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HEALTH TOURISM IN THE SPA RESORT OF COVASNA

TURISMUL BALNEAR ÎN STAȚIUNEA BALNEO-CLIMATERICĂ COVASNA

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Abstract: *Covasna, known as the town of the thousand of mineral springs, ranks among the most famous spa resorts in Europe. Covasna is one of richest resorts in natural mineral waters in our country with a great variety of its physical-chemical compositions. All the issues addressed in this paper lead to the general conclusion that Covasna County has an extremely valuable touristic potential, which is not sufficiently capitalized. Only a sustained financial effort and the cooperation between all the factors involved in the tourism business will lead to the revival of the tourism and economy of the county.*

Key words: *health, health tourism definition, typologies of health tourism, the Spa Resort of Covasna, therapy program, treatment indications, the structure of the accommodation means of types.*

INTRODUCTION

The Romanian spa resorts are meant for the domestic market, but some of them have the potential to welcome foreign tourists. Although in Romania there are almost 1300 resources of mineral waters which represent 30 % of the total European waters, the spa tourism is relatively poorly developed.

The improvement of this situation will be reflected on the spa tourism market only if the investments in this field will be major and the percent of Romanian and foreign tourists will increase significantly.

Viewed as whole, Romania has a very good potential being an important country for touring destination in future. This is to be achieved by improving substantially the touring product and service level. The diversity of the touring offer from the spa baths is considered to be one of the strongest points of tourism in Romania. The Romanian spa offer has a tough concurrence from the European spa market being rigid, non-performant and un-adapted to modern demands of the touring market yet.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Health – (definition the WHO 1946) - "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

Definition **health tourism** (definition of UNWTO): "tourism associated with travel to health spas or resort destinations where the primary purpose is to improve the traveler's physical well-being thought regimen of physical exercise and therapy, dietary control, and medical services relevant to health maintenance".

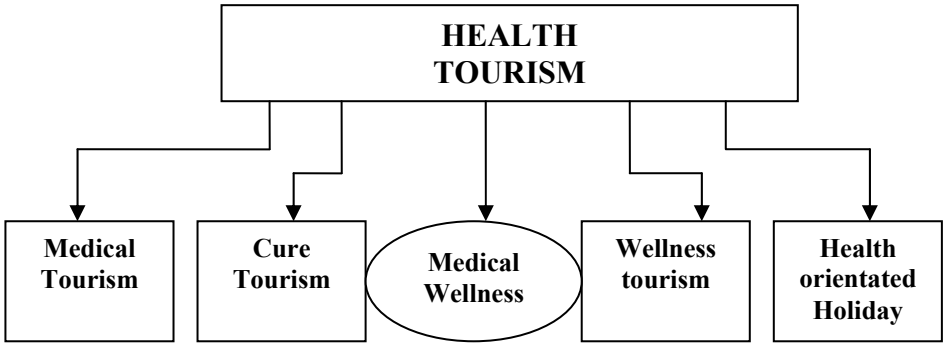


Figure 1. – Typologies of health tourism

As regards the spa tourism, an increasingly important trend of the last years is to use natural bathing treatment factors for prevention. Thus, more and more tourists are choosing spa resorts motivated by the need to strengthen their health, to rest and to relax in an invigorating environment, performing activities which prevent the occurrence of some diseases and contribute to the strengthening of the body defense against diseases. Thus,

the bathing treatment represents a health related offer both for sick people and for healthy people.

Because spa tourism is not only for those with medical problems, but also for those who want to relax, to regain their stamina and a good physical, mental and spiritual condition, in the last decades, due to its important social and economic effects, spa tourism has become a major sector of the international tourism market.

Covasna is situated in the centre of Romania and south-east of Siebenbürgen sourounded by the lovely Carpets. Between hills, mountains, forrests, rivers and lakes live the hungarians and romanian live peacefully together.

The region is famous for it‘s mineral water springs and Spas. Already at acient time of the Empire of Rome Covasna‘s Spas where known for it‘s healing effects. Covasna and it‘s sourround offer a wide range of outdoor activities.

Covasna - City of Hearts - is a small, sympathic city in the heart of Transylvania and is famous for it‘s health treatment facilities. Located in the Szeklerland it has a pleasing subalpine climate and beautiful, untouched nature. Nature reservs, architecture, museums and castles are only a few attractions of the region.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Spa Resort of Covasna is one of richest resorts in natural mineral waters in our country with a great variety of its physical-chemical compositions. The mineral waters here are carbonaceous, bicarbonate, chlorosodic, and iodinated and brominates, ferruginous, arsenical or slightly sulfurous, with a total mineralization of 3,2 - 22,4 g/l, very rich in carbonic acid of volcanic origin (2,5 g/l).

