

## Appendix 1:

### Estimated patients treated and money spent in Asian countries

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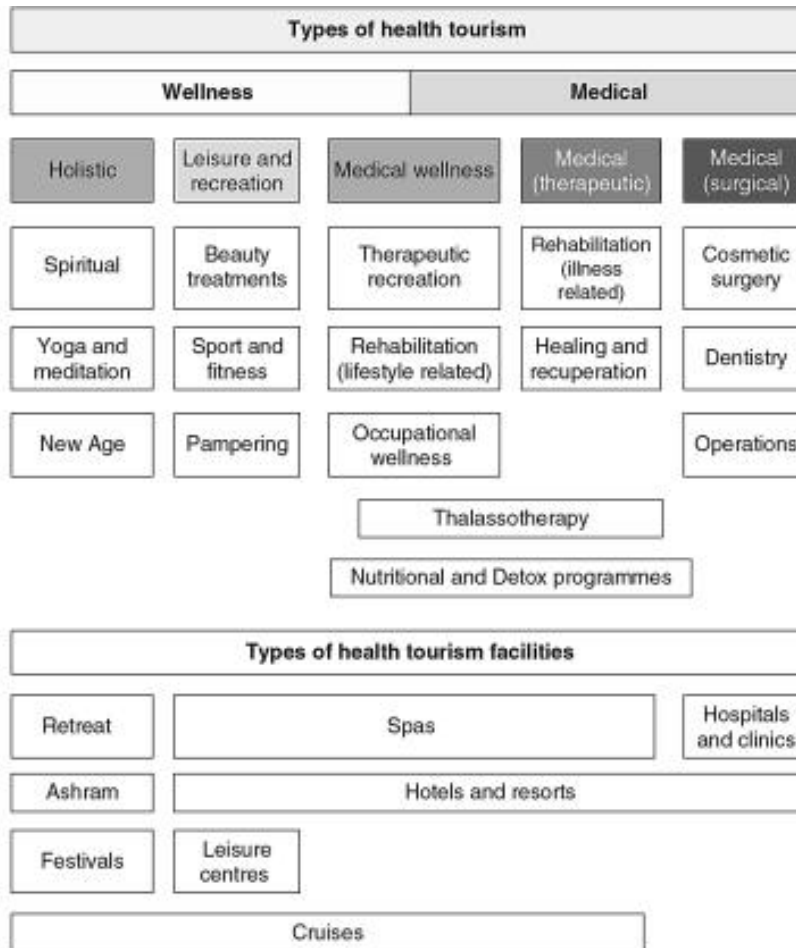
<i>Country</i>	<i>Patients treated</i>	<i>Estimated earnings (US\$)</i>	<i>Major services provided</i>
Thailand	900 000 (2008)	850 million (2008)	Cosmetic surgery, organ transplants, dental treatment, joint replacements
India	450 000 (2007)	480 million (2005)	Cardiac surgery, joint replacements, eye surgery
Singapore	410 000 (2006)	560 million (2004)	Liver transplants, joint replacements, cardiac surgery
Malaysia	350 000 (2007)	43 million (2005)	Cardiology, cardio-thoracic surgery, cosmetic surgery

*Sources:* ESCAP;<sup>12</sup> DiscoverMedicalTourism.com;<sup>41</sup> Health-Tourism.com.<sup>42</sup>

**Adapted from:** Hopkins et al., 2010: 192

## Appendix 2: Spectrum of health tourism

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Adapted from: Smith and Puczko, 2009: 7

## Appendix 3: Interview nr. 1

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Date of the interview: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
Interviewer: Brigita Cseriova  
The mode of conduction: Skype interview

Short description of the interviewee: A 33 years old male who studied Economics at Aarhus University and is now an account manager at a bank in Copenhagen. Single, without kids.

Transcript of the interview: see below

*A short pre-conversation took place before the recorded interview to learn about the interviewee and his medical experiences in order to ensure he fits our research sample. He explained he had an accident in South America where he was hospitalized and that he uses dentist in Thailand. Based on our definition on medical tourism, the first experience is not the experience we looked for, so the interview started by questioning about the dental experiences in Thailand.*

**You said that you have been in Thailand for dentistry/dental treatment.**

- Yes. Actually I go there just to have my normal check-ups also. I am going there again next month. I am going there for check-ups.

**So it is like that you don't even use the Danish dental treatments?**

- I haven't used that for 10 years.

**And you go to Thailand for vacations as well, right?**

- I combine it always. Only for vacations, not job. But then I visit dentist when I am going there always has some 1-2 days I can go to Bangkok and go to dentist and I always combine it with some holidays.

**And did you only use dental treatments abroad or have you had other, like surgical treatments?**

- Not planned, but I had an accident while I was two month in a hospital in South America, in the Caribbean. But it was not planned, because I had an accident.

**Please, describe the experience you had during these medical treatments in Thailand.**

- Good. Very impressed with the service, by the luxury and the quality and also the way... the place I was, was like a huge- huge dentist's clinic. The first time I was there was in 2002, I think it was, and I had a break some of my teeth off... and I came in there... and they had like an accountant for every language: for French, for Chinese, for Japanese, for English and for German. So there are people who speak every language, I go to the English part, I get an appointment and I could go in 10 minutes later. I had this huge room where people is and I could hear music and everything and it was five dentists around me. Oh, it was five persons around me, it was only one dentist and assistants and all that the other ones. One hour later I

went out and I paid like one tenth of the price I would do at home. And it was a really good job. So I was like: wow, why the hell go to the dentists in Denmark. And since that time I just come there again and again and again. And I like it, it is really nice and it feels comfortable.

**Where was it?**

- It's in Bangkok.

**How did you find the information or how did you find this dental clinic?**

- I asked my girlfriend that time. She was Thai and she lived there and she used the same. So I didn't go internet or anything.

**So you became loyal to the same clinic?**

- Yeah. Because I like it.

**And what is the reason that you decided to obtain these treatments. Is it only the costs? Like is it only the cheaper price that makes you do these dental treatments in Thailand.**

- That's what I'm telling myself. But it is also an excuse to go there.

**Okay, so benefits with fun, right?**

- Yeah.

**And you said that you use 10% of the price compared to Denmark?**

- That time. Now it got more expensive. Now it changed a lot down there, so now it's more like one-third.

**Is the quality or service at the same level or did it also increase?**

- Increased. Like in Denmark it also increased, down there it also increased, but the quality down there - that's my expression anyway - I feel the service and quality is better down there.

**Did you have problem with a language?**

- No, not at all. They have English-speaking doctors and assistants for English-speaking persons.

**Did the destination influence your attitude towards travelling there? So is it only Thailand, you would not imagine having the dental treatments for example in Hungary?**

- Yeah, could, but I just don't have... I could. I was actually considering in Poland once. Hungary or Poland, whatever, but I was considering in Poland, I have a dentist contact in Poland, but then I thought: okay, Poland is only half the price in Denmark, the other one is one third and I have to make a new... I had some old holes that to remake, so I actually pay much trip to Asia and I rather go to Asia then to Poland or go to Budapest. I could easily go to East Europe, I have no problem with that... at all! or Sweden in that matter.

**So it was the price that mattered?**

- Yeah. But also because the quality is really high. And I know some places to try a dentist there. But I also hear some bad experience and I know the place I'm going there is really good. It also a little bit of - how do you call it - comfort in knowing the place.

**So you also mentioned that you are combining it with a holiday while you are in Thailand. What kind of tourism facilities do you use? I mean probably you stay at a hotel or you travel around the country, or what do you usually do there as a tourist?**

- Thailand is different because I lived there for a year also. I started traveling around as a backpacker and after there I found a work down there, couple of years after. I have lots of friends down there, so it is very different for me.

**So you are really familiar with the whole country.**

- Yes. I speak bit of Thai, too.

**How would you classify yourself when traveling? So when you are going for these dental treatments, what would you say: are you rather a patient or you are there a tourist?**

- I'm a tourist.

**Would you recommend these treatments for your friends based on your experiences or have you ever recommended someone in Denmark to try a Thai dental treatments?**

- Everyone I meet. Also you, you should do it.

**Have you actually pursue someone to go there?**

- Yeah. I also take some friends down there. So let's get a check-up it wouldn't cost anything. So I bring my travelling friends... I travel down there two times a year and I have 10 or 15 different friends with me, not in the same time, but one at a time. Every time I go to dentist, I always ask them if they wanna come, so sometimes I pulled someone to do it.

**And what are your arguments for doing these things?**

- Quality and price.

**Now I would like to ask you some questions about your travel experiences. How often do you actually travel?**

- I say like this: I have a gold card, a private gold card at SAS. And that means that you have to travel at least 15 times a year. So I have to travel these 15 times. At least, the last two years I have traveled more than these 15 times a year outside Europe.

