

DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH TOURISM IN THE RESORT REGIONS OF THE LEADING COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE

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The main types of health tourism are considered, the main functional components of resorts are defined: wellness tourism establishments and special institutions and facilities for medical use. They, in turn, are further divided into subspecies. It was found that the health tourism market changes every year due to new classifications and newly developed tourist services for tourists. While retaining its foundational principles, medical tourism continues to evolve, introducing diverse specialized programs for rehabilitation and flexible recovery plans. Based on the regional analysis, Germany has been found to dominate the market for a long time. The development of medical and health tourism in Europe has led to the compilation of a 2022 ranking of the most visited spa centers, with several located in Western Europe. A feature of health tourism services in the countries of Western Europe is the infrastructure, which is also supported and updated thanks to profits from other sectors of the countries' tourism market. On the territory of the countries of Western Europe, there are world-famous objects of medical and health tourism, which is one of the reasons for the demand of tourists in these countries. Also, this region provides a variety of professional services and tourist products, which are in wide demand in the global market of medical and health tourism. The statistical indicators of the health care market are determined and the statistical data of tourist flows to the countries of Western Europe are given, as well as the rating of health care facilities of Western countries, which are leaders in the European and World rankings, was created. According to the data, statistics of the best medical and health facilities in Western Europe and the World were created, where France takes the first place, the institution – this rating includes other countries of Western Europe, among them Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. According to The Global Wellness Economy: Country Rankings of 2023, the top of the largest markets in Europe was created – the first place is occupied by Germany – 223.9 billion dollars, the second place is Great Britain – 158.4 billion dollars, the third place – France – 133.1 billion dollars. It has been determined that there are about 900 spas in Germany, including mineral, mud, climatic, marine and hydrotherapy resorts, as well as 700 ski resorts. The French market consists of 625 spas and 249 ski resorts. Switzerland has more than 300 ski resorts, including Davos and St. Moritz. In Austria, there are famous balneological resorts of Badgastein, where radon sources are used. Austria has more than 400 ski resorts, some of which are world-famous. More than 300 ski resorts are located in Switzerland.

Keywords: medical and health tourism, resort, medical and health facilities, educational and health tour, countries of Western Europe.

РОЗВИТОК ЛІКУВАЛЬНО-ОЗДОРОВЧОГО ТУРИЗМУ В КУРОРТНИХ РЕГІОНАХ ПРОВІДНИХ КРАЇН ЗАХІДНОЇ ЄВРОПИ

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Проаналізовано сучасний стан лікувально-оздоровчого туризму в курортних регіонах провідних країн Західної Європи. Визначено вплив окремих чинників на розвиток даної галузі туризму. Створено рейтинг країн Західної Європи, які впливають на розвиток лікувально-оздоровчого туризму на глобальному ринку. Проаналізовано фактори, що впливають на стан розвитку лікувально-оздоровчого туризму в країнах Західної Європи. Визначено доходи від лікувально-оздоровчого туризму країн Західної Європи. Виявлено, що ринок лікувально-оздоровчого туризму з кожним роком змінюється через нові класифікації туристичних послуг для туристів. Лікувально-оздоровчий туризм розвивається та урізноманітнює нові спеціальні програми для пацієнтів, які потребують реабілітаційних послуг та більш гнучких підходів до тривалості лікування та реабілітації власного здоров'я. Виявлено, що Німеччина домінує на досліджуваному ринку лікувально-оздоровчого туризму протягом тривалого часу. Визначено індикатори лікувально-оздоровчого туризму та наведено статистичні дані потоків туристів до країн Західної Європи, а також створено рейтинг лікувально-оздоровчих закладів країн, які є лідерами в рейтингах Європи та світу. Виокремлено найкращі лікувально-оздоровчі заклади країн Західної Європи (де перше місце займає Франція).

Ключові слова: лікувально-оздоровчий туризм, курорт, лікувально-оздоровчі заклади, пізнавально-оздоровчий тур, країни Західної Європи.

FORMULATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL PROBLEM

Health and wellness tourism occupies a leading position in improving the health and well-being of the population through recreation, health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation following illnesses. The integration of modern equipment and innovative technologies in health and wellness tourism, as well as in the spa and resort industry, provides facilities with new tourism value in the global tourism market.

