

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology
of Egypt / Egyptology

FACTORS THAT AFFECT MEDICAL TOURISM AND SELECTING OF MASHHAD AS A TOURIST DESTINATION BY THE IRAQI TOURISTS

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Ali Tuama Hassan Al-Bdairi, Ali Abbood awdaa. Mohammad Ghaffari. Factors that Affect Medical Tourism and Selecting of Mashhad as a Tourist Destination by the Iraqi Tourists-- Palarch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology 17(12), 719-732. ISSN 1567-214x.

Keywords: Medical Tourism, Medical Services, Tourist Destination.

Abstract

The study aims at analyzing the most important factors that affect medical tourism as well as investigating the reasons behind the selecting of the holy city of Mashhad as a medical tourism destination by Iraqi tourists. For achieving the aims of the study, sixty questionnaire forms were distributed to a sample of Iraqi travelers and tourists, and they were fully regained. The investigation of the research is according to the method of the descriptive and analytical approach and in order to prove the hypothesis of the research, which includes the existence of an influence relationship between the number of Iraqi visitors and the multiplicity of specialized medical centers in the holy city of Mashhad. After the analysis and the explanation the results of the field study, it confirms the research hypothesis that there is a relationship between the axes of the study, which is a relation of engagement and effect of a high significance between the factors of the medical tourism and the tourist destination. The study concludes that the low cost of treatment and surgeries is one of the main reasons for the influx of Iraqi patients to the hospitals of the holy city of Mashhad. Then, it recommends that there is a necessity for establishing medical centers and specialized hospitals that serve patients suffer from different diseases in different Iraqi cities as is the case in Iranian cities.

INTRODUCTION

Nearly during the end of the next five years, it is expected that the most economical incomes of countries will be from medical tourism [1] since a lot

of countries recently invested the medical tourism as a source of economic development, especially in the last three decades [2]. The incomes of the medical tourism are about (14-16 %) of the general income of tourism. The rate of the international tourism increases from 528 millions of tourists in 1995 to 980 million in 2011. International statistics confirm that medical tourism has raised its financial returns to more than half a trillion dollars in 2012 and they are subject to an increase of 9.9% annually during the last five years to achieve 678.5 billion dollars in 2017, which constitutes 16% of the total tourism incomes [3].

The many wars and political crises in Iraq led to the degradation of many services, On top of which is the medical services, which are considered one of the most important services that the individual needs on a daily basis, which led to selecting alternative treatment destinations. The most important of which is the holy city of Mashhad due to many positive factors that make the Iraqi tourist consider it as his/her premier choice if compared with other competitive destinations. The number of Iraqi tourists to Mashhad is annually increased for two purposes: first, they visit the holy shrine of the eighth Imam Ali Bin Musa Al-Ridha (Peace be upon him), and second, they join its medical centers which are well-known of their distinguished medical staff that matches foreign medical staffs in its advanced medical capabilities and requirements, especially in the field of ophthalmology, plastic surgery, joints, hair transplantation, etc.

There is no doubt that medical tourism became one of the most important sorts of tourism around the world because of their huge financial incomes which enhances the national economy as well as pushing the wheel of urban development, and the economic and tourist progress of most countries. The holy city of Mashhad was selected as a field of the empirical study because it is the most favourable destination of the Iraqi tourists.

The holy city of Mashhad is well-known as it has a leading rank in religious tourism as well as it being an important destination for medical tourism due to the establishing of many hospitals and medical centers specialized in many different medical fields. In addition, it has various entertainment places as well as moderate temperatures in summer. Therefore, the problem of the study can be presented more precisely by answering the following inquiries:

1. What is the reason behind the increasing number of Iraqi visitors to medical tourism in the holy city of Mashhad?
2. Is there a relationship between the factors affecting the medical tourism in choosing the holy city of Mashhad?

The significance of the study is highlighted because it is one of the studies that dealt with an important and vital topic that the local library lacks, and there is an increasing international and regional trend in developing medical tourism in their countries, in addition to the fact that the study dealt with a city famous for religious tourism before it was known as medical tourism.