**Do you consider yourselves a traveler?**

- In private terms, I think I travel a lot. I travel more than average anyway. Maybe if you mean business traveling, most people who has a job that includes traveling during a job. I travel a lot.

**Do you prefer travelling faraway countries or rather to short-hauls, like Europe.**

- Normally, I combine three-four times abroad... and then I have some weekends around Europe because I don't have that much vacations. It's a half - half. Five-six times abroad and five-six times around Europe a year.

**And do you rather explore something new or do you prefer going back to countries you have actually visited before?**

- Hmm... that's... that's a good question as I would like to say I always like to try something new, but I've been to Asia, like 40 times to Thailand. So... but normally, I use... like I go to Thailand next on the 10<sup>th</sup>, I go to dentist and I will be in Bangkok for 3 days and then I will go to Brunei. Last time, I was there I went to Singapore, last before that to Malaysia, and before that to Vietnam, so I go there but I use it as a hub to go to other places, so I always take another country with me. But I always land in Bangkok as I have friends there.

**So you really combine dentistry with vacations?**

- Yes, in Asia.

**What kind of risk do you see when you travel abroad?**

- No, I don't see any risks.

**So you are not really concerned about travelling?**

- No, no. I am normally never afraid with guidelines where there say the country is very dangerous. If you take them with cautions, it is okay. I just been to Ethiopia. The foreign minister say don't travel to Ethiopia and if you travel there, travel with a police escort. I travelled alone along with a blonde girl. And nothing happened.

**How do you prepare yourself before you travel to an unknown destination?**

- Normally, it is impulsive. If I see advertising of something half price of the ticket, I look up the name of the place and if I haven't been there, then it's fine. If I have time I try to search on Wikipedia and see about the country. But normally I just leave it in the plane. For example in Ethiopia... I thought it was very hot, but I didn't know it is in 300 meters, so it was not hot. But I found that out when I read about it on the airplane on the way down there.

**Do you make some arrangement (e.g. book a hotel) or is it included when you buy a ticket?**

- I haven't bought a package for 10 years, I think, so no. I always book scheduled planes, never tourists planes. I must say that in Ethiopia I had found a hotel for the first two days for just to find out where to stay. I normally do that for the first couple of day if I go to a new destination and then on I plan. I never plan the whole trip and then I arrange step by step ahead with some locals that can help you. I never bought a guidebook. Most people go as it is written in Lonely Planet to see this and that. It is very funny to see. I don't wanna be one of those.

**Do you travel like a backpacker?**

- I am not saying I am a luxury traveler, I like five stars hotels, but I don't care about living in two-stars either if there is nothing else around or if I don't want it to be too expensive. But I'm not a backpacker, not anymore because I am working. Travelling is actually not a money issue, it's more like time issues now. Because you only have 7 weeks of vacation, so you have to get the

most out of it. And it's actually really funny as you say it now when I think about it. I go to Thailand to save 500Kr or maybe 1000kr. for the normal check-outs. If I have a hole, maybe 2000kr. every two times to save. But I use 14000kr for fun and going out. So it actually don't matter at all. I just got used to go there, so actually it's quite funny when I think about it.

**Have you ever had any negative experience with a doctor or other medical person in Denmark?**

- How long time do you have? Because maybe I'm a boring guy right now, but I had a past where I did lots of extreme sport and have been really clumsy or unlucky or whatever you say, so I have been to hospitals quite a few times. And I have been quite a few times that they did the wrong thing to me, so I have a lot of... I trust the doctors' principal because if you go to the bank, people trust the banker, and they of course trying to do the best. But he is a human so he does mistakes also and they have pressure over them and everything else ... I don't think they would do anything wrong to me on purpose. I don't say a lot, but I was unfortunate you only hear about the bad things, but I trust them. But I had bad experiences.

**And did you also have bad experience with your dentist in Denmark?**

- Nooo, actually not. He was really nice.

**So it wasn't the main reason that you changed to Thai?**

- No, not at all.

**Do you trust the Danish health system in general?**

- Yeah!

**And you satisfied with it?**

- That's a political question and I would say no, I'm not satisfied with it because I don't like when it is not privatized. It can be a political question in terms of if I'm satisfied with it I never complain about the mistakes they have done to me, but I think it should be better.

**How important is to you the relationship between you and your doctor? Like do you like to have as a friendly relationship or is it okay to have this formal/official relationship?**

- Oh. I think it is nice... I like to talk and open towards thing, not be like very clinic. Clinic things are mentally sometimes... If you have a very clinic relationship with somebody, then maybe you are afraid of asking the questions. I actually like in doctors in Thailand. Down there is very - what do you call it - hierarchy built up so the dentist is the chef and then the assistants they have to listen to dentist only and command orders and things like that and there I am talking to everybody and they are not used to that.. I try to joke and it's funny.

**Which qualities increase your trust towards a person? Like how do you generally trust a person?**

- Telling me things, as I do. Like if you're a doctor , you can always, maybe is time to relate to real thing in the world. Explaining that this operation here can go bad. Then you say okay. My kidney was gone because I had an accident and they took my kidney away 10 years ago and the first doctor was a senior doctor and he come to say to me that you have 2% chance to die of this operation here, you have 10% chance to be crippled. And I thought, wow that's a lot of numbers, you know. And there was like an attendee and he came to explain me like we actually

doing 10 patients a year this operation and in last 2 years there was no accident around it... he was talking more human about it, instead of just numbers then you start trusting them more I think.

**You said that you would consider Poland or Hungary for dental treatments, but would you consider other countries for medical treatment? Because you also said that there were some mistakes during your surgeries in Denmark, haven't you thought about having those surgeries in another country that have a better system or care for that?**

- Well, my surgeries in Denmark were not planned. It was an accident when they had to operate me right away. There I was not in conscious, so I couldn't do that. But I have never thought about getting any cosmetic surgery because cosmetory is something you plan and I need it, but right now I don't have the money for it, so I don't think about it, but in that term if one day I decided to get then I would think about where to get it. I would investigate where it is good. It is not like I only want it in Denmark or I don't want be in Denmark. But I have never had other than dentist planned operations.

**Could you think of something that could stop you having dental treatments abroad or having any medical treatments abroad?**

- If it gets too expensive to fly there or if I lose my job and I won't have money, so I would have to go here. Even if the operation is cheaper down there, the whole trip is not.

**How do you see trust in your decision to take these medical treatments abroad? Does it play a big role or does it actually play any role?**

- Of course, it plays. Well, dentist is not bad, you can destroy teeth only, but if it goes something to your body and you don't trust the people who do it, then damn you're stupid to do it. I easily pay double the price if I trust somebody, but it's a money question again. But if there is something you have to do what is not necessary, like cosmetic. Then I would not do it if I don't trust a place.

**Would you for instance trust India based on the information you collected?**

- I have been travelling in India a lot, but I am thinking now. I am afraid to have taken out my kidney while they're operating on my nose. I would, but I at least would have 3-4-5 references I can talk to who have been the same place. Now I am talking about major operations.

**THE END**



## Appendix 4:

### Interview nr. 2

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Date of the interview: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012.  
Interviewer: Zosia Konieczna  
The mode of conduction: Face-to-face interview

Short description of the interviewee: 59 years old Dutch woman. Potential medical patient.

Transcript of the interview: see below

**I will ask you few questions about your medical background and your present medical experience.  
When you were young, so as a child, were you afraid of doctors in general?**

- I guess, no, not afraid. It was really something like being very respectful. Knowing to be with someone important. It was like the doctors are very well-educated persons, persons who know things. Well, you need them and well, I guess my parents learned me this approach.

**What was the general image of a doctor in your family?**

- That was the authority. I remember that we had two doctors in my life up to 17, until the time I lived with my parents. First, there was a doctor and my mother disliked this person, really, because he had this reputation just not to have time for you, speaking very loud voice. And it was at the time when in a little village he came along, you didn't go there mostly, but it was the doctor was to come. And my sister Anna had these lung infections pretty often... so, well, the doctor came pretty often and my mum was so angry because this man just dropped in and dropped out, and screamed, yelled something. And there was a second doctor because if the first one was not in service, then it was the other one. He lived couple of villages away, and she was so happy because this was very kind person. And I have some... I remember this person being the big man, the tall man, a really big man with very dark voice. But it was like me just glancing at him and well, just never say anything just one or two phrases and well, this man was to speak. And it was up to 17 and then I guess I had a different relation with doctors when I was a student, when I moved out and was a student in the north in Groningen. Every now and then, you needed to see a doctor. I realised that it was something I needed to respect or to be afraid of even because this was a man and I was a young woman, but I didn't feel silly or bad. That was nice.

**Did you ever have any traumatic experience with a doctor or hospital or anybody from medical area in your life?**

- Me myself, no. I just had... when I was a child I was only one day at a hospital or half a day for my almonds. I have very few experience and traumatic? no.

