

Premier medical destination:

# Patients from 164 countries choose Iran

## Social Desk

Health tourism, a thriving sub-branch of the tourism industry, involves seeking medical services in foreign countries. This rapidly growing sector has become a significant player in global economics, offering a lifeline for countries like Iran which is currently grappling with economic challenges caused by harsh sanctions. Through generating revenue and creating employment opportunities, health tourism contributes to sustainable development and economic dynamism.

According to Iran's Ministry of Health, out of 1,100 hospitals in our country, 250 have been granted the license to accept health tourists. Saeed Karimi, the deputy director of the Ministry of Health, recently announced the streamlining of health tourism licensing for medical centers, Tasnim News Agency reported. He explained that the process, "from document submission to license approval", takes approximately one month.



While 27 provinces in our country have centers capable of providing inpatient services to health tourists, there is still a need to increase the number of centers with health tourism licenses. This is because the influx of foreign currency resulting from the growth of health tourism significantly boosts the financial turnover of our medical facilities.

Karimi emphasized the importance of health tourism licensing, highlighting the unique standards and benefits offered by licensed centers. For instance, many foreign clients lack proficiency in Farsi, the official language of Iran, which can pose challenges in unlicensed centers. However, licensed centers provide translators, technical officers, and dedicated

medical staff in order to ensure that foreign patients receive high-quality services. Iraq stands out as the top source of health tourists coming to Iran, followed by patients from 164 other countries, including those from Europe, North and South America, Asia, and neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Pakistan,

and Turkey. Moreover, infertility treatment is the most common reason for referrals of foreign patients, closely followed by ophthalmology, orthopedics, cosmetic and pediatric surgery, and heart diseases.

Despite having enormous potential to attract health tourists, Iran has yet to fully capitalize on these opportunities and maximize its income. According to Karimi, last year alone, 1.2 million foreign patients sought medical treatment in Iran, generating one billion dollars in revenue. However, the country has the capacity to earn ten times that amount if it strategically harnesses its potential to attract tourists. The World Trade Organization classifies health tourism into three types: medical tourism, health tourism, and preventive tourism. Medical tourism involves seeking treatment and undergoing surgeries in medical centers or hospitals. With over 1,100 hospitals and 55,000 beds, Iran boasts substantial capacity to accommodate a large number of foreign pa-

tients. Remarkably, approximately 25 percent of hospital beds in the country remain unoccupied, providing a solid foundation for welcoming international patients.

Health tourism, on the other hand, encompasses the post-treatment recovery period, where patients enjoy medical supervision while utilizing various therapeutic resources such as hot springs, salt lakes, mud therapy, and climate-based treatments. Iran's favorable climate, rich history, pristine natural landscapes, salt lakes, and diverse climatic conditions make it an attractive destination for health tourists seeking rejuvenation and recuperation.

Lastly, preventive tourism involves traveling to health villages and areas featuring mineral water springs and spas, providing an opportunity to escape the stresses of daily life and revitalize one's well-being without medical interventions. Unfortunately, the development of such health villages, despite the existence of suitable urban and rural locations with favorable climates, has been

neglected, representing a missed opportunity in attracting health tourists.

However, there are notable challenges facing foreign patients seeking medical care in Iran. The lack of easily accessible information regarding medical centers, services offered, and associated costs remains a significant hurdle. Additionally, lack of a comprehensive system suitable for following up with patients after they return to their home countries is another issue. Efforts should be made to provide foreign patients with up-to-date information, mobile-friendly platforms, and dedicated support to ensure a seamless experience.

Health tourism, undoubtedly, could serve as a catalyst for economic growth in Iran, providing a lifeline amidst challenging times. Through embracing this industry and leveraging our country's strengths, we can attract a larger number of health tourists, gain substantial revenue, and establish Iran as a premier destination for high-quality medical services and holistic well-being.

## Boredom silently kills academic performance

According to a recent international study, students often feel bored during exams, which can harm their performance.