This study can contribute by clarifying the factors affecting medical tourism, which in turn aims to increase local interest in medical centers and develop them in all cities of Iraq.

The main objectives of the study are:

1. Shedding light on the important aspects of medical tourism.
2. Focusing on the most important problems and obstacles that forbid the travel of Iraqis to the holy city of Mashhad for treatment.
3. Promoting the city of Mashhad in tourism, construction and medicine.
4. Studying the most important factors that make the holy city of Mashhad an international tourism destination.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Definition of Medical Tourism

Medical tourism is “those places in which mineral water wells are available, which have certain natural medical properties. Either because of the sea, the climate, or the land, and they have suitable spatial properties that allow them to reduce, treat or prevent diseases.” [4]. Pollock defined it as the recreational activities that the individual undertakes outside of work and housing through his use of tourist resorts and their tourism and therapeutic services to maintain his vitality and promote his health [5].

It is defined as the movement of the individual from his permanent residence to another area with the aim of preventing or treating a disease. The reasons for his recovery may be environmental based on the elements of the natural environment such as the sun, sea and lake water, sand, medicinal mud, mineral and sulfur sources, or other such things. It may be medical, depending on modern facilities, devices and medical experience. [6]

Furthermore, medical tourism is distinguished in the tourism sector and its investments, present and in the future [7]. In addition, places of medical tourism are recognized destinations, as they constitute a center for the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of health diseases, which has been confirmed by medical studies. [8]

Accordingly, medical tourism includes three subtypes: preventive tourism, hospital tourism, and medical tourism. Medical tourism is one of the ancient traditional tourism patterns; as it was practiced by humans since a long time ago. It was practiced by the Pharaohs, Greeks and Romans, and then it began to develop consequently until it has now become an important tourism pattern. It has many types and resorts, as well as the various means and methods of treatment used in it according to the type of disease and the condition of the patient. Nowadays, many countries of the world tend to pay attention to medical tourism and work to develop it due to the increase in demand for it and the abundance of economic benefits resulting from it. It occupies an advanced position among the rest of the other tourism types, as it came in third place after leisure tourism. [6] and business tourism. It is registered 10% of the total global tourism movement.

Types of Medical Tourism

There are many types of medical tourism:

1. Preventive Tourism

These are tourist trips in which the participants seek to raise the percentage of normal performance of physical, mental and even psychological forces, by going to places where the components of natural treatment are increasing, for example mineral or sulfur water, sand or mud formations [8]. Preventive tourism can practice all activities that can renew a person's vitality, improve his psyche and revitalize him, as well as develop his culture.

2. Hospital Tourism

It means that the patient resides in various sanatoriums or health resorts that have special medical facilities to take care of public health, such as if the patient visits places where sulfur or mineral water sources are available, as well as mud baths, radiant sand or hot water springs, all of that with the aim of hospitalization and rest by natural therapeutic methods, especially from psychological, dermatological and respiratory diseases [9].

3. Medical Tourism

This type is the subject of research, and the tourist aims to travel for treatment from an organic disease, or to perform a specific surgery in a hospital or specialized medical center. [9].

Perhaps the most important surgeries that are in high demand in medical tourism are: plastic surgeries, including liposuction, in addition to eye, dental and especially cosmetic dentistry that are not covered by health insurance in rich countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. As a result of this demand, medical tourism companies emerge that work to connect patients on the one hand and hospitals on the other hand, as well as work to move the underlying medical tourism demand, and among the most famous of these companies:

1. Surgeon and Safary in South Africa.
2. Antigua Smiles, which combines travel for plastic surgery.
3. Gergeous Getways, in Australia, specializes in tourist travel for cosmetic surgery in Thailand and Malaysia. [10]

One of the most important factors that helps the activity of medical tourism in the world is the presence of a great demand for this type of medical treatment in countries, especially in developed countries, due to the high cost of treatment on the one hand, and the growth of the medical level in some developing countries clearly on the other hand. In addition, some provide the service at cheap prices, as is the case in Thailand, India and Iran. Accordingly, the destination for Iraqi patients to travel to Mashhad in Iran is chosen.