**Any negative experiences?**

- Not for me personally, but I have some negative experiences with one of my father's doctors. And he was homeopathic doctor. My father really wanted just to go to a homeopathic doctor

and my mother not. And this was a problem in my family because my parents didn't agree. And well with medical, mental medical problem with my father, couple of times it was me had a discussion with my father's doctor. And it was rather bad, but I guess because of his personality. It was only phone calls I had with him and he overruled me completely. And it was something that made me really angry because I was supposed to explain things to him. And well, just didn't respond. It was like you are insinuating things and it's not what it is and he stopped the conversation. And I think, this is my worst experience with doctors. And my father it was a really big problem because this doctor, when my father got seriously ill, he made a very bad diagnosis and it was very sad for my mother, for my family.

**Was that causing some further problems then?**

- Absolutely, very severe problems. He didn't see that my father had a cancer. He was only telling that he was only getting old, there's no problems whatsoever and when my father needed to go to hospital, he was very bad already. This was traumatic for my mum. ...

**And what is today your general attitude towards doctors?**

- I call it myself, sometimes I call it with my two sisters. I say it is something like... I don't know whether it is a good English, but it's worry less. I don't worry about myself and in comparison to my two sisters it's a little bit... there is a difference, because they are always talking or many times talking about... well, medical treatments and also alternative medical treatments. And I'm more over like. I feel okay and as long as I feel okay, I don't worry about anything. And I don't see doctor very often. And I feel that ... I have a new doctor since only three years now because my former doctor is pensioner now. And well, it's for me something easy-going, but I accept easily what a doctor tells me. I know I'm not difficult for doctor.

**And how do you choose your doctor when you need to have some kind of treatment these days?**

- Mostly, I ask my doctor - the generalists - if he has an advice for me. Last year, I had a trouble with my... I needed a physiotherapist... and well, I just give him a ring and well, I didn't speak with him personally because it is not possible then, but I asked whether they have good experiences with someone in the neighbourhood. And then I accepted it. I am not a person who investigate these thing, I accepted what they advice. And it was okay. I felt that was okay.

**So what is your present relation with your doctor, the general practitioner that you have right now?**

- Hmm... I think it is very much on a same level, on an equal level. I've seen him only twice because this is this new doctor. I didn't choose him myself. It's the same approach because I was advised by my former doctor too - well, to try this one. And I've seen him twice. He is younger and that's the thing I like because, well, he won't be pensioner very quickly. And it's a person who asks you what do you want to tell me, just sit down and he has to take some time, he's pretty patient. We speak on an equal terms.

**And are you satisfied with your doctor right now?**

- Yeah. So far very satisfied.

**And what do you think creates this satisfaction?**

- Well, with this one I cannot really say because it's so... well, it is so young. But my former doctor I've been seeing for over 20 years because I lived here for over 20 years. What was very special with this doctor and it was... I mean, my husband felt the same, my children more or less. This was a doctor who was not that patient, normally. He was a little bit stressful person but very sympathetic, but what was wonderful with this doctor that when there was something really wrong, he felt this very well and then he took very much time. Several times, he was like diagnosis, ciao. He had not a bad reputation, but there were talks about this person that he never takes any time, but really find out that he took time only when it was necessary and then he took very much time and then it was something we admired a lot.

**And how important to you is the relation between you and your doctor if in the matter of medical treatment? Is it important?**

- Of course, because you must feel like in good hands with your doctor. And well, when there is a reputation like with this former doctor who I know some people didn't like his character, but he had a reputation of being a very good in his diagnosis. And this is something very important. I cannot check now for this new doctor I have, but well, the thing that he is kind person and willing to listen makes you feel confident. And that's the most important thing that you feel confident.

**And now I will ask you few questions about tourism and your general attitude towards travelling. So could you please describe your attitude towards travelling?**

- Well, I love it. I love travelling. Travelling for me is not... I don't travel to relax, so I am not going to seaside, to the beach and lie down and be suntanned. No, I travel to... well, to make trips, big trips in a country because I... well, couple of countries I loved to know, to see by myself. In a way, I know something and it's a very different culture or very different nature, so I want to explore. And of course, it is not about being stressful, because mostly it's holiday, so you don't want real stress, so you want some relaxing time also. But moreover, it's about having pretty active holiday.

**And do you prefer travelling to far-away places or rather not very distant places?**

- Well, every time when I come back from travel from far-away, I realise for the future I wouldn't need this because there is so much around me in Europe that I'd like to know. So each time I'll say: first, I will go travelling around Europe, so there are no reasons to go far-away. So it's like two answers.

**And in general, do you prefer travelling to places you don't know and you have never seen before or rather to places you know and you are familiar with?**

- Well, I found out now that I like to go to new places, but I always like to go back but once only. So I return once and I think it's nice to be back... and a little be later I think it's okay. I know what it is and next time must be a different place. That's like... I feel this is my thing. My way of choosing.

**And what kind of risks do you see when you travel abroad? Are there any?**

- I guess it's a little bit like with the doctors. When I don't worry too much... when I travel, I don't worry too much. Well, I can tell you because you will ask more questions, but I have a reputation of being a little bit overconfident. I don't see...

### **Within travelling?**

- Within travelling, within my life, in general. I don't see too much problems... and when I think things over, there might be problems but I don't feel. And I don't think I take really many many risks, but I feel confident mostly.

### **Do you prepare yourself before travelling?**

- Yes.

### **And how do you do that?**

- Reading, by reading. Well, there's one thing to choose my destinations, well it's very much that I prefer very much to go to countries where I can speak the language. That's a preparation in a way. So I'm prepared to go there and know that I can speak with the people, then it's always about finding a destination I read things about. It's about cultural destination like Georgia last year, when I was there. I've some ideas about the culture, the ancient culture because that's something I love and then I... well, I start reading. I prepare myself by reading pretty much.

### **And how does a typical process of arranging your vacation look like? I mean, when do you start thinking of your holidays, or how much time before actually going, what is the way you prepare, you choose the destination?**

- What it's rather new for me is that it's only couple of years that I make a booking. Because I in a way... let's say up to fifty-five years I didn't book.

### **You mean hotels?**

- No. I was just like... we decided about a destination to go somewhere and especially, when we were camping we didn't book anything, but even later when we planned to go by car and plan to be in a hotels. We never planned hotels, we never book hotels in advance. Sometimes two days in advance. So in the country, we have our books and we give phone calls. And that's the way we planned, and it's only just very recently... actually I only booked once a trip with a group and of course it's a couple of month ahead. And half a year ahead seems crazy to me. Even for a big trip to abroad, to America. I guess that the idea of making a reservation four month ahead, it's to me something like 'Why?'.

### **Also plane tickets?**

- Yes, also plane tickets. And I know it's not very profitable. It might be not very profitable, but the idea of having this in my agenda six month in advance is something I dislike.

### **Okay. And what is usually the main purpose of your holiday?**

- Well, of course, it's holiday because it's in the period you don't work. There is no work. Or it was that up to couple of years ago especially, now it a little less. I mean all this period when I had my work, we had our work and then have couple of weeks off, then of course it was really holiday and then the combination of not only going to the beach and going to relax, but trying to travel, really travel, see things, make many kilometres. Just for fun, to be in a different country and relax a little bit and now it's more focus on visiting very different cultures. It's the aim of travelling.

**And what are the important considerations that affect your decision on taking a vacation? Is it price, quality, culture, friends maybe?**

- Yeah, I think, for holiday it's really culture, like I explained in the former question. And of course price is something, but it's very much on choosing a way to be with the people, so not to be... to find myself with a big group of tourists and surrounded by tourists. No, I like to be surrounded by locals, and that's why I mostly decide to book hotel and to go to restaurants, never choose all-inclusive destination, because well, you are not surrounded by locals. So first it's culture, and then well of course it's comfort, at second place. Comfort is something like it is not necessary to have a very good hotel, it's more the change of alternatives. Let's say two nights in little comfortable, and two nights in little less because the budget is not... well, you must survey the budget and control the budget. Accept also hostels, very cheap hotels.

**Diversity also?**

- Diversity, exactly.

**Okay, and then I would like to ask you few things about the general trust, so it will be little bit different now. When you meet someone for the first time in your life, how do you approach the person? How do you feel when meeting a completely new person?**

- Well, I said I was ... I am a very confident person. And I see this happens with me almost every time when I meet new people. I realise that I... just I feel overconfident with very many people. I talk easily about... well, pretty personal things.

**With total strangers that you meet for the first time?**

- And why? I couldn't explain anyway. Because I see in my family many differences, so how come that one person... and of course, I didn't have any traumatic experiences with doctors and perhaps it's because I didn't have really traumatic experiences in my life. So I feel confident and I don't feel the need to change this approach.

