



Metaverse: A Modern Approach to Medical Tourism Industry

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(Received 19 Aug 2022; accepted 26 Aug 2022)

Dear Editor-in-Chief

Recently, the concept of Metaverse has been highly debated in the world of technology. The term has been defined as a post-reality universe combining words 'meta' and 'universe.' In other words, it merges physical reality and digital virtuality, which provides people with an opportunity to have virtual and augmented reality experiences using a digital identity (1). During the previous few years, technologies such as artificial intelligence and telemedicine have altered the way healthcare services are provided. After the re-branding of Facebook as Meta in Oct 2021 that prompted several well-known technology commercial businesses to launch and accelerate their business models based on the Metaverse, it seems that it is now the Metaverse's turn to revolutionize the healthcare industry (2).

We aimed to emphasize the importance of Metaverse and its related opportunities and challenges, with a special attention to the medical tourism as one of the most profitable industries in the healthcare area.

The recent pandemic has caused a disruption in many industries across the globe and medical tourism is no exception. However, this industry seems to be able to take a great advantage of this modern technology to make more progress during or after pandemics. Becoming familiar with

the tourist attractions of the destination city or country through Metaverse can raise potential tourists' enthusiasm and excitement to decide for this medical travel. Moreover, Meta-based simulation of the hospital environment can increase patients' awareness and experiences of the environment that awaits them, thereby reducing their stress, helping them feel more secure, and leading to a better doctor-patient relationship and a higher rate of patient satisfaction. This is vitally important, especially for patients undergoing surgery. In addition, patients can benefit from virtual consulting rooms, which can result in a more accurate diagnosis as well as a better planning for the upcoming treatment method.

Another point that can be interesting for patients is that, this technology can bring their families and relatives together virtually that can help both sides stay calm and relieve their stress, eventually making this medical trip a good experience for patients. Furthermore, Metaverse can provide high-quality remote education for medical staff and surgeons based on the international medical services standards, which can be effective in attracting international patients and gaining their trust. Metaverse also provides more opportunities for promoting creativity and innovation in medical tourism advertising and, consequently, im-



proves the process of patient attraction for countries.

On the contrary, there are some concerns regarding the use of Metaverse in this area including the high cost of the necessary digital equipment and patient's privacy loss. Hence, governments and technology giants are recommended to provide the necessary requirements and infrastructure considering the aforementioned opportunities and challenges to be able to get the most out of this new technology in the medical tourism area and promote the industry's profitability.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Ms. A. Keivanshekouh at the Research Consultation Center (RCC) of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences

for her invaluable assistance in editing the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interests to declare.

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