The Importance of Medical Tourism

The importance of medical tourism at the state and tourist level lies in the following:

1. It contributes to revitalizing the health and hotel sector.
2. It activates the buying and selling movement and the economic wheel.
3. It contributes to revitalizing the investment process in the health and hotel sector.
4. It helps to provide new job opportunities, especially in countries suffering from an increase in unemployment.
5. It serves as a means of promoting its products and other tourist attractions for those countries.
6. It provides training opportunities.
7. It contributes to achieving large tourism income, unlike the tourist areas that depend on water and climate only, and thus it supports the national economy [11].
8. It allows the beneficiary to obtain medical and hospital services of high quality and within international specifications and at competitive prices.
9. It provides the tourist or his companions with the opportunity to visit tourist attractions and enjoy enjoyable trips during his medical and hospital trip. [12]

Aims of Medical Tourism

There are many aims of medical tourism:

1. The accommodation and treatment are in places that have a healthy and pure atmosphere for the purpose of physical therapy, bathing in mineral water or drinking if the water is suitable for treating some stomach diseases.
2. Renewal and physical, intellectual and psychological rehabilitation.
3. Enjoying spending free time to relax or refreshment after recovery from a specific disease or psychological crisis. [4]

The study believes that attracting qualified medical personnel, using advanced medical technology and improving the quality of services at competitive prices compared to developed and regional countries, will contribute to the recruitment of Arab and foreign arrivals for the purpose of treatment and tourism.

Aspects of Medical Tourism

Medical tourism depends on the provision of specific natural properties and ingredients found in the environment, which are as follows:

1. Natural resources: (mineral and sulfur water, baths, natural climate, etc).
2. Safety and security: (security stability and means of safety). [13]
3. Tourism services: (means of communication, tourist and health guides, translators, means of transportation, etc).
4. Ease of access: (airports, timing requirements, etc. [14]
5. Providing specialized staffs: (doctors, therapists, specialized medical centers, etc).

Holy City of Mashhad

It has the grave of the eighth Shiite imam, Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha, peace be upon him. According to the latest statistics, its population has reached three

million, and it is the largest Iranian city after the capital, Tehran. The sanctity of this city is intended by Muslim visitors (especially the Shiite community) from various parts of the world to be blessed by visiting the shrine of the infallible Imam (PBUH) [15].

The spirituality of the holy place is closely related to religious tourism and with the blessings of the infallible Imam. The inhabitants of this city live with their business and trade, especially in those places that are close to the holy shrine. For all this, the city is considered a center of attraction for domestic and foreign tourism.

Factors of Selection Mashhad

There are certain factors affecting the selection of the holy city of Mashhad as a medical tourism destination. At the present time, tourist cities are developing, especially those that are famous for medical tourism, as they include special centers in medical research, water and climate properties, and many other means of treatment. Each of these tourist cities specializes in treating specific diseases [16].

The issue of medical tourism is one of the new topics, as this type of tourism is closely related with treatment and medicine. It improves according to the increasing number of patients and treatment recipients, and travelers who are tourists and patients at the same time. The most important indicators that are mainly adopted for choosing the city of Mashhad as a medical tourism destination are:

1. Low cost of treatment.
2. Easy access to hospitals and medical facilities.
3. The presence of advanced medical staff in all specialties.
4. Availability of advanced medical equipment with very advanced capabilities.
5. The presence of secondary and administrative medical staff with high experience.
6. Providing a place to stay for patients in hospitals and feeling reassured near the shrine of Imam Ali bin Musa Al-Ridha (peace be upon him).

Hypotheses Development

The study was based on one main hypothesis from which sub hypotheses emerged, as follows:

The main hypothesis: To what extent does the increasing number of Iraqi visitors respond to medical tourism in the holy city of Mashhad?

And the following sub-hypotheses emerged from it:

1. There is a statistically significant relationship between the increase in the number of tourists and the availability of specialized and advanced medical staffs in the hospitals of Mashhad.
2. There is a statistically significant relationship between the increase in the number of tourists and the availability of specialized and advanced medical equipment in the hospitals of Mashhad.