**And then when you meet somebody for the first time, you get this first impression, usually. Could you maybe say which aspects influence this first impression for you?**

- It's difficult to say. To explain what makes you think that a person is a kind person or let's say honest. Sometimes people say 'I always look at the eyes', but I don't know what I look, the mouth or the eyes, or whatever. And I guess when I don't feel confident - doesn't happen often - I try to be off... pretty fast. That's what I do. I try not to have a second experience. And when it's about colleagues, so people you cannot avoid, I think I rather try to avoid, not to be in conflict with, so not to be together with. But I don't have an example - you don't ask me and it's not needed, but it's difficult to me to find example, but I know this is the way I proceed.

**Okay, so it's nothing like how the person looks or how the person speaks?**

- Of course, but what it is exactly... well, how the person speaks, like I think it's something very bad with me that it's sometimes I think that he is stupid or she is stupid. And I have problems with stupid people. But what is this? I mean really stupid in a way or not intelligent at all. Then it's like stupid. It's not about education, but kind of... you don't understand what I mean or not willing to understand or not open. I guess it's that when I feel that that person is very narrow-minded. That's to me something I think I get them little bit blocked. I know it's physical. All

these things are physical, but I cannot say that it's on how one look like. It must be a combination of things.

**On scale from 0 to 10 points, what is the level of trust towards a person when you meet this person for the first time? Where 0 is complete lack of trust, and 10 would be for full trust for this person.**

- I guess, I am on an 8.

**And when you meet a person for the first time which qualities increase your trust towards that person? So what could make the person like higher in trust for you?**

- Well, that's that intelligence. The kind of intelligence, so to see that that person is open-minded and intelligence and willing to communicate. And it's perhaps because I speak easily; it's difficult when people are really very closed and not open-minded. It's very difficult or it's rather difficult. But it's not about feeling unconfident, but it's about feeling less. About feeling... well, nothing.

**So it would be the intelligence you said and the open-mindedness.**

- Yes, and something like a connection, something in common. Because the feeling of - not common interest, common... well common thing you like, or you think it's important in life. Something you feel this connection that we have something in common. And that means a lot to me.

**Could you maybe explain why it is important, those features that you mentioned?**

- Well, I think that's because you can... it's like approaching the world a little bit in the same way, to feel the same openness and also to feel the same caring about people, or the same interest in people. So liking to know people. Because I think, especially I know I like to live with many different persons from different cultures. And it's because of my profession. Normally, I meet quite some people from very different countries and it's something I love. When... I feel very strong bound with people who are open to the world. And to the world really over Dutch frontiers ... and if there is something in a first contact, that make me feel that this new person feels little bit the same, then I feel really comfortable. It's something like I'd like to know you, or I'd like to spend a night with you or have dinner with you, to do things together.

**And on the opposite side, which qualities would decrease your trust towards somebody you meet for the first time?**

- Yeah, that's exactly the opposite. Sometimes I find myself with people who... in politics are very much opposite to my ideas and then is often that is that people who feel very restricted and don't open themselves to different cultures and it can make me angry when people talk badly about people they don't know. And then it's about trust. Because when people talk... when people say things like - and I understand that they don't have trust and they are really a little bit scared for differences, scared for people - well, then it makes feel like angry sometimes. I try to talk against it, argue with them. That's very strong with me.

**And then maybe you can explain why those qualities are decreasing then your trust? So that will be the different opinions?**

- Of course. I think it doesn't decrease my trust, but I'm concerned about people who don't trust people and to me it's something that really doesn't make the world better, because it makes the world so much better when you have trust in people. It's like when I explained several times to friends of mine who have children, young children who leave to go abroad or to study abroad that... well, when they are really very worried about their children to let them go, then I only think that my experience when I moved out at the years of 17, then of course I had done some silly things in the eyes of my parents, but really not dramatic and I never felt myself in a big trouble. So I guess that mostly people are not looking to cause big trouble or looking to cheat people, I think normally... let's say 90-95% of humanity, people are nice and trustful. And when I meet people who try to convince me of the opposite that I am naive... and well, one day I will discover it, I'll be in trouble. But I wasn't in trouble so far, so where is the problem?

**Thank you! And now I have the last area of questions which is about trust in medical area. So could you tell me if you in generally trust medical professionals about aspects connected to their field?**

- I guess in general, since I said I have not much experience myself, but of course I have experience through my family with medical world. I think that you really must be aware of problems. And for me it's not really about to feel this but it's an intelligent thing. I mean that I know that in every profession, there are good professionals and bad or not as good professionals. So it's normal it's the same in the medical world. So there are good doctors and bad or not so good doctors. How to find out and that's one thing I should be concerned about, but I'm not really active. Like I see many people trying to have an investigation on doctors, on the treatments. And I tend not to do these investigations, I tend to accept what I find and then I hope that it will be okay.

**And why would you/why do you trust them?**

- This must be because I told you I'm not traumatised by bad experiences. I guess when you have bad experiences, you change your attitude. It's a matter of temper, because some people are afraid, more afraid and want to control. And I don't feel to control things where I am not professional. It must be that, because when I think that this is my profession or it's my talent, it's my business, I want to control things, really! But if it's not my...

**Field.**

- Field, exactly. Then I really tend to accept.

**And which characteristics make - in your eyes - doctor a trustworthy person?**

- It's the communication. But it should not too much be - what we call sometimes the Dutch communication of leaving the responsibility to the client or the patient. Because I know that in general, generally spoken Dutch doctors tend to ask you what do you think and what do you want. And I know there are many countries where this is different... when I was a child the doctor gives his opinion and takes the decision for you. There should be something in between. So the doctor should be the one who makes you feel that he knows what he is doing and that he makes the preposition for a treatment. And not that he tells me 'what do you want to choose' or he might offer two alternatives, but not these open thing 'what do you think?'. And I know it happens in Holland. And I guess when I would have this experience, it would make me sad or distrustful... and not willing to react.

**And do you trust your own doctor?**

- Yes. I mean my own doctor is the new one, but so far so good. And the former one I really did.

**And what makes you trust – well since you have the new one for very short period of time, so what made you trust the old one? The one that you had for 20 years?**

- Yes, that was especially his reputation of having the good diagnosis. And I found out that it was that.

**And do you trust the Dutch health system?**

- More yes than no, but I have a problem with privatization and the idea of making it more commercial, so it should be on profit or non-profit. Well, I guess it's the combination of health service and insurance services where I have a problem, I don't really agree with this system. I guess that especially insurance companies like Pharmaceutics are more focused on having profit and I guess that well, in Dutch health... public health service or insurance service, whatever... the way that we are sometimes stimulated to have more medical exams because you could find out whether there is a problem and why stimulate this. Because I'm trustful when I feel healthy, I don't feel the need to do have an exam whatsoever, so this idea of this... that many people do to prevent for the future to fall ill, to have a disease, so to go and have a research on this. I dislike this tendency in Dutch health service or in Dutch insurance service.

**Okay. And on the opposite side, which characteristics make a doctor untrustworthy in your eyes?**

- Well, it must be really the opposite of what I told. If there is a reputation of making mistakes so bad diagnosis or... well, bad treatment. And it is because people talk about these [...]. That's, I mean reputation is far one of the most important thing for a doctor.

**And why would that be?**

- Well, because the reputation is the basis for your trust. Trust or distrust. I guess it must be that. Perhaps there is a relation with my – when I said when I prepare to go abroad or when I prepare to travel for holiday, I first want to know things, I read things. And that's a little bit similar because you first want to know things about a doctor or whether he is a new doctor at the hospital. So you want to know something on his...

**Background**

- Background, yes. And that's a reputation and that is related to trust and distrust.

**And when you hear a term 'medical tourism', what kind of feelings do you associate with that?**

- Well, in Holland it's especially about waiting long time to have treatments. I know it's a little bit better than a couple of years ago, but it's very started there. I mean, for many surgeries people needed to wait such a long time that they planned to go abroad. And since my family – most of members of my family –live near Germany or near Belgium, they easily could choose to go abroad. They didn't really so far because there was no medical reason. My sister once did, but it was not on surgery. It was only to see a homeopathic doctor of good reputation.

**But is it a rather positive or negative association with medical tourism?**

- Well, when you say tourism, to me it's not negative. Because it's okay go abroad, try to find out treatments or second diagnosis abroad might be very intelligent and very useful. But to me the



idea of combining it with tourism is a little bit funny, I would say. I know it's... you could find reason because you want to see a doctor, because it's cheaper abroad – because I guess it's that. When people look for treatment abroad it's first of all it must be about budget, unless they know – again I come back to the same idea – unless they know about reputation, about a doctor they've known by friends or whatever. Then I guess you'd decide to well to find out and then the budget is less important. But if you don't know the doctors abroad, to me it's only the matter of budget and perhaps of time, but especially matter of budget.

**Okay, and would you ever go yourself abroad for a medical treatment?**

- Of course, I cannot say ever, but... only eventually. Because I guess that first with my feeling of being in good hands here, I rather stay in my country.