Another natural cure factor peculiar to the resort are the mofettes - emanations of natural gases, mainly carbon dioxide, used especially in the treatment of cardiovascular, locomotors, dermatological, metabolically affections or nervous system. The natural mofettic gas of Covasna, containing 80 - 98% carbon dioxide, has a vasodilating effect, lowering the arterial tension, being thus salutary for the heart and the peripheral circulation.

The mofettes are to be found in the health center of the hotels. The natural moffetes and the mineral waters offer the unicity of the health product and tourists call them "healing labs".

Another important natural cure factor is sparing bio climate, with a less exciting effect on the central and vegetative nervous system as well as on the glands with internal secretions.

The variety of its natural cure factors combined with others medical methods offers the possibility of simultaneous treatment of more affections, which gives the complexity of Covasna.

The effects of natural moffetes and mineral carbon water:

- increase the dilatation of blood vessels, increase the muscular and cerebral blood flow with 50-75%;
- reduce arterial hypertension;
- increase the temperature of body extremities;
- pain reducer, smoothing effect produce a new repartition of de blood through the body, empties the viscera's and accumulates the blood in the skin and in the vital organs.

Therapy program

The therapy programs are monitorised by qualified medical personnel and include 3 or more of the following procedures: warm bath in natural mineral water, moffetes (therapy with natural dry carbon gas), electro-physiotherapy (ultrasounds, ultra waves, diadinamics, magnetodiaflux, galvanic bath), hydro-thermotherapy (massage shower, underwater massage, paraffin packing, Jacuzzi), inhalations and aerosols, dry massage, rehabilitation gym. The effective recommended period for the treatment session is 18 days. Doctors prescribe the procedures according to individual patients' affections, based on the results of regular analysis (blood, EKG, lung-Roentgen, urine). On the first day the patients have a medical examination and another one after 3 days or whenever is necessary. GEROVITAL cure is also available, by request.

Treatment indications – Covasna

1. Cardiovascular disorders

- Artheriopaties: peripheral occlusive atherosclerotic disorders in stage I and II, after surgery;
- Thromboangiitis Obliterates (Buerger's disease);
- Ischemic chronic cardiopaty: effort angina, stable angina pectoris, myocardial infarction - second stage of treatment after the acute

episode, without rhythm disorders or unstable angina, after regaining the hemodynamic balance; myocardial ischemic chronic disorder, with E.C.G. ischemic changes and branch blocking;

- ❖ Arterial hypertension, stage I and II;
- ❖ Valvular heart diseases: valvular disorders caused by rheumatic diseases without clinical hemodynamic disorders valvular heart disorders after surgery, without clinical and hemodynamic significant disorders, 3 months after the surgery (with the recommendation of the cardiologist, who should decide the timing of the balneary treatment);
- ❖ Post- cerebro-vascular accident state and disabilities - mostly of thrombosis nature- when patients are stable;
- ❖ Venous chronic diseases: thrombophlebitis complications.

2. Skin disorders - psoriasis, chronic eczema's, allergic skin disorders, neurodermatitis.

3. Gastrointestinal disorders - (internal cure): chronic erosive or non-erosive gastritis, gastric ulcer, postgastrectomy gastritis, duodenal recurrent ulcer, chronic inflammatory diseases of the bowel, functional bowel disorders, chronic enter colitis, gastrointestinal dyspepsia, disorders consequent to epidemic hepatitis, postoperative biliary disorders, biliary calculus.

4. Endocrine disorders - Basedow disease, hyperthyroidism, low functioning of the parathyroid and of the endocrine system.

5. Musculoskeletal disorders

- ❖ inflammatory articulate disorders;
- ❖ allergic articulate and abarticular disorders with rheumatic;
- ❖ infectious affections (general or - specific: tonsils, ear, sinuses, teeth) or toxic (professional, alimentary or drug induced);
- ❖ rheumatoid arthritis; spondylitis ankylosing osteoarthritis;
- ❖ lombar disk syndrome, cervical and toraco;
- ❖ lombar spondylosis, osteitis and osteoperiostitis; apophisitis and epiphysis's;
- ❖ osteomalacia and osteochondrosis.