3. There is a statistically significant relationship between the increase in the number of visitors and the decrease in the cost of treatment in the hospitals of Mashhad.
4. There is a statistically significant relationship between the increase in the number of visitors and the medical care available in the hospitals of Mashhad.
5. Population and Samples of the Study.

The study included visitors to the holy city of Mashhad from Iraqi patients, with a hypothetical reality of (60) patients per day. And they were randomly selected in a group of health centers and hospitals in the holy city of Mashhad.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted (the descriptive and analytical approach) as it is appropriate for the kind of studies. In order to understand the aspects of the study, and according to its nature, the following approaches were used:

Theoretical References

They are represented by Arabic and foreign books, periodicals, letters, university theses, and the Internet.

The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed to a sample of Iraqi tourists coming to the holy city of Mashhad and it was fully regained. The questionnaire is designed according to two parts. The first part focused on the identification information and the second included (37) paragraphs which are specialized questions. The five-year Likert scale (Very Good - Good - Medium - Bad - Very Bad) was used to answer these questions and this was clarified using the statistical system (SPSS).

Statistical Methods

In analyzing the data on the subject of the study, the study relied on a set of statistical means to test the study hypotheses using the statistical system (SPSS) as follows:

- Arithmetic mean
- Standard deviation
- Relative importance
- Correlation analysis (Pearson coefficient)

FINDINGS

Characteristics of Sample Subjects

Sixty questionnaires, which included a sample of some Iraqi travelers and tourists coming to the holy city of Mashhad, were distributed and they are regained all. After reviewing and checking the forms, it was found that they were valid for the purposes of statistical analysis which means that they fulfill all the basic elements of the analysis. The following table represents a description characteristics of the study sample:

Table 1. Analysis of characteristics of study sample

Gender	Male	Female		
	36	24		
Educational level	Preparatory	Diploma	Bachelor	Master
	4	16	28	12
Age	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 and more
	11	22	24	3
Number of visits	8	20	30	2

It is clear from table (1) above that the research sample consists of (60) sixty individuals, most of them hold a bachelor's degree, and the rest of the sample members have different scientific qualifications, and that the age of the sample members is between 40-49 years, and it is considered a reasonable indicator for most of the sample members of the scientific potential and the mentality to answer reliably and objectively for all paragraphs of the questionnaire.

A Statement of the Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

To demonstrate the validity and reliability of the questionnaire of the study tool, it used the equation (Cronbach's Alpha). Table No. (2) clarifies the statement of the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for measuring validity and reliability of the questionnaire

Axes of questionnaire	Number of questions in each axis	Degree of reliability
Advanced Medical Staffs	8	0.957
Availability of medical equipment	6	0.960
Low cost of treatment	7	0.762
Medical care	10	0.954
Tourist destination	6	0.943
Total reliability of the questionnaire	37	0.937

It is evident from the above table that the general validity and stability coefficient of the questionnaire for the study axes is high and reaches (0.937) for the total of (37) paragraphs of the questionnaire, and the stability of the questionnaires also ranges between (0.960) as a maximum and (0,762) as a minimum. This indicates that the questionnaire can be relied upon due to its high degree of stability according to the Nanli scale, which was approved (0.70) as a minimum stability. (Nunnally & Bemstein, 1994:264-265).

The Validity of the Paragraphs Made of the Axes of the Questionnaire

The validity of the paragraphs of the axes of the questionnaire was verified by calculating the Pearson coefficient between the scores of each of the (5) paragraphs of the axes, using the SPSS statistical program. It concludes that all the paragraphs of the first axis have an internal link with the axis to which they belong and also indicates the validity and stability of the paragraphs of the above mentioned axis (** 0,855). For the second axis, the minimum correlation coefficients were (** 0,946) in contrast, the upper limit was (** 0,965). It concludes that all the paragraphs of the second axis have an internal

connection with the axis to which they belong and also indicates the validity and stability of the paragraphs of the above mentioned axis. For the third axis, it concludes that that all the paragraphs of the third axis have an internal link with the axis to which they belong and also indicates the validity and stability of the paragraphs of the above mentioned axis.

