



Where Does Dubai Rank for Medical Tourism?

Dubai has been named as the top location in the Middle East for medical tourism, according to the latest analysis released by the International Healthcare Research Centre (IHRC). It's the second time running that the emirate has finished top of the pile regionally, having supplanted Israel in the 2016-17 edition of the Medical Tourism Index.

Globally, Dubai also fares favourably. It came sixth out of a total of 46 destinations, reflecting its competitiveness against some of the world's most prestigious healthcare epicentres. For comparison, neighbouring emirate Abu Dhabi came ninth overall, demonstrating how the UAE as a whole is leading the way in top-class medical services.

Best in class

Dubai is not only one of the most preferred tourist destinations on the planet in its own right, but is also lauded as a hub of quality medical care. That fact is reflected in the IHRC's Medical Tourism Index for 2020, which places the emirate ahead of its Middle Eastern competitors and sixth worldwide.

Indeed, Dubai was only pipped to the post by Canada, Singapore, Japan, Spain and the UK, all of which have significantly larger populations. It achieved such a prestigious ranking based upon its performance in three main categories: quality of services and facilities, environmental destination and medical tourism industry.

Record-breaking footfall

In total, Dubai welcomed 350,118 medical tourists in 2019, which represented a 4% increase on the year previous. Most visitors hailed from Asia (34%), while those from the Middle East (28%) and Europe (17%) were not far behind. It achieved such impressive numbers partly off the back of significant investment into the industry in recent months, which has seen an influx of doctors come to Dubai to practice.

In the first half of 2020 alone, for example, Dubai issued 3,397 licenses to healthcare facilities in the emirate. 45 new locations opened their doors in that time, while one hospital and 10 clinics were also inaugurated. At the same time, the city boasts over 20 licensed venues offering traditional, complementary and alternative medicine (TCAM) services.



What lies ahead

Of course, the upheaval caused by coronavirus mean that 2020 is likely to witness a drop-off in medical tourists, not least because the national borders of countries across the world were closed for a significant period. Difficulties in devising a reliable test for the virus – [as well as knowing what constitutes the best time to take it](#) – have since been overcome, but the all-important vaccine remains elusive.

Nonetheless, Dubai remains well-placed to welcome those in search of top-quality medical care to the emirate, especially given that lockdown measures are now beginning to be relaxed in many places. With such excellent facilities and impeccable personnel – and not to mention a superb record in handling the pandemic itself – Dubai is sure to comprise a top-ranking medical tourism destination for many years to come.