

Chapter 4. Research results

The results of the study were based on the results of 145 peoples survey (Table 5).

Table 5 - Personal data about surveyed tourists

Groups	Younger than 40 y.o.		Older than 40 y.o.	Totally
Male	Permanently live in Russia	6	31	70
	Permanently live in Thailand	9	24	
		15	55	
Female	Permanently live in Russia	7	42	75
	Permanently live in Thailand	5	21	
		12	63	
Totally				145

As can be seen from the results of the study

1. Most Russia tourists (56%) are aware of the health tourism potential in Thailand. 42% of surveyed tourists noted the positive attitude towards treatment in the Kingdom of Thailand. However, it should be noted that only 15% of the surveyed Russian tourists had any personal experience (or close friends, relatives experience) to get medical help (or undergoing medical examination) in Thailand. This shows that Thailand has a positive reputation as a place of treatment for

Russians, and Thai medicine initially (before the direct purchase of services) has a positive image among Russians.

2. Sources of information about the state of Thai medicine, named by interviewed respondents, differed from each other. But, in general, it is worth noting that scientific sources and articles, including posted on the Internet, are popular sources of information about the state of Thailand medicine and treatment in Russia. More than 22% of respondents noted that they received information about the state of medical tourism in Thailand from television reports and expert interviews. The work of national tourist offices is very poorly in the positive information about the potential of medical tourism in Thailand dissemination (their activities had virtually no influence on the choice of respondents). This allows us to conclude that tours to Thailand, sold in Russia, mainly by tourism operators of mass demand, do not form the necessary information support for the medical potential of the country. A Russian tourist who is accustomed to trusting his health to professionals (in the understanding of a Russian, a professional is an official organization that possesses the necessary documentation, licenses, qualified personnel), will not consider the option of buying a treatment tour at the office of a mass tourism operator. It determines the need to modernize the sales system of Thailand's national medical product in Russia.

3. As the main advantages of health tourism in Thailand, Russian tourists identified, first of all, quality care (42%) and the availability of infrastructure (for example, when everything is nearby, lack of queues, the ability to plan many procedures in advance, diagnostics, etc.) (18%), as well as the possibility of treatment and recreation, treatment and rehabilitation combining (12%). The price advantage factor proved to be much less important for Russians than, for example, for German or Australian tourists (8% against 37% and 34% respectively), which in general is easy to explain by the the exchange rate of Russia's currency falling in

2014 and rise in price of any imported services for Russians almost twice. And also because in the medical treatment in Thailand is mostly chosen by Russians with medium incomes (wealthy Russians prefer treatment in European countries, Israel and the USA), for which the price factor remains extremely and cost of treatment in Thailand remains at a high level (also comparing with the Russian prices for medical services).

4. Only 21% of the polled Russians believe that Thai medicine is more technologically advanced, developed than Russian medicine. This low percentage can be explained, rather, not by the real state of affairs, but by the fact that Russians prefer to do serious operations not in Thailand, but at home (which is cheaper or maybe free in the quota of the Ministry of Health of Russia), and also common to all Russians Patriotism and confidence in their own exclusivity. But more than 85% of respondents said that the quality of medical services (rehabilitation, care, hospital infrastructure) in Thailand is many times superior to Russian counterparts.

The majority of Russians who came to Thailand for treatment apply for:

- regular health-check (34%), which in Thailand can be completed in one day with visiting more than 5 doctors and passing the necessary tests;
- services of professional manual therapists, including specialists in ayurvedic massage and massage for recovery after surgery (21%),
- cosmetic services (inoperable) (18%),
- dental services (12%),
- cosmetic services (operable) (9%),
- body adjustment services (8%).

Obviously, the Russians attitude to treatment in Thailand only as a service that accompanies the rest. Relaxation and daily massage, relaxation plus an annual health check, rest and therapeutic starvation and so on. On the one hand, this opens

up new opportunities for the tourist product oriented to the Russian market modernization (for example, short-term programs for the whole family can be offered, such as an ordinary beach tour, with the ability to correct posture, cure platypodia, or normalize blood pressure, skin condition). On the other hand, this does not lead to the development of high-tech medical tourism in Thailand, associated with the highest qualifications of specialists, modern equipment, profile treatment (certainly with high added value).

5. As the main problems faced by Russian tourists undergoing treatment in Thailand, they distinguish: the language barrier in the processing of documents (36%), the language barrier in communication (21%), the high cost of services (19%), the difficulty of choice (16%), the difficulty in further use of documents in Russia (15%), the turnover of doctors in Thailand (9%), the narrow specialization of doctors (6%).

The shortcomings of medical tourism in Thailand, given by Russian tourists, should be considered in more detail, in view of the fact that they are becoming more and more known (via the Internet), and 36% of those interviewed already heard about possible negative consequences of treatment in Thailand and the shortcomings of the Thai medical product, as well as the fact that they are really capable of significantly restricting inbound medical tourism from Russia.

So, if the first problem - the language barrier - is a traditional problem that every specific hospital can solve by its own forces (for example, by introducing the positions of translators into Russian, with the experience of medical translations, by introducing a system for translating documentation into Russian), then the problems of the second level - the complexity of choosing a place of treatment, the use of documents in Russia - these are relatively new problems, however, already having a negative impact on the attitude of tourists to treatment in the Kingdom.

So, the Russians note that there is so much information available about the possibilities of treatment in Thailand, sources of its origin are also many that it is difficult for them to decide on the place of receiving medical services. A tourist often makes a decision based on feedback and unreliable advertising information, and then gets disappointed when he comes to a non-core hospital or clinic. The second problem is related to the inability to use documents obtained in a Thai clinic (hospital) later in Russia. Russian doctors do not take into consideration the results of the tests that were conducted in Thailand, for several reasons. First of all, this discrepancy between diagnostic standards in Thailand and Russia (used by different systems of units), as well as language problems and the reluctance of doctors from Russia to "lose money", earned on the diagnosis of patients.

Also, Russians in general are negative about the narrow specialization of Thai doctors, considering this approach as an additional tool for making money. Of course, the attitude of patients and the fact that doctors in Thailand often combine work places and have a very flexible work schedule is negatively affected. On the one hand, it either requires flexibility from clients (which increases the time required for treatment), on the other hand, turns the treatment process into a succession of replaceable doctors, which forms the client's feeling that he is not needed and abandoned.

6. As very positive can be considered the result of the last part of the survey about the prospects of Thailand as a place of treatment for Russian tourists. So, the majority of respondents (71%) expressed their readiness to be treated in Thailand in the future, or regularly undergo medical examinations and diagnostics in the kingdom. However, it is worth highlighting some recommendations of Russian tourists, which can be regarded as recommendations for action. Thus, a large proportion of respondents recommended introducing business models of spa hotels in Thailand with the functions of medical treatment (surveillance) included in the

cost. For example, the cost of living in such hotels can include not only full board - diet food, but also some medical procedures (thermal baths, manual and physical therapy, aromatherapy, herbal therapy, etc.). This kind of health services in Russia is spread from the middle of the twentieth century, which suggests the popularity of identical accommodation facilities and tourist services for Russian-speaking markets (not only directly in Russia itself) in the future.