Western Europe leads the global market in health and medical tourism services. Owing to their well-developed infrastructure, health and wellness facilities in these countries deliver professional tourism services. The application of innovative technologies, advanced treatment methods, and the availability of a sufficient number of specialists enable Western European countries to maintain leadership in the health and wellness sector within the global tourism market [8].

ANALYSIS OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON THE RESEARCH TOPIC

The study of health and wellness tourism and the spa and resort sector has been undertaken by both domestic and international researchers, including L.V. Melnyk, V.I. Novynka, V.O. Pavlenko, O.O. Lyubytseyeva, V.F. Kifyak, O.O. Beydyk, and M.Y. Rutytskyi, among others.

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The objective of this research is to perform a statistical analysis of indicators that define the following: the number of wellness facilities in resort regions, the ranking of leading Western European countries in the global health and wellness sector, and the expenditures and revenues of markets in Western European countries as a potential benchmark for Ukraine.

PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN MATERIAL

The development of health and wellness tourism began evolving into a modern concept thanks to Europeans during the 16th and 17th centuries. Knowledge of the therapeutic properties of marine waters and favorable climatic conditions facilitated the establishment of the first resorts, which were predominantly visited by the elite [8].

The concept of resorts originated in the United Kingdom and subsequently spread to France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. Among the nations that actively developed resort activities and became leaders in the European health and wellness tourism market are Germany, France, Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom. These countries have a long-standing tradition of providing high-quality medical services and are renowned for their advanced medical technologies and expertise [8].

Balneological spa and resort facilities have been utilized for treating a variety of conditions, including dermatological, gastrointestinal, and musculoskeletal disorders. In continental Europe, the active development of cities was accompanied by the identification and utilization of natural therapeutic resources. For example, in Switzerland, alongside the development of balneological resources, modern resort cities such as St. Moritz, Lausanne, Interlaken, and Baden emerged. In Austria, Vienna saw similar growth, and in Germany, cities like Baden-Baden and Wiesbaden became prominent [2].

Resorts in these countries provide a range of therapeutic and wellness services, including:

1. Treatment and medical rehabilitation, disease prevention using natural therapeutic resources, traditional and non-traditional methods, addressing residual effects of surgical interventions, reducing recovery time for injuries, correcting dysfunctions, and preventing pathological processes from progressing to chronic stages.
2. Development and implementation of new effective diagnostic and treatment methods.
3. Active collaboration with relevant research institutions and the conduction of scientific-practical work to develop and implement innovative treatment methods.
4. Strengthening the material and technical base of therapeutic and wellness facilities.
5. Provision of paid therapeutic and wellness services in accordance with legally established procedures [3;4;7;8].

According to the 2023 Scimago rankings, a statistical evaluation of the top health and wellness facilities in Western Europe and globally placed France's Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale in the first position. Other Western European countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg also featured in the rankings (table 1) [5].

The development of railways significantly increased the flow of people to more remote coastal and seaside resorts, providing a unique and escapist environment away from urbanization. This advancement also facilitated the opportunity to engage in what was regarded as a healthy pursuit of seeking sunlight [3;4;5]. A village known as Ville d'Eaux, or the "City of Waters," gained fame across Europe in 1326 when iron-rich hot springs were discovered in the region. It was here that the term "spa" was first used, originating from the Roman phrase «salude per aqua», meaning "health through water" [3].

Table 1.

Ranking of Western European Countries in Global Health and Wellness Facility Ratings, 2023

Country	Global Ranking	Ranking within Western Europe	National Ranking	Year of Established
France	1	1	1	1964
Netherlands	3	3	11	1983
Germany	4	5	5	1710
Switzerland	6	7	19	1948
Belgium	9	12	21	1972
Austria	11	15	12	1980
Luxembourg	12	17	1	1988

Source: compiled by the authors based on [5]

The development of health and wellness tourism in Western European countries dates back to the 14th century. It has its own distinct characteristics shaped by the gradual emergence of typologies based on tourists' needs. A significant feature of health and wellness tourism in Western Europe is the enhancement and refinement of tourism services and spa treatments provided by specialized professionals in spa centers and other wellness establishments (fig. 1) [8].