Table 3. Correlation coefficient between every degree of every paragraph and the degree of the axis

Axis	Paragraphs of Axis	Correlation coefficient	Function value
First axis (The advanced medical staffs)	1	**0.844	0.000
	2	**0.832	0.000
	3	**0.810	0.000
	4	**0.848	0.000
	5	**0.789	0.000
	6	**0.749	0.000
	7	**0.855	0.000
	8	**0.800	0.000
Second axis (The availability of medical equipment)	1	**0.951	0.000
	2	**0.946	0.000
	3	**0.951	0.000
	4	**0.963	0.000
	5	**0.965	0.000
	6	**0.950	0.000
Third axis (Low cost of treatment)	1	**0.755	0.000
	2	**0.518	0.000
	3	**0.645	0.000
	4	**0.700	0.000
	5	**0.749	0.000
	6	**0.779	0.000
	7	**0.683	0.000
Fourth axis (Medical care)	1	**0.713	0.000
	2	**0.774	0.000
	3	**0.903	0.000
	4	**0.875	0.000
	5	**0.895	0.000
	6	**0.950	0.000
	7	**0.845	0.000
	8	**0.911	0.000
	9	**0.678	0.000
	10	**0.869	0.000
Fifth axis (Tourist destination)	1	**0.865	0.000
	2	**0.899	0.000
	3	**0.839	0.000
	4	**0.893	0.000
	5	**0.823	0.000
	6	**0.888	0.000

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

For the fourth axis, it concludes that all the paragraphs of the fourth axis have an internal link with the axis to which they belong and also indicates the validity and stability of the paragraphs of the above mentioned axis. For the fifth axis, it concludes that all the paragraphs of the fifth axis have an internal link with the axis to which they belong and also indicates the validity and stability of the paragraphs of the above mentioned axis.

According to the stability of the paragraphs of the axes classified in the previous tables, it becomes clear that the study procedure (the questionnaire) is highly stable, which enables it to be reliable for the study sample.

Weighted Averages and Standard Deviations of the Research Axes and Variables

It will be relied upon the above table in using the weighted average of the answers of tourists and visitors coming to Mashhad to the questionnaire questions using the five-year Likert scale because the responses were five options for the purpose of knowing the direction of the respondents' opinions.

Table 8. An estimated balance according to the five-year Likert scale indicating its conversion into periods

Response	SMA	Period Length	Level
Very bad	1-1.79	0.79	Low
Bad	1.80-2.59	0.79	
Medium	2.60-3.39	0.79	Medium
Good	3.40-4.19	0.79	High
Very good	4.20-5.00	0.80	

Description of the Study Procedure

After distributing the research questionnaire to a sample of travelers and tourists coming to the holy city of Mashhad for the purpose of religious or medical tourism, its paragraphs were clarified and explained to them in order to obtain accurate answers about the entirety of its paragraphs. After they were filled out by them, the questionnaires were collected and analyzed, the percentage, standard deviations, arithmetic means, and relative importance were extracted and the answers of the sample members were calculated according to the following table:

Table 9. Frequencies, arithmetic means, standard deviations, and the relative importance of the paragraphs of the questionnaire

N.	Variables	Paragraphs agreement ratio	Very good	Good	Medium	Bad	Very Bad	SMA	Standard deviation	Percentage
		Variety in medical majors	27	26	5	2	0	4.3	0.76	86
		Doctors' wide fame	19	30	10	1	0	4.12	0.73	82.4
		Experience and skill of technicians	20	30	7	3	0	4.12	0.8	82.4
		Ongoing care by doctors	17	39	1	2	1	4.15	0.75	83
		Coordination and cooperation between doctors and nurses	9	44	4	2	1	3.97	0.71	79.4