**But are there any specific... Can you maybe think of any specific situations that would make you go abroad?**

- To me it would only be the very sad circumstances. When there was a very... when it's a matter of a really bad problem, bad diagnosis and you will be suggested to go abroad and to find special doctor or clinic or hospital abroad. So in real urgent situation and not for any cosmetic surgery or surgery that could wait. I mean if it's not really urgent, you can wait and you can find out a doctor in your country. And why go abroad and be without your family, alone all around?

**Okay and what kind of difficulties would you expect to appear when travelling abroad for a medical treatment?**

- Well, I guess that is more difficult to change anything in the situation. When you are in Holland and if you feel the need to communicate, to change something, to ask questions I guess it's really more... well, less of problem in your country than abroad, because the whole situation is different, and especially with this situation of hierarchy. Because since I'm Dutch and since I want to be on equal levels, speak on equal levels with doctors, it's difficult to be... because I have one experience abroad, but it was not because we wanted it, but because we had an accident... that we have a medical experience in Italy. And it appeared that any Italian doctors really do not want to decide for you and you don't speak on equal terms... well, that's the worst thing when you are abroad and ill, because you want to communicate.

**And is it in your opinion safe to travel abroad for a medical treatment?**

- I think it's only... I feel it's only safe in Western countries, because I have the idea... when you travel to China, India – I mean Asia, the country it's that different and I feel - but I don't know why, I don't read much about this, I'm not really informed - but to me it feels like business there. And it's very much different than to feel to be at home and again to communicate and to be in good hands. And again it's possible that people... it must be possible to be in good hands abroad, but that's in an Asian country where we don't have the same standards of living as in Europe, in Western Europe, I guess I'd feel less comfortable. Although I know that it's a matter of medicine and health care they can be very advanced. But when there is a very big difference in a country in good hospitals – private hospitals or public hospitals when there is a big difference, then it feels like business. And when you live in a country like Holland where the standard is very high and of course there are problems and there are mistakes, but in general the standards are very high, then I feel much more comfortable in my country or in a European

country. That's why I make a difference between going abroad for treatments in Western world or non-western world.

**What would be the Western world then?**

- It's Europe and it might be America, although it's far away. It's really for me the Western world.

**Do you see yourself as a person who would be able to trust a doctor from abroad?**

- Only by reputation then. Only by advice from friends, from people who have any experience with a special hospital or special person, doctor.

**And to which countries would you ever consider going for a medical treatment?**

- I think Germany... and Belgium also. Scandinavia. Or... not America, because to go so far away for me it's not normal. Only if it's very urgent or in the same time very urgent and with a good advice, but I guess not it would be the last decision.

**To go so far?**

- Yes, to go so far.

**And what do you think would be important for you when choosing place for medical treatment? Which aspects?**

- Well, the aspect... I was still thinking of the formal question because when I say Western world, meaning Scandinavia and Belgium and Germany. It's like one thing desiring to be with people who are a little bit similar to your own culture. So all the people, it's the doctors or the nurses or well, everybody you would be in contact with abroad. If the culture is that different from your culture, I would be less trustful and that's because of the communication and reputation - everything I mentioned - it's related to the culture. And although I like/ I love very different cultures for all over the world, let's say in Southern America, I feel very much less comfortable in a hospital in Southern America then in my Western world.

**And what stops you from going abroad for medical purposes?**

- I don't know... It's silly, I can only think of something like if it is a country with a very instable political situation. So what would stop me... to me it's... it would take some time to decide to go abroad. So if I would decide to go abroad in very urgent matter, so what would stop me then? That situation? And it was only, well in very... not that easy at all in that country.

**Maybe I should ask a little bit differently. Why don't you go abroad for medical treatment?**

- Because so far I think I can have the treatment in Holland. It's only a theoretical thing to think over when to go, why to go and I always come back to the answer that I need to be advised by someone 'go and see this doctor'. And I'd accept.

**What in your opinion would be your personal biggest threat when going abroad for medical treatment?**

- Well... Sometimes I think might be something on medicines. I dislike to take many medicines. I know in Holland there is a reputation of not giving many pills, the doctor even... well, it's what people tell me. They go to see my doctor and he even refuses to give me antibiotics. So why

would I go to see this doctor, if he doesn't even want to give me anything. And for me it's the opposite abroad. Because if they would just prescribe me lots of medicine, I get... and feel like worse to have problems with overmedication.

**Okay, that would be one of the biggest threats. Why is that?**

- That must be because I tend to be not very trustful with pharmaceuticals. It's something that this is a business of making you accept to have prescriptions, medications.

**What kind of conditions would have to be fulfilled to make you feel comfortable with medical organisation abroad, with medical hospital or doctor?**

- Should be something written on paper, something very concrete about how it's organised. And of course it's something related to insurance. But more... also the communication before you leave. There must be communication. There must be documents that tell me what is the way they work abroad in that hospital where you decide to go, so they give me information. It's little bit like travelling abroad with hotels and whatever you know where you go. Because you can find out on the internet, you can find information. With the advice and good reputation. So I come back to this aspect.

**And would you prefer to do it directly with the doctor or the hospital or would you maybe use the middle man?**

- I guess the middle man, because I since I told you I want to control things in my own field, but I tend to give in the hands of others when they are the professionals. So I guess I rather have a middle man. And this middle man of course must inform me, not decide for me.

**So also being in steady contact with?**

- Yeah. Steady in contact, so before and after.

**And do you think that the issue of trust in medical tourism is important?**

- For me yes, but I guess in general... people just decide because they are told that it's quicker, cheaper or easier or it's about surgery or treatment that we don't have in Holland, so then it's normal. I think people don't think about trust. It's something that you don't... It's because you ask the questions, normally you don't think in terms of trust or distrust. It's about the feeling and I think you can't give this interpretation. It's the end of feeling, because you trust or you don't trust people. But you don't have the same in yourself; you don't make the same reasoning. Most people choose or decide on different arguments.

**So if I understand correctly, in your opinion this general trust that people have would have a lot in common in trust to/within medical tourism?**

- Yes. Exactly. And in general... because people who are distrustful in character, I guess, it's the same for treatments abroad. They would even after making the decision, eventually they would think it over and get scared. Then it's a matter of distrust.

**And how important from 0 to 10 again to you is trust as a factor in decision-making for your medical treatment abroad, where 0 is again not important and 10 is the most important?**

- It's 8 or 9. But I want to say that trust is something you feel and not something you can really explain or argue, so it's not on knowing what's better, but it's really a feeling of what's better or good enough.

**So this also in your opinion connected to emotions?**

- Yes. It's that or it's more temper than emotion. So we come back to the beginning because when I am generally a trustful person when I don't worry too much about the world, my doctor or my lawyer or whatever, since I have the idea that most of them are nice people who do their job well, that's my temper and that makes me feel good with my doctors and say well, it's important for me. It's 8 or 9 - that important. That's my feeling without ... it's not possible to explain whether it's based on something concrete. You cannot, because it's a feeling.

**So it's kind of intuition.**

- Yeah.

**Okay, this was my last question. Thank you very much. Is there anything you would like to add?**

- No. I guessed I talked a lot.

**That's very good. Thank you very much!**

**THE END**

## Appendix 5:

### Interview nr. 3

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Date of the interview: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012.

Interviewer: Brigita Cseriova

The mode of conduction: Skype interview

Short description of the interviewee: A 47 years old male who is an organizer in a union in Copenhagen and sometimes during the weekends a bouncer at a disco. He has a Thai wife for four years, but no kids.

Transcript of the interview: see below

#### **Can you please tell us about your experiences with medical tourism?**

- Actually, the first thing I have tried is that I make laser eyes. I could not see long distance and then I go to hospital here [Thailand] and they make it very very very professional. It is about 8 years ago and everything has been perfect. And the reason why I choose Thailand is not only because of the price, it's also because of it is very professional. The doctors in private hospital they had worked about 5 or in the middle of 5 or 10 years in America or England, so they know... their language are perfect and they are very professional. They are specialist, so the doctor who operate my eyes, he only make eyes and nothing else. He travel around Thailand and only make eyes, nothing else, so before me he had make 32000 eyes. So he said to me just relax, you are not the first.

#### **How did you find him/ this clinic?**

- Actually on the Internet, I write a little bit about it and they showed that he had made the machines. He had the sign of the machines in the United States. The same machines they also use in Denmark. And they write a lot about him and then I contacted him. The way they treat you is like you get checked in one whole day, two nurses sitting in two different rooms and they check the same and have to find out. It's really really fantastic, good service. I don't think I can get the same in Denmark, sorry. I have bad experience with hospitals in Denmark, very bad experience and I hope if I get sick, I hope I get sick in another place.

#### **Okay, just back to the laser eye operation. So was it actually the doctor that you find trustworthy and come to Thailand?**

- Yeah.