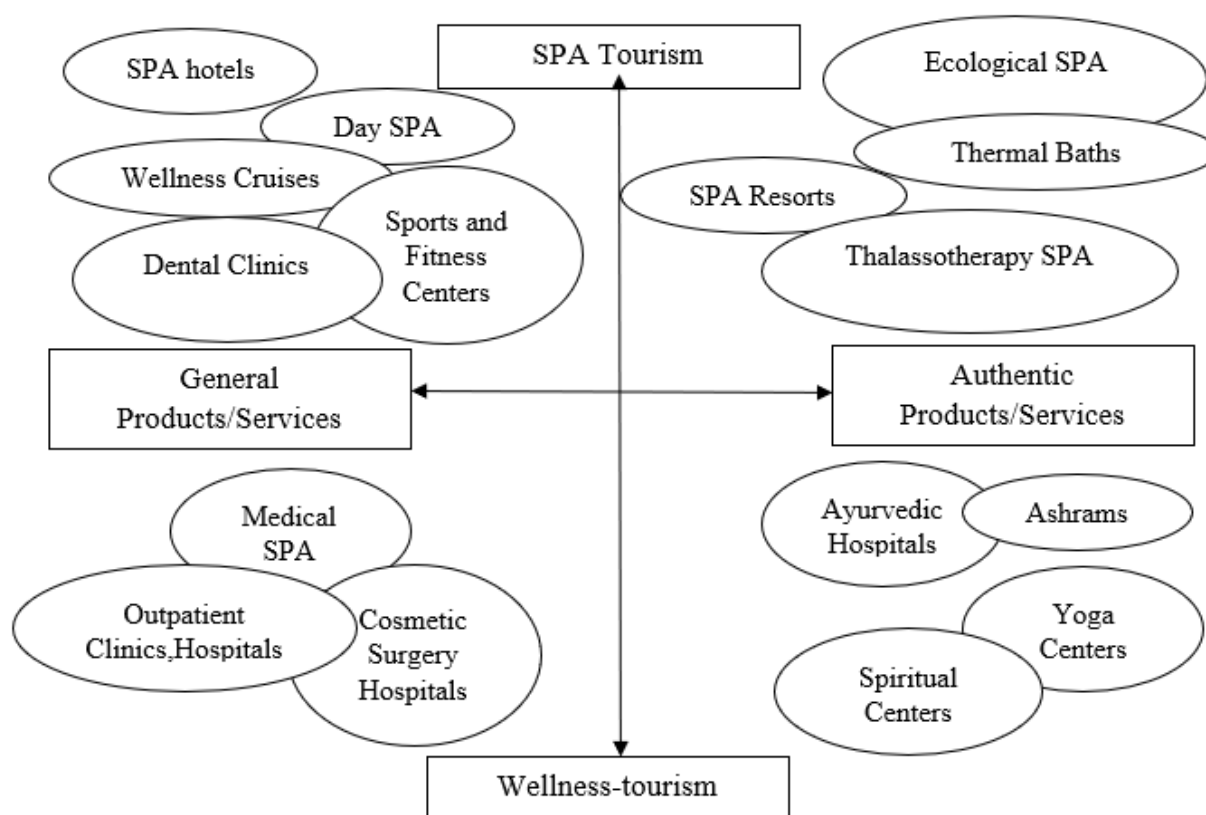


Fig. 1. Typology of Wellness and Spa Services in Western European Countries

Source: compiled by the authors based on [8]

The services offered by the Western European wellness tourism market include massages, body care treatments, fitness programs, and other procedures. Regional analysis shows that Germany has maintained a leading position in the health and wellness tourism market for an extended period, followed by France in second place [1]. The evolution of health and wellness tourism in specialized establishments across Europe has led to the compilation of a list of the most visited spa centers as of 2020. Among them, four are located in Western Europe, specifically in Switzerland and Germany (fig. 2) [6].

