The Impact of Medical Tourism to Nursing Services in Thailand

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Abstract

At present, the growth in medical tourism greatly due to the number of the foreign patients who treated in Thailand have increased every year. As the result to increase the medical staffs for services and increasing the quality of medical personnel is essential. Therefore, The objectives of this research is to study the impact on nursing service in medical tourism and to study the core competency in caring for patients with foreigners in the treatment. The research method was used document research and review the related literatures in 2004-2014. The results of research was found that the competency of nurse is not sufficient to service. The performance that need further include: functional competency and generic competency are called unit of competency.

Keywords: medical tourism, nursing service, nurse, medical staff, core competency
Background

According to the policy of medical service center of Asia resulting in the number of foreign customers increasing. The effect that there is a need to develop the potential of personnel services and employment increase. Such as, hiring talented personnel in foreign languages are provided. For example, Bumrungrad international hospital and Yanhee hospital were arranged the interpreters service over 10 language. The scope of medical foreign clients that used to be in a private hospital expanded to a government hospital. Such as, Siriraj hospital and Ramathibodi hospital are completed by cooperate with the company MEDS take the patient foreign to treatment in Thailand. By focusing on specific diseases, such as tumors of the uterus or heart surgery with the use of new technologies in the treatment. (Na Ranong 2011) Data from the comparative study of service system in different countries found that the service of foreign tourists, Thailand is concentrated in a few of the private hospital groups while Singapore has similar proportions between public and private hospitals (Pocock, &, Phua 2011). The direction of business expansion of health services resulting in the increasing rate of medical personnel needs, both public and private, especially those nursing position increases. The needs of nursing personnel still has increased continuously is caused from Thailand step into the ASEAN economic community is to create a market and production base of the same shared by the movement of goods, services, investment, skilled workers have more freedom. When comparing the number of nursing staffs, database of the 2000-2007 found that the country Thailand is 2.2 rate per population 1000 people. In the first 4 of ASEAN countries while the country, Brunei, Philippine, Singapore, in 6.1 6.1 4.4 rate per population 1000 following sequence. (Kanchanachitra et, Al, 2011) From the research of Na ranong, et al (2009) from interviews with both state and private hospitals, many of the hospital were faced with severe shortage of nurses that causes many hospitals have turned to the use of nurse assistant instead. A survey of production rate of public health nursing is not increased due to some of the production according to institutional frame rate are in government or the departments of themselves such as the College of Ministry of public health and some do not produce allowance for nurses quit are private, or give up the nursing profession. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to study the effect of nursing in caring patients with foreigners who come to receive
treatment in Thailand. The study was conducted in the development of nursing personnel to the medical tourism industry.

**Objectives/Research Questions**

1. To study the impact on nursing service in medical tourism.
2. To study the core competency in caring for patients with foreigners in the treatment.

**Research Methodology**

The methodology used in this study by reviewing the previous research, research article and related literature to search for medical tourism impacts toward health service and study the core competency in caring for patients with foreigners in the treatment.

**Findings**

The finding that related to objective

1. **What's the impact on nursing service in medical tourism?**

   Nowadays, economic growth as a result to Thailand has gross domestic product (GDP) is increasing. The Global Competitiveness report that Thailand has the proportion of GDP 4,000,000 millions in 2003 up to 10,000,000 millions in 2012 (Schwab, 2012). Especially, Thailand is focusing to be the medical hub of ASIA at since 2004. (Na ranong, 2011) This policy is result to the numbers of foreign patients who come for treatment in Thailand have increased steadily. As can be seen from the data of the Department of Health Service Support, Ministry of Health (2011) has estimated the number of cases of foreigners in 2008 there were approximately 1,380,000 people rose to 2,530,000 people in 2012 and generated revenue for the country from 50,963 million baht a year 2008 increased to 121,658 million baht in 2012 led the country to compete in Singapore in the proportion of patients in less than a decade.

   From such a situation affect to nursing service. viewed from production rate of nurses did not increase and Thailand is still in shortage of professional manpower at least 10 years since the year 2010 - 2020 (Amornvivat et, Al) Many hospitals turned to the use of nurse assistant instead of the nurse to serve patients. It
was also found the problems and obstacles in the service of foreign patients, including the skills of communication in English. The survey of speaking English problems of nurses rajvithi hospital found that nurses will speak with foreign patients in providing information and details about the treatment and the problems found in spoken English is a mistake in the use of grammar, obstacles in the expression, the use of vocabulary accurate pronunciation, wrong pronunciation and lack confidence in themselves. (Orisa, 2006) Also, another problem, providing nursing care that does not consider cultural differences. It can divide the types of patients by culture religion; Christian, Islam, and Buddhism, which was different beliefs and behavior traditions. (Kamonbud, 2014) The swot analysis of the Development Research Institute Foundation Thailand (2552) was found that the main problems in service with patients in medical tourism in Thailand. Found that the lack of language to create a travel package and coordinate insurance or health insurance for patients’ rights of foreigners. So, competent development of nursing service to response the needs of customers is necessary.