		Nursing specialty (bandages, glaucoma) and others	25	27	7	0	1	4.25	0.79	85
		Ongoing care by nurses	19	35	5	0	1	4.18	0.72	83.6
Result of the variable members			163	254	46	11	6	4.16	0.78	83.2
2	Availability of medical equipment	Hospital laboratory and equipment capabilities	27	30	0	1	2	4.32	0.85	86.4
		Patient room equipment and facilities	31	25	1	0	3	4.35	0.93	87
		Equipment and capacity of the operating hall.	24	33	0	0	3	4.25	0.89	85
		Health status and cleanliness of hospitals	36	21	0	0	3	4.45	0.92	89
		Equipment needed for the intensive care room	33	24	0	2	1	4.43	0.8	88.6
		Ambulance equipment and capabilities	29	27	1	0	3	4.32	0.92	86.4
Result of the variable members			210	160	2	3	15	4.4	0.87	88
3	Low cost of treatment	Availability of medication in pharmacies	32	19	4	2	3	4.25	1.06	85
		Services provided to the patient's companion	14	33	4	2	7	3.75	1.19	75
		The cost of treatment compared to Iraq (hospital medication, analyzes) and others	3	20	33	2	2	3.33	0.77	66.6
		Costs associated with travelers' tours	5	15	36	2	2	3.32	0.81	66.4
		Costs associated with staying in Mashhad (hotel, accommodation, etc.)	5	11	42	0	2	3.28	0.75	65.6
		Travel costs outside the city	1	14	43	0	2	3.2	0.63	64
		Other costs such as city tours	3	4	48	2	3	3.03	0.71	60.6
Result of the variable members			63	116	210	10	21	3.45	0.95	69
4	Medical care	The elegance of the reception and guard staff	11	41	5	0	3	3.95	0.85	79
		Taking care of the patient's personal privacy	27	30	0	0	3	4.3	0.9	86
		Speed in opening the patient's file	10	45	2	0	3	3.98	0.81	79.6
		How doctors deal with patients	27	27	1	0	5	4.18	1.09	83.6
		How nurses treat patients	27	25	3	0	5	4.15	1.11	83
		Clarification of doctors for all inquiries directed by the patient	19	34	2	2	3	4.07	0.96	81.4
		Availability of translators or staff knowledge of the Arabic language	13	33	3	2	9	3.65	1.28	73
		The presence of Islamic laws and values in the corridors of hospitals	21	33	3	0	3	4.15	0.91	83
		The presence of the religious surroundings in the city	22	29	2	2	5	4.02	1.13	80.4
Taking care of legal issues in the delivery of medical services	19	33	5	0	3	4.08	0.92	81.6		
Result of the variable members			196	330	26	6	42	4.05	1.02	81
5	Tourist destination	Transportation system and transportation within the city.	23	32	2	0	3	4.2	0.91	84
		The quality of services provided for the tours.	23	29	5	0	3	4.15	0.95	83
		Modernization of services and hotel capabilities.	22	33	2	0	3	4.18	0.9	83.6
		Tourist attractions and entertainment places.	35	21	1	0	3	4.42	0.94	88.4
		Ease of obtaining an entry visa to the country (Iran).	18	34	5	1	2	4.08	0.86	81.6
		International transportation and transportation service (airport, train station).	23	27	6	0	4	4.08	1.04	81.6
Result of the variable members			144	176	21	1	18	4.19	0.94	83.8
Total results								4.40	0.97	80.6

DISCUSSION

The last table shows the responses of the study members through the percentages around the first axis on (the presence of advanced medical staffs), which came with an arithmetic mean (4.16), which indicates that the answers are compatible with the movement of the scale, and a standard deviation (0.78), which indicates the lack of the presence of differences or deviations between it and the arithmetic mean, as for the relative importance of the axis, it reached (83.2), and these results are acceptable and indicate that most of the sample members agree and were of the total (good), which indicates the presence of advanced medical staffs in the holy city of Mashhad.

The results of the second axis can be illustrated on (availability of medical equipment) from Table (9), where it came with an arithmetic mean (4.4), indicating that the answers correspond to the movement of the scale, and a standard deviation (0.87), which indicates that there are no differences or deviations. It is between it and the arithmetic mean, as for the relative importance of the axis, it reached (88), and these results are acceptable and indicate that most of the sample members agree and were of the total (very good), which indicates the availability of specialized and advanced medical equipment in the hospitals of Mashhad.