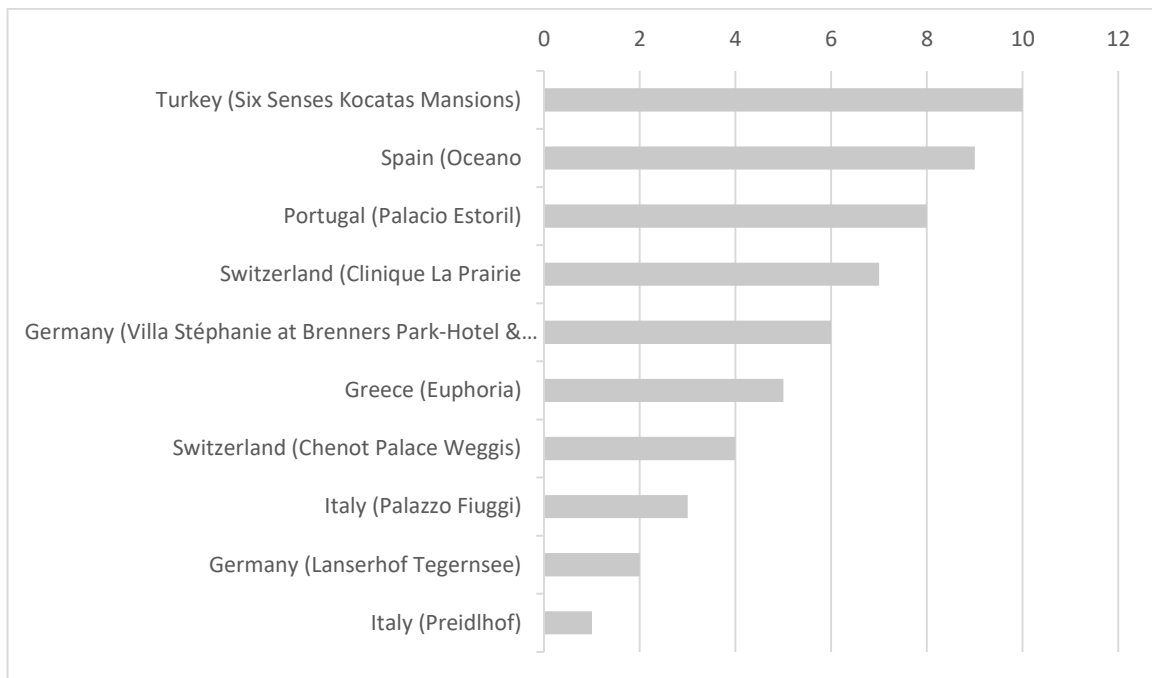


Fig. 2. Top Spa Centers Most Popular in Europe in 2020

Source: compiled by the authors based on [6]

Wellness hotels and resort spa centers remain the most popular health tourism products across all key regions in Europe in 2023 (table 2) [2].

Table 2.

Services and Products of Health and Wellness Tourism Across World Regions, 2023

Services and Products	Key Regions
Therapeutic Services	Central and Eastern Europe
Spiritual and Holistic Services	Far East, Southeast Asia
Wellness Services and Spa Centers	Africa, Central and South America, Middle East, Australia, New Zealand, and South Pacific
Lifestyle-Based Services	Northern, Southern, and Western Europe, as well as North America

Source: compiled by the authors based on [2]

At present, this type of tourism is undergoing development and experiencing significant changes. A healthy lifestyle is becoming increasingly appealing to recreation seekers, which has led health tourism centers to transform into multifunctional facilities designed to meet the diverse needs of visitors [2;4]. The majority of visitors to such health and wellness facilities are middle-aged and elderly individuals. Another factor driving the growth of health tourism is the expansion of the tourism services market, which annually incorporates new segments of the consumer market. Consequently, the tourism product in this sector must evolve and adapt to achieve financial objectives and satisfy the needs of tourists [8]. The wellness tourism market changes annually due to new classifications and newly developed tourist services tailored for visitors. While retaining its core principles, health tourism diversifies by introducing specialized programs for patients requiring rehabilitation services and more flexible approaches to treatment and recovery durations.

CONCLUSIONS

A distinctive feature of health and wellness tourism services in Western European countries is the infrastructure, which is maintained and modernized through revenues generated from other sectors of the tourism market. Western Europe is home to renowned resorts offering health and wellness tourism, which serves as a key driver of visitor demand. This region provides a diverse array of professional services and tourism products, which are in high demand in the global health and wellness tourism market. The development of health and wellness tourism, which traces its origins to ancient times, has evolved gradually in response to the needs of tourists. Globally, over 60% of the wellness economy is concentrated in four sectors: healthy eating, nutrition and weight management, personal hygiene and beauty, and physical activity. This trend is particularly evident in large countries with medium to high income levels, where tourism does not dominate the economy.

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