#### **What other experiences did you have with medical tourism except this eye laser?**

- Can you call it a medical experience that I always use dentist in Thailand?

**Yes, we use that as well as medical tourism.**

- Yes. My dentist is near the hotel in middle of Bangkok and they check me every time. The price is low and I feel it is more clear than in Denmark. It is a dentist hospital, so it is like a big big hospital only for dental treatments.

**While you are abroad what tourism facilities do you use?**

- Sorry. What?

**I mean when you are flying abroad, do you only fly for a dental treatment or do you utilize some tourism activities/facilities?**

- I make a package. I make all the things when I am there.

**And you said both of those clinics are in Bangkok?**

- Yes. In Bangkok.

**How did your friends influence your decision when you took these dental treatments abroad? Did they have any influence on it?**

- They didn't think it is a good idea with the eye operation, but everybody understand that I go to dentist to Thailand because you can just go to Sweden and then it is half price. Prices are too high in Denmark now. So the most people understand about dentist, but a lot of people ask me about the eye and a lot of people think of maybe doing it, but they are scared, because they say oh, it is Thailand and it is not so good. But I would rather prefer to do it in Thailand as I explained to you. But most of the people are scared about it.

**But have you recommended to other friends as well?**

- Yeah. Always, always.

**In your decision, what did matter the most? How much cost mattered in your decision? For example if you could put it from one to ten?**

- It is only ... with the eyes it's only 3 and with the dentist it's maybe 4. So it is not only the price.

**So it is not only the price. What about the reputation of the doctor or the hospital? Did it also matter?**

- Yeah. And they are more specialized here [meaning Thailand]. So I feel they are more professional, because they... like this guy today, he is dentist and professional in only cleaning teeth and nothing else. Just today I was to three different dentists, because they have to check, and they have to make x-ray and they have to clean. This is 3 different doctors, because they specialised in everything and this is what I really like. You cannot be specialist in everything, so this one thing I really like.

**I can see. Okay, now I would like to ask you some questions regarding your medical experiences in Denmark. Have you ever had any traumatic experiences with a doctor or a hospital?**

- Yeah, for three years ago, I get very very sick. I was in Herlev hospital [Denmark], I lie down there for two weeks, they just give me morphine and they could not find out what was wrong. I had another doctor, a friend of mine's father, he tell them what it was. They don't want to listen. After this two and a half week just drove me home and give me some headache tablets and then make operation and take everything out from the stomach. After this I say, no it's not

good enough and then called a professor in Rigshospitalet and he said 'I know what exactly it is'. And then after two weeks, I was fresh again. And this is incredible, really incredible. I was really nearly dying.

**So how is your trust? How do you trust generally the doctors?**

- From 1 to 10?

**Yes, from one to ten.**

- Two.

**Is it the Danish doctors?**

- Yeah.

**And the abroad doctors? Do you trust them more or is it the same?**

- Let's say... a Thailand doctor... I trust him a lot more.

**Okay. And how do you trust the Danish health system in general?**

- Hmm...

**Like do you think it is a good system in Denmark?**

- I had always said it was a good system, but with my own experience it is not so good any more, to be honest.

**So you are not satisfied with the Danish system, with the Danish doctors?**

- No, not at all.

**How important is to you the relationship between you and the doctor or the assistants while you are in the hospital?**

- It is not matter of this. It is only matter of that I feel safe because I feel they are professional. All the other things do not matter for me. And actually the language is not a big think. I speak to English, but it's not about the language. I think it is about I feel they are professional, I feel safe there. I don't feel safe in a Danish hospital.

**Do you think it is medically safe to travel abroad based on that you can maybe misunderstand each other and do you still trust even though these misunderstandings can occur?**

- Yeah, because go to a hospital and see safe doctors in Denmark or where you are. And if they say we make this operation for you, then in Denmark you have to say, 'yeah, it's okay'. It's the right decision. And in Thailand you have to say the same things. For me it's not matter of the language, if they say you have to do this then you have to trust them. And I trust more the doctors in Thailand than in Denmark

**What qualities increase your trust towards a person?**

- Sorry, I don't understand.

**What qualities increase your trust? If for example if you meet a person for a first time, how do you see yourself to trust him?**

- The way he behaves and tell about the medicine and you can ask questions and everything... if they are trying to make you feel safe, then this is the way.

**What should they do to make you not trust them?**

- Just say 'Hello. I'm the doctor. Can I take some blood test? And we will come back later' and when they come back later this is another doctor and then he say a new name and then in one day maybe come six or seven new doctors and then you never get like trust and you only feel like in Herlev. Seven different doctors in one day. And don't tell the same thing, it was a new thing every time. This is unprofessional in my head.

**In Thailand you have only one doctor?**

- When you come in and check and after this, you get a telephone number where can reach the doctor in the first five days. It's so professional. You feeling like... after the operation you feel like a friend.

**And to which countries would you consider to go for medical treatments, except Thailand?**

- I think United States, but I have never been there. But I think they have also good hospitals there. But... I like to travelling but... I also think about a lot of other countries in Asia, Malaysia or private hospitals in China. In Asia, the treatment and as they are, I really like, so I will have no problem with going to hospitals there. Not in to Laos or places like this, but most of the other countries in Asia, but only in private hospitals. Yeah, because the other one is really really not good.

**Now I will ask questions about your travel behavior. So please describe your attitude towards travelling. How often do you travel?**

- I travel in summer time, when it's summer time in Denmark one week to capital in Europe to show my wife Europe. And then in winter time we take 5 or 6 weeks holiday in Thailand, also distance to China, Malaysia, Laos, other countries around here. This is the way we travelling every year.

**So you travel pretty often.**

- Yeah. For me this is my life. To be honest. I could not live one winter in one country because I feel I am born on a wrong place in Denmark. When it is cold I feel really really bad.

**Do you prefer travelling all the time to new places or do you prefer going back to same destinations?**

- This is a little bit funny, because I always choose the same hotel in Bangkok. I have done so in the last 12 years. But I am only here for, when I come to Thailand, for some days and when I back, some days. Like transit place or what you can call it. And all the other places around, I always choose new hotels to try something new.

**So you like to explore new things.**



- Yes, yes. When I came to this hotel here, it's ready, everything is perfect... I can leave my big suitcase here and just take sport bags with me if I'm going to some islands. And I just write to Facebook and the room is ready again. I have friends here, I feel really my home here.

**So what kind of risk do you see when you are travelling? Not necessary to Thailand, but general.**

- No. I like everything. There is no limit for me. In Brazil, I was in a very criminal district and travel around there and a lot of people get killed every day there, but I just want to try it. And here in Thailand, I had been inside the jungle with tribes they never seen white people before. And things. I also wanted to see, but I never feel risk. I don't see difference between going to a jungle or going to a big city like Bangkok.

**And how do you prepare yourself before you travel to a destination? How do you plan a trip?**

- Nooo... the most of the time I don't plan anything. I just look at the map and say 'maybe this time it could be nice to see this' and when you come, especially in Thailand the plans sometimes change and I try something else. So I only make plans if some friends go with me. The most of the time I make plans from day to day.

**Okay, so if you search for some destinations then do you use the Internet or friends recommendations?**

- Yeah, I talk with friends, but most of the time I'm searching for things. But I have a lot of friends whom I ask about 'do you have any experience with this or that?' Yes, I use the Internet. I think it is a great place for this.

**And what is the most important thing when you are deciding to take a holiday, like do you consider the price, the quality, the culture or the friends who live there?**

- I think it's the weather, the food, friends. I'm not a five star guy, so I just want to have a little room in a very nice hotel, not too expensive but living on the beach. Just take small cheap places and then spend more on food and other things. I think it is more important to try to be with the local people. If you are in Thailand or Vietnam or other place, then it is more nice to try to live, to be like normal people in the country. Because if you go to a five star hotel, you do not go out from the five-star hotel, then you could be another place in the world. So actually when I'm in Bangkok, I go to the street kitchen and eat with the Thai people and I don't spend more than 60kr per day for food and drinks. On a normal day, because it's very cheap.

**So you are becoming part of the culture.**

- Yes, I think it is the best way to feel you go to a new country. Because if you go to a five star hotel and you do not go out from them, then you could be anywhere in the world.

**Let me just ask question regarding this medical treatment and costs. How much you actually save on a dental treatment?**

- Oh. It's like... I think like today it was about one thousand crowns.

**The saving?**

- Yeah.

**What would prevent you from travelling to Thailand for these medical treatments?**

- But I don't go only for this. When I'm here I check all the other things together. Of course it is nice to save some money, but it's not all.

**For instance, if the air tickets would be more expensive, would you still go to Thailand.**

- No. If it was more expensive than in Denmark, I would not go, to be honest.

**Okay, that's what I wanted to clarify.**

**THE END**

## Appendix 6:

### Interview nr. 4

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Date of the interview: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

Interviewer: Brigita Cseriova

The mode of conduction: Skype interview

Short description of the interviewee: A 31 years old single male who is doing a PhD. degree in History at Aalborg University. He has a lot of travel experience.

