to support its national healthcare system. The purpose of this study is to identify current trends and opportunities in the medical tourism industry, and to explore the possibility of an expanded medical tourism industry in the country of Croatia from the perspective of medical physicians practicing in Croatia. A semi-structured interview format was utilized to allow local medical physicians employed by a public hospital to freely discuss their impressions and opinions regarding the strengths of Croatian health care and possible opportunities in the area of medical tourism. Overall, while this study's participants possess a positive attitude toward development of a Croatian medical tourism industry Croatia's post-Communism environment presents unique challenges for the implementation and growth of the medical tourism industry. This paper concludes with suggestions for Croatian policy makers.

Keywords: *medical tourism, qualitative methodology, tourism development, Croatia*