The results of the third axis are on (low cost of treatment) from Table (9) above, as it came with an arithmetic mean (3.45), which indicates that the answers correspond with the movement of the scale, and a standard deviation (0.95), which indicates that there are no differences or deviations between them and the mean. The arithmetic, as for the relative importance of the axis, it reached (69), and these results are acceptable and indicate that most of the sample members agree and were of the total (good), which indicates a decrease in the cost of treatment in Mashhad hospitals.

The results of the fourth axis are on (medical care) from the table (9) above, as it came with an arithmetic mean (4.05), which indicates that the answers correspond to the movement of the scale, and a standard deviation (1.02), which indicates that there are no differences or deviations between them and the arithmetic mean. As for the relative importance of the axis, it reached (81), and these results are acceptable and indicate that most of the sample members agree and were of the total (good), which supports this in the presence of (medical care available in hospitals in Mashhad).

The results of the fifth axis are on (tourist destination) from Table (9) above, as it came with an arithmetic mean (4.19), which indicates that the answers correspond to the movement of the scale, and a standard deviation (0.94), which indicates that there are no differences or deviations between it and the arithmetic mean. As for the relative importance of the axis, it reached (83.8), and these results are acceptable and indicate that most of the sample members agree and were of the total (good), which supports this acceptance, support and statement of the research problem on the response of the increasing number of Iraqi visitors to medical tourism in Iran and choosing the holy city of Mashhad as a tourist destination.

Average Response of all Sample Paragraphs

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the paragraphs of the questionnaire related to (factors affecting medical tourism and choosing the city of Mashhad as a tourist destination by Iraqi tourists). Table No. (9) shows that the trends of the research sample are positive towards all paragraphs because the arithmetic averages of the performance of the members of the study sample are greater of the means of the measurement tool (the hypothetical arithmetic mean equal to 3 of the five-point Likert scale), the standard deviation is less than half the arithmetic mean, and the relative importance is close and high, where the average response of the sample as a whole is (4.40) and the standard deviation of it is (0.97) and the relative importance is (0.97). 80.6) and the overall trend of the sample is (good).

The source: prepared by the two researchers depending on the electronic results of the calculator of the statistical programs.

CONCLUSION

According to its prior hypotheses, the study concludes the following:

1. The presence of advanced medical staffs in the holy hospitals of Mashhad encouraged many Iraqi patients to receive treatment there.
2. The availability of modern and high-quality medical equipment in the holy hospitals of Mashhad and the presence of specialized staff who play their role in working on these modern and advanced equipment, which led to the selection of the holy city of Mashhad as a treatment and tourist destination.
3. The low cost of treatment and surgical operations is one of the main reasons for the influx of Iraqi patients to the hospitals of the holy city of Mashhad.
4. Medical care for the patient is one of the most important motives that make the patient revisit and retreat at the same destination.
5. Whenever Iraqi patient compares between two treatment destinations, one of which is of a religious and sectarian nature and the other of a tourist nature, so the patient prefers the first to feel at ease near the holy shrines.

The study recommends the following:

1. The Iraqi Ministry of Health must take care of medical centers and hospitals, equipping them with the latest medical devices, and establishing specialized courses for medical workers and staffs to train on these equipment.
2. Creating a special system for each patient from the time he enters the hospital until he leaves, and the system is linked to all hospital units, making it easier for the patient to do so.
3. The Ministry of Health must allocate special funds to purchase modern medical devices and equipment and make them available in all hospitals in Iraq.
4. Taking care of the patient by providing all medical supplies, receiving, medical care, good treatment, and reducing treatment costs as much as possible.

5. Building and establishing specialized health centers and hospitals for all diseases in several Iraqi cities, as is the case in the holy city of Mashhad.
6. Adopting specialized laboratories for the Iraqi pharmaceutical industry with international standards and suitable prices.

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