Transcript of the interview: see below

**So firstly, I would like to ask you some questions about your travelling behavior. Please, describe your attitude towards travelling. Like how often do you travel?**

- I would say I travel more than the average person and travel few times a year. Mainly within Europe, but when I can get outside Europe, I try to do that. And I'm trying to travel less as a tourist - although obviously I am one - but I am trying to travel in a way where I am learning understandings. Usually, I am meeting people that I know or have organized to meet with. Or something like this. Or sometimes also I'm travelling into the... well, to me unknown. But you know like everyday life every other person in this place.

**And if I would ask how often do you travel on a yearly basis? What would be the number?**

- Let's say 5 to 6 times.

**Okay, thank you. Do you prefer travelling to far-away places or rather for like short-haul distance?**

- For me it depends on what I'm doing on the particular trip. If I'm going visiting friends, maybe then close by. If it's to expand my horizon and understanding, then distance would probably be more interesting.

**And see a different culture?**

- Yes, exactly. Expand my horizon, see more of the world, that sort of thing.

**So the next question is - you already answered, but do you prefer travelling to known destination that you visited before and you are familiar with or you rather - if you would choose, you choose rather a destination that you have never been before?**

- It depends. I like both, but I'm finding... over the last 5-6 years, I am finding I'm getting more interested in visiting family and friends again and again than going to new places.

**What kind of risks do you see when you are travelling abroad?**

- When I'm travelling... again it depends on where I'm travelling. I don't see the same problems in rural France as in urban Johannesburg in South Africa or travelling or visiting people in ghettos in Russia, in St. Petersburg. Mainly it's sort of a physical security issue in some of the

places I'm travelling. You know, if people look at me and say 'this guy got money, let's mug him'. In some places, there has been a health risks also. In South America I was visiting a... she was my girlfriend then and I visited her in French Guinea in South America and there was the risk of malaria and there was also the outbreak of a fever - I forget, some kind of virus.

**Yeah, the N1H1 or something like that?**

- I don't remember the name. It was something spreading through the air, so we had to be careful when we were travelling around. And because she was a doctor and was asked to help in a hospital sort of in the moment. We had some vaccines with some medication to protect ourselves and she was feeling somewhat uneasy about it. So we just stayed I think just for one day.

**Would these risks or threats prevent you from travelling?**

- I'm thinking.

**Have you ever had an experience where maybe they said there is a war or there is this health risk and you decided not to travel to that destination?**

- Well, I tried to get in to Gaza half a year after the bombing and I was rejected at the entry to Gaza from the Israeli side, but I think my military background - although not that long, just a year and a half - it's still sort of ... I am less inclined to be nervous at the places. I rather go and see and then, you know, see what happens. But this is me talking now before have family and kids. When I get to that stage, my behaviour will change complete, I'm quite sure. Then I'll become very careful and probably visit family and friends, or places that are entirely safe for kids and no other place. So it's a behaviour defined by my situation.

**And how do you prepare yourself before travelling? Where do you collect information about the destination or hotels or whatever?**

- Again it depends on where I'm going. If I'm going to visit friends or family, I usually just check the schedule for the logistical aspects: how am I getting there and at what time. If I'm going to a new place where I don't know anybody and haven't organized to meet anyone, I'm searching through the, you know, travel literature or online stuff or the Couchsurfing project. So to get as many perspectives on the same area as possible. If I'm meeting people that I haven't met, but staying with them, then I'll find out sort of... you know, so I have some understanding of the place, if something happens, I can still find my way to hotel or hostel or a camping place, so it's sort of I think again my military background sometimes comes in. I like to know enough, not to have everything planned, but to have a plan if something happens.

**Like a back-up thing?**

- Yeah. I think... I was in a recursion unit in my military period, so I think the whole planning and preparing is made from. I still have this mentality in some way I think.

**It's not bad to have that. Can you describe your typical process of arranging you vacation? Like when you go to a new destination, not just visiting a friend, how do you start preparing, how do you start making the decision to go for a vacation?**

- That could be out of the conversation with somebody, if they talk about trekking in Norway or if somebody sends me an e-mail saying it's been a long time since we haven't seen or ... Oh, sorry, you have to repeat the question.

**No, it's okay. Well, so what is the typical process of arranging your vacation? So when you, for example hear from a friend that this is a good place to visit, what do you do next?**

- Well, then I think, for the most part I would check tickets or means of travelling. So you know, when I was a student I had most times when I wanted, so I would just travelled when the tickets were cheap. So I think that finding the logistical aspect of it. And then you know it did fit when I was a student, I still had some work and does it fit with a deadline for projects, so it's sort of fitting into the calendar and the budget. Sort of a planning phrase or something like that.

**What are the important considerations which affect your decision to make the travel? Do you consider about price or the quality of the hotel or the airline tickets or what makes the decision?**

- Well, the cost of it. What I stand to - how do you say - gain in like cost benefit somehow. When I was travelling in South Africa, I would go to lot of museums and I found that if this museum, a particular museum was closed for a certain amount of time or in time I was in the city, I would go around the city and then try to come back. It also depends if I'm able to see my friends or family for a longer time, then I'll try to put the time of their schedule and make it mine.

**Thank you. Now I would like to go further with questions about trust and medical tourism. First starting with general trust, I would like to know which aspects influence your first impression when you meet someone for the first time.**

- Well, if they - how do you say - fill their space in the room. If they're not an excuse in themselves, if they're not, you know, this almost invisible persons or if they are not too offensive to take more than, you know, a person can require. It's a balance: are they aggressive when they talk, what sort of eye contact do they have, do they look away when you speak with them or do they keep the eye contact. General body language, if they are comfortable. With a lot of my travellers, I was staying with people I haven't met before, so I was about making them feel comfortable because I'm coming as stranger into their home. So I had to quickly break the code and understand: are they formal people, are they informal, maybe they are older people then me, but they dress young, they speak in a fashion younger people speak. It was sort of finding a common ground to communicate; it's usually what I'm looking for. When I find then it is very easy for me to stay with people I don't know in places I've never been before or will never go back to. If I can make the personal connection then I'm quite happy.

**From 0 to 10, how would you measure the level of trust towards a person whom you meet the first time? Do you feel to trust him if these kind of things that you mentioned before like body language fit? Is trust generated?**

- I would say so, but there're different levels of trust. There is a level of trust where you go into a situation completely blind and you don't know what to expect, you don't know what's happening and you don't know what options you have if something happens. This is the highest level of trust when you put your life in somebody else's hands. This would not come for me in a second or in one hour... that is something with me. Then there is a lower level of trust where you sort of get a feeling of the person and then - how do you say - you can walk through the fire

and water for the person, it's sort of the closest circle of your friends or family. And there is a sort of... you generally trust people from what they show of themselves to you. If you see their house, their home, their family, meet the friends or, you know, if you have Facebook and you see all the connections what they write. It's everything, sort of the general picture put together gives you a sense of 'okay, this woman or guy is trustworthy', then I'll go quite far, but still not to the extent that I would put my job on his hand and don't risk reputation.

**Just open up in this way?**

- Yeah. And then the last sort of category is where I'm finding myself... probably a little bit more now with travelling more and more visiting friends and family and people I know, I'm finding that I'm becoming not less trusty, but it takes a little bit longer for me to ... Now I'm 31, when I was 22-23, I could sleep in any train, in any bus and any plane and I didn't care about my luggage, you know on the general situation, I was quite happy to just close my eyes and fall asleep. Now I'm lot more... I'm paying a lot more attention now than I did 5-10 years ago. And I don't know if my sense of security has changed or if it's just because I'm getting old and less naive, I don't know if my travel environment changed maybe also. It could be a good mix.

**Okay. Thank you for this information. It will be useful, I can see now. Now I would like to ask questions about your medical experiences, starting from your childhood. When you were young, as a child, where you afraid of doctors?**

- I don't think so. Maybe the dentist because I ate quite a lot of candy and had some holes in my teeth. But I think for the regular doctors, probably less. I broke my arms twice and it was necessary to go to hospital. And I realized they don't try to hurt me, they try to help me. So in general that sort of was an influence. And then my mum is an eye doctor as well and I think it also probably made them more familiar to me somehow.

**And have you ever had any negative or even traumatic experiences with a doctor or with a hospital?**

- Not traumatic as such. I had an experience where I was... how do you say, where was three young doctors or interns. They were very interested to taking part of the surgery I had to undergo. And I was somewhat nervous because they were looking like three small boys looking through the window of candy shop. And they didn't seem all that professional, they seemed more like... and that sort of made me nervous. I told the doctor, the guy doing the surgery that they can watch, but please don't let them do the cutting.