The study found that most foreigners traveling in treatment with surgery 48% followed by heart disease 24% and examines the health programs 16%. In particular, patients from Japan to receive services surgical treatment is the most including artificial joint replacement surgery, lumbar disc herniation surgery, cosmetic and spine surgery (Sewasud, 2010) Also present are stepping into the aging society. Therefore, focusing on the elderly care is necessary. Survey of the elderly in the world of International Institute of infection prevention (CDC: Center for Disease Control prevention) found that the cause of death of the elderly 5 first, including heart disease, cancer, stroke, pneumonia or influenza and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which is similar with a group of countries or other races. As the table.

2. What’s the competency of nursing service to caring the foreigners whom serviced in Thailand.

The development of service can be separated into 2 issues is functional competency and general performance, (อ้างอิง) which can be summarized as follows.
2.1 The functional competency

A review of the context of foreign patients to receive services in Thailand as a guideline to competent development services found that the most foreigners traveling in treatment with surgery 48% followed by heart disease 24% and examines the health programs 16%. In particular, patients from Japan to receive services surgical treatment is the most including artificial joint replacement surgery, lumbar disc herniation surgery, cosmetic and spine surgery (Sewasud, 2010) Also present are stepping into the aging society. Therefore, focusing on the elderly care is necessary. Survey of the elderly in the world of International Institute of infection prevention (CDC: Center for Disease Control prevention) found that the cause of death of the elderly 5 first, including heart disease, cancer, stroke, pneumonia or influenza and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which is similar with a group of countries or other races. As the table.

Table 1 cause of death of population aged over 65 years. (Sahyoun, Lentzner, Hoyert & Robinson, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Asia/Asia Pacific</th>
<th>Hispanic*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>heart disease</td>
<td>heart disease</td>
<td>heart disease</td>
<td>heart disease</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stroke</td>
<td>stroke</td>
<td>diabetes</td>
<td>stroke</td>
<td>stroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPD</td>
<td>diabetes</td>
<td>stroke</td>
<td>pneumonia or influenza</td>
<td>COPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>pneumonia or influenza</td>
<td>pneumonia or influenza</td>
<td>COPD</td>
<td>COPD</td>
<td>pneumonia or influenza</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Hispanic mean people from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, South America, Central America and Caribbean And so on, including the use of language / culture business in Spain.
From the above, the researcher can summarize the essential competencies per serving patients overseas services, medical tourism in Thailand, shown in diagram.

Therefore, The results of research was found that the impact of medical tourism towards functional competency as follows: caring for patients with heart disease, cancer, stroke, pneumonia or influenza, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, caring for patients with surgery, setting for health promotion screening and communication skills in using English.

**2.2 The general competency**

The performance is generally associated with the general service has nothing to do with the competencies of nurses. Performance recognition is in providing patients with foreigners, including the development of skills in
communication, especially the use of English. The development of services in accordance with the culture. Service quality assurance and management of package medical tourism. As described more details in the article 1 of finding.

**Discussions**

The results of this study found that medical tourism affecting the service system, including manpower in nursing, nursing care in accordance with society and culture and the development of language skills determine which such effects as the performance of nurses using the concept of competency base of training consists of professional competency and performance in general which such concepts can be used as a guide in the development of personnel involved. At present, Thailand potential service located in good level, compared to other countries. The comparative measurement degree of customer orientation found that the rate 5.4 ranked second, Japan at the level of 6.4 which has the highest score in the Asian region (Puththamaroj, 2011). It shows that Thailand has the potential of personnel services, especially the personnel of nursing. So, if the personnel can know the needs of customers to receive services. Especially foreign customers be internationally recognized. Together with Thailand’s step into asean economic community is the labor movement fully free occurs. If they don’t accelerate the development of such personnel may lead to work from an expatriate staffs potential than working in Thailand. For the sake of the service area group of foreign customers found that the group most customers to receive the service in private hospitals with more 100 beds and through international certification JCI which is in 7 provinces of Chiang Mai Bangkok, Phuket, Ayutthaya, Krabi, Chon Buri and Surat were 19 of Thailand. So, The nursing personnel serving in such areas. Should be the development efforts to developing services to international levels

**Recommendations**

The research on impact of medical tourism to nursing services in Thailand aims to study the impact on nursing service in medical tourism and to study the core competency in caring for patients with foreigners in the treatment. The study to know the impact of services from medical tourism the trend of hospitalized patients
increased and know the competencies of service skills with foreign patients, which can develop a training course for educational organizations or agencies involved.

**References**


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