The study, led by Thomas Götz from the University of Vienna, focused on this overlooked phenomenon of "test boredom" and uncovered some significant findings. The research revealed that students do experience considerable boredom while taking exams. Moreover, the study found that extreme boredom can have a negative impact on test results. These findings were recently pub-

lished in the Journal of Educational Psychology. Interestingly, while boredom has been extensively studied, test boredom has been completely ignored until now. This study, conducted by psychologists from various universities, including the University of Vienna and the University of Konstanz, sheds light on the occurrence of test boredom and its detrimental effect on performance.

The main causes of test boredom were found to be both under-challenging and over-challenging exam con-

ditions. Additionally, when the exam content lacked personal relevance to the students, test boredom was significantly higher. The study concluded that high levels of test boredom have a negative influence on exam outcomes. The researchers introduced the "abundance hypothesis" in their study, which they were able to confirm. According to this hypothesis, boredom has a particularly negative impact on exam performance when students are over-challenged, as all their mental resources are focused on completing the tasks. This

leaves fewer resources available for experiencing boredom and working on the tasks. Conversely, when students are under-challenged, they have an abundance of resources available for task processing.

To combat test boredom, the researchers recommend that teachers design exam tasks that relate to students' real-life experiences. Additionally, tasks should be appropriately challenging, neither too easy nor too difficult. Parents or guardians can also play a role by discussing potential challenges

or lack of challenges with their children. Prompt action is necessary to prevent boredom and its negative consequences, such as a decline in performance.

This study not only sheds light on test boredom but

also opens up a new area of research. The researchers' work contributes significantly to understanding the detrimental effects of boredom in school. Previous studies have shown that boredom not only affects learning and

performance but also mental and physical health. By focusing on exams, which are a central aspect of students' school lives, this study expands our understanding of boredom's impact on children and adolescents.



## The will to overcome

Story of a disabled boy who believed in his abilities and went beyond the limits



Mahdieh Qazvinian  
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Seyyed Esmail Nasrollahi, a student from Sari (capital city of the northern province of Mazandaran), who was capable of getting the 25th rank in the national entrance exam in the humanities major. Although Esmail suffers from complete paralysis, through his achievement he proves that "when there is a will, there is a way." Achieving the 25th rank is not something we can easily ignore. It indicates all the efforts that he made despite his difficult condition and disability. We also witness the love and sacrifice of a mother who has encouraged her son to achieve anything that may seem impossible. "Since my son was born in 2004, I noticed that he was really talented," said his mother, Pari Hajizadeh. "Because he was really extraordinary," said his mother,

"I never punished him or got tired of his condition. I would always encourage him to gain his life's goals."

"When he was nine months old, we recognized my son's disability. Ever since I tried so hard to prove that he is gifted. One of the most important characteristic qualities of Seyyed Esmail is his compassion, perseverance, and strong will." Hajizadeh spends her days nursing her son at home, and her nights nursing patients at Imam Khomeini Hospital in Sari.

"I don't want to retire. I am willing to continue nursing my son and the patients in the hospital. Given how busy I was, it didn't occur to me that I could remain as a nurse for my son - and this is nothing more than a mother's love." Although the genius teen has been dealing with paralysis for ages, he neither lost hope nor ambition.

During the years he was studying, he did not attend any school. He was self-ed-

ucated, studying at home, without a teacher or an adviser. His physical condition was really difficult to overcome. He was not even able to turn the pages of a book.

He would lie down to study. He worked so hard to achieve good grades.

All his efforts and hard work finally paid off and, at the age of 18, he managed to get the 25th rank in the national entrance exams. In addition, he is adept in chess.

He succeeded in winning many championships, and winning official positions at national chess competitions. Esmail owes his success to his mother's love. He said, "I should write a book to appreciate my mother's passion and patience. My mother is full of kindness and sacrifice, and she is my friend."

He has had a meeting with Hossein Kamali, the Minister of Science of Mazandaran Province, and has applied for virtual learning in the field of philosophy at the University of Tehran.



Esmail Nasrollahi (R) posing for a memorial photo with his favorite singer-songwriter Mohsen Yeganeh

● COURTESY OF NASROLLAHI FAMILY