6. Genitourinary disorders

- ❖ chronic glomerulonephritis; simple secondary albuminuria;
- ❖ infectious chronic pyelonephritis; urolithiasis; chronic inflammation of the lower urinary tract (cystitis, urethritis, pyelocystitis).

7. Neurological disorders

- peripheral nervous system disorders (nerve root disorders, polyneuropathy, post traumatic nervous system disorders);
- central nervous system disorders (after cerebral vascular accidents, asthenia or neurotic disorders).

8. Professional diseases

- chronically professional diseases caused by physical agents
- professional skin disorders due to physical agents.

Treatment contraindications - Covasna

Specific:

- myocardial infarction with complications and severe evolution in the acute stage;
- myocardial ischemic disease with recurrent and frequent crisis;
- myocardial ischemic disorder not associated with pain but with severe arrhythmia conduction defects or low heart functioning;
- valvular heart diseases with recent evolution, low functioning or thrombo-embolic accidents;
- some valvular diseases like mitral stenosis, aortic stenosis, plurivalvular lesions;
- essential arterial hypertension stage III or with complications;
- cardiomyopathy, no matter its cause;
- cerebral atherosclerotic disease with psychic disorders;
- cerebral thrombosis accidents with important neurological impairment.

General:

- acute fever episodes and chronic diseases in acute stages;
- infectious diseases in contagious stage till the end of the isolation period;
- sexually transmitted diseases in the contagious;
- carriers of pathogenic bacteria (streptococcus haemolytic, AgHB, etc);
- severe weakness of the body (cashexia) no matter its cause;
- malign tumors, no matter their form, location or evolution stage;
- recurrent and severe bleeding of any form;
- abnormal pregnancy of any form and normal pregnancy after the first 3 months;
- epilepsy;

- ❖ hematological or system diseases with major general state changes (anemia, leukemia, lymphomas,etc);
- ❖ carriers of germs or parasites;
- ❖ personality disorders with social behavior disorders;
- ❖ chronic alcoholism with neuropsychic disorders, drug dependencies;
- ❖ patients close to organic decompensation (diabetes resistant to treatment);
- ❖ skin diseases potentially contagious or with severe un-esthetical lesions;
- ❖ acute myocardial, kidney or liver low functioning;
- ❖ patients lacking autonomy.

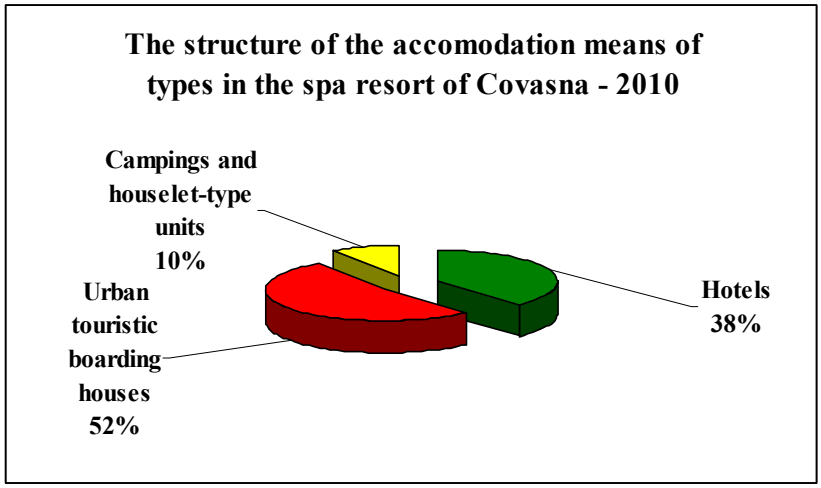


Figure. 2. – The structure of the accommodation means of types in the spa resort of Covasna - 2010

By the types of units, the urban touristic bording houses recorded the biggest percentage of 52%, hotels 38% and campings and houselet-type unit 10%.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the tourism types with major potential but inadequately capitalized in our country is the spa tourism. The Romanian spa resorts are

meant for the domestic market, but some of them have the potential to welcome foreign tourists.

The improvement of this situation will be reflected on the spa tourism market only if the investments in this field will be major and the percent of Romanian and foreign tourists will increase significantly.

The touring information and promotion fliers, meant to advise by audio-visual approach, advertising clips, publicity and promoting strategies of the touring offer, participation to international tourism fairs, have already given the correct feed back, well known tour operators, have reappeared on the Romanian touring market with excellent perspectives in increasing the number of tourists for the years to come.

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