

Editorial feature

TAKING A MEDICAL HOLIDAY

The search for beauty's

Medical holidays offer affordable health support to a growing number of Aussies, writes ADAM DAVIES

AUSTRALIA is fast becoming a hotspot for women choosing to head overseas on a medical holiday.

An overseas holiday to a tropical island for a week of rest and relaxation has taken on a new meaning for thousands of men and women across the state.

International medical holidays are fast becoming part of a booming and growing industry.

And the driver behind it all is affordability.



LUXURY: The Phuket International Hospital, Phuket, Thailand. PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

And leading the charge is Somnio International Medical Holidays that offers clients an array of cosmetic and dental holiday packages to

Phuket, Thailand.

The company offers a range of procedures and also organises flights, accommodation and tours for their ever-growing client base.

Somnio International Medical Holidays' founder Virginia

COST COMPARISON: AUSTRALIA VS THAILAND

Breast implant ..	\$10,000 vs \$3600
Breast implant with lift	\$14,800 vs \$6100
Facelift.....	\$12,000 vs \$4500
Tummy tuck	\$8700 vs \$4800
Liposuction	\$8000 vs \$3800
Eye surgery.....	\$4300 vs \$1600
Root canal	\$1100 vs \$300
Dental crown	\$1300 vs \$455
Porcelain veneers...	\$1400 vs \$350

with overseas medical holidays," Mrs Riddle-Cross said.

"Having plastic surgery done in Australia is not an affordable option for the vast majority of people.

"People have worked out very quickly the standard overseas is world class, if not better than in Australia, and costs half the price.

"Consumers no longer want to pay the ridiculous prices being charged in Australia.

"The whole industry has literally exploded over the past five years."

Mrs Riddle-Cross said the Thailand Government had injected hundreds of millions of dollars over the past two decades into building state-of-the-art, world-class medical facilities.

"The Thai Government has been very supportive of medical



The whole industry has literally exploded over the past five years



CAN-DO TEAM: The Somnio International Medical Holidays team (from left) April Hardy, Jenny Bryant, Virginia Riddle-Cross, Janarah Platen and Amy Morris. PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



YOU'RE WELCOME: Reception awaits at the Phuket International Hospital, Phuket. PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



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STEPS YOU NEED TO TAKE

Editorial feature

Holy Grail

tourism," she said.

"They have injected millions into the industry to ensure it becomes the premier destination in the world for medical tourism.

"People have this incorrect perception that any surgery overseas is Third World. Nothing could be further from the truth."

Mrs Riddle-Cross said her company – based on the Gold Coast and servicing clients as far south as Newcastle – dealt with the Phuket International

Hospital, headed up by Australian Peter Davison.

"It is by far the premier private hospital in Thailand," she said. "The doctors and surgeons who work at the hospital are highly trained professionals."

Mrs Riddle-Cross said breast enlargement surgery was the most popular procedure among Australian women travelling internationally on a medical holiday.

"The majority of our clients have always wanted to get the procedure done but could not afford it," she said. "Plastic surgery is not about vanity. It is about women of all ages wanting to feel good about themselves."



HERE TO HELP: April Hardy and Virginia Riddle-Cross.

PHOTO: DAVE NOONAN



AMA says stitch up the research first

By ADAM DAVIES

A LEADING Australian medical practitioner, Dr Alex Markwell, has urged people considering travelling overseas on a medical holiday to ensure they have done extensive research first.

"The biggest concern we would have is ensuring people organise their medical holiday through a reputable company," Dr Markwell said. "Problems can occur when people decide to do it themselves.

"It is like a picture of a hotel. What can look nice and presentable, might not always necessarily be the case."

Dr Markwell, who is an emergency physician, said people planning an overseas medical holiday should ensure the hospital they are going to is internationally accredited.

"Different people have different reasons for wanting to travel overseas for a cosmetic procedure," she said.

"I cannot stress enough the importance of using a reputable company.

"If you have surgery in a hospital overseas that is not accredited, it could be quite dangerous and lead to medical complications if things go wrong."

Dr Markwell said people should also check thoroughly the fine print contained in international travel insurance policies.

"There are some excellent facilities overseas," she said.

"Consumers need to ensure they are accessing those facilities before leaving. People also need to check the travel insurance they have purchased to make sure they are covered in the event something goes wrong.

"A lot of policies cover you in the event something goes wrong on your holiday, but many do not cover you for pre-planned surgery."

Dr Markwell is the Australian Medical Association Queensland president. She said the AMA did not have a formal position on overseas medical holidays.



“People need to check their travel insurance”

PLAN AHEAD: Dr Alex Markwell.

PHOTO: MAX FLEET

DENTISTRY TREATMENTS AT THEIR BEST

Having major dental treatment done at half the price, as well as a holiday sounds like an offer too good to be true. And coming from the professionals, it is. The risk of failure is much higher in a third world country, in an environment that may not meet Australia Standards in Infection Control. In Australia, if you are unhappy with the work provided you have an avenue to express your complaints or concerns. To the naked eye, bad dentistry can appear well done but what we often see is poor margins between the crown and bridge and the gum line, creating a habitat for bacteria, also unsupported root treated teeth, unlined fillings and dental implants that Australian Dentists cannot get spare parts for, it is a risk, and could cost a lot more to fix, than what you bargained for.

Complex dental treatment cannot be done in a rush. We stress to our patients that healing and ongoing maintenance of their dental work is required, because things do need maintenance. And if your dental implant crown comes loose, who will fix it, or have those parts available? The more complex the dental work is, the more probable it will need repair and maintenance.

If you're looking for Dental Implants or would like to know your options, please come into Divine Dental for a Free Initial Consultation, where we can tell you your options. Located in the Commercial Buildings at the Noosa Civic Shopping Centre or call Sarah the Practice Manager on 5455 6214.

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