**And they didn't let them?**

- Well, you know, I was completely passed out, so I have no idea. But I mean it's not a traumatic experience, it's something I remember, but I don't think I had the trauma.

**And do you trust the Danish health system in general?**

- I would say so. In comparison with many places the standards, the hygiene, the level of equipment, the level of education seems to be quite high. I have been told though when I'm travelling, especially in Africa - I haven't been to that many African countries, just two - but I've been told by well-travelled people with experience in Africa that in these places just don't go for the American, the British or the French hospitals, choose the Cuban or Chinese hospitals because in these places the doctors have very few resources, so they know how to use, whereas the American who doesn't have his right machine, will do nothing. But I mean, to

return to your question, the Danish health care system and hospitals and everything around it are quite trusted. I think it's maybe also - sorry I just elaborate - there is also the thing that the health care system in Denmark is not so vast or big, lot of people tend to know people involved somehow. So I have personal friends that work in hospitals and also my mum, she used to work in a hospital, so I think in Denmark there is also a possibility or personal connection to make the hospital seem much more familiar than say in the US, where everything is private and a lot more bigger.

**Regarding the persons, the medical persons do you trust your doctors in general?**

- In my experience, yes. I don't remember as a kid, but I think so. In the last, say 15 years, I'm finding that if I make a human connection with the doctor - if I find out the name, and if we do the informal chit-chat or small talking, no problem. If the doctor is - how to say, not robotic, but - very down to business, I am not gonna be not trusting the person, but I'll sort of be 'ah, okay', maybe take a step back. But that could be cultural thing for a Dane to say, I don't know. It could also be just me as a person.

**And what do you think, what characteristics make a doctor trustworthy?**

- If they seem generally interested and concerned. They may not be, but as long as they have a body language and the speech that it indicates that you are human and not just a patient or number, that sort of a good indication to me. They don't need to ask you about everything, but you know in the condition that you have or whatever situation you are in, if that's only a health check-up, if they have what it appears to be a general interest and also job, I am quite happy.

**And if I ask the opposite, what makes them untrustworthy?**

- If they seem to be unsure of themselves. You know, in medical terms if they don't know what analysis to give, if they don't know what advice to give in terms of treatment and if they are very quick to make a conclusion without looking at all the aspects that need to be investigated or looked into. It's maybe too robotic, so you don't have a feeling that you even get close to... because I think for a lot of things the medical condition or problem is not just a physical thing, it is also a mental thing, so in the treatment the larger part addresses mental well-being in the situation in the hospital or the clinic. But also make the experience a lot more humanized or better for the patient than if it is just strictly medical.

**I agree. Are you satisfied with your doctor? Do you have a doctor?**

- I have a doctor and I was there actually last week to get a vaccination for measles because it was free, it was said in the radio. Before that I had doctors one time, because I had a problem with my feet after military with some fungus or infection. And my doctor refused to believe that I had any infection or something like this, so they sent me to specialist that did samples and they couldn't find either, but looking at my feet, it was quite obvious that they are not... you know...

**Healthy.**

- Yes, they could look more normal.

**And they rather sent you to a different doctor?**

- Yeah, but I mean the specialist couldn't really give me a good conclusion either. But I think in the last 10 years, it was really the only thing that I visited doctors for or for injections before travelling, vaccination: the measles and yellow fever, I think in 2009. So it's just been something like the 3-4 visits for vaccines and this foot thing.

**Based on that, can you state whether you are satisfied or you don't even think about this satisfaction towards the doctor?**

- Well, in terms of the foot thing, I wasn't all that satisfied, because I could see myself that my feet are not exactly what they should be. They didn't find anything even they took samples in the specialist, so for these... I don't know, I 'm not dissatisfied, but I thought more could've been done. But for the vaccination, I was very happy with the treatment. The doctors and nurses were very welcoming, asking where I'm going, what am i doing, you know paying attention to me, not just as a patient but as a human. So on these two visits I was more than satisfied, I was quite happy with it.

**In your opinion, is it medically safe to travel abroad for a medical treatment?**

- I think that that depends on in what country you want to go to have your treatment. Say if you travelling from rural Ghana and you have cervical cancer and you want to go to another country to get treatment, if you going to another low income country, then you know, you expect high quality. But if you go from Denmark to Ghana to get treatment for cervical cancer, it'll be the opposite. So I think it is possible to travel for medical tourism or for medical reasons. But I'd say it depends. I wouldn't be happy to go to, say - not because Russia, Korea or Armenia are bad places, but because of their alphabet, and if I don't speak the language and the doctors tend not speak too much English... the lack of knowledge and mutual understanding would make me nervous. But in general I think it's possible to go and have good.

**And what kind of feelings do you associate with the term 'medical tourism'?**

- I think it sounds like a broad context that goes for many things from dental regulation or cosmetic stuff to - how do you say - life sustaining treatment in terms of cancer of a deadly source. So it could be anything from a small cosmetic thing to life-death questions. And it could go from a rich country to a poor if the waiting list is shorter or if you want a treatment that requires a lot of technical expertise that you don't find in your country then you go to perhaps higher income countries to find this treatment. It seems to be quite a broad concept.

**Would you ever go abroad for a medical treatment yourself?**

- As a Dane I would probably - you know you don't know your future, because the Danish system for me provides more than adequate treatment opportunities for me. But say I have a kid or two kids or whatever and then they have a problem that is either not really researched in Denmark or there are not the abilities to give the right treatment then I would be going for sure.

**Okay, so you say you cannot imagine yourself going abroad for let's say dental treatments?**

- At the moment, no. Because I haven't really been forced to think about it. I haven't really, well, thought about it. It could be... it depends what I would be looking to be treated. If it was the cancer thing, then I would probably not go to Russia to have it treated, even if they have a better waiting list because of the insecurity of language. But I think... it depends, if somebody depends on me, my kids or my wife then I would go to solve the problem if it was outside Denmark also.



Because then it's a question of stability or feeling safe with your family. But for me now as an individual without family, I think I would be content with Danish health services.

**Many of the researchers researched that actually cost is also one of the factors that causes this medical tourism, so that Western people go to low income countries or developing countries for higher quality health care for lower costs. If you think about this aspect, would you utilise this cost savings, if there was an option?**

- Maybe. It depends on how serious my condition would be and also again if it was me as an individual, I would prefer the Danish not because it's closer or it's more safe or anything, but because of the Danish welfare society model that it's based on high taxes and free universal health care for people that pay taxes – or for I mean for all that live in Denmark. Just on my own, I think I would support that model because the last people without high income are treated and if people with money begin to go private or if they begin to go abroad at a pace and numbers that threaten the overall model of the welfare system, then I see a problem in a longer future. But again, if it's a child of mine in the future or if it's my parents or close friend, I would think I would have close hesitation going to... if it's Ghana for cervical cancer treatment or Hungary or whichever place. Because if it's somebody that depends on you, then it's becomes a quite a different situation. Then you don't think so much in terms of politics and ideas then it's okay.

**You want them to have the best.**

- Yes, exactly.

**And in that case, would you be able to trust the doctors in a foreign country?**

- That would depend if there was a proper translation or if they spoke enough English, so you know there could be a common ground of understanding.

**So it's based on the language?**

- Not only. Also I mean, if it's super expensive then maybe not. I mean in terms of if it's male dominated culture or female dominated culture that matters less as long as you understand the situation you find yourself in. What is the problem and how can you solve it and what are the long term things to be done when you return home. It's not just in the moment, it's also what comes after the treatment, you have the concept of post treatment. If there is a need for follow-ups then I would preferably have relative close to where I live. Because I could imagine going to Japan every three month to have a check for some type of, I don't know, scan of some organs then it would become quite hard financially and also if your health is not that – how you say – the best any more, going off constantly to have follow-ups, would make it difficult. But if it is a one time operation where there is a guaranteed return on investment or you know, treatment is peaceful... so it's not just the language thing. I think the bigger the operation or treatment, the more aspect and also the longer post treatment, the intervention of the treatment, the surgery, whatever, you have to think more about this also. So it depends on what needs to be done.

**So depending on the treatment or on the illness, it would influence your destination choice, your level of trust towards that hospital or doctor?**

- Yeah. And I think also somehow if it's a package where you buy... if you get a place to stay, if you have a logistical means also arranged for you, so because if you arrive with your family or by

yourself or your friends, and you need to have a medical problem attended, you don't want to be forced into travelling with taxis or buses. The more of this is organised, the better. If you feel when you arrive the whole – not necessary it has to be this way, I mean. It's more than possible to feel trusting the hospital if they give you the best medical treatment, but if they provide much more than just the treatment, but also the care taking from the moment you arrive and they give you advice or guidance. So the more extensive advice you get, I think the trust level is the bigger because you feel they are prepared and they know what they are doing.

**How do you see, you know there is this word-of-mouth where friends recommendations are taken into account when deciding on a trip, how this would influence your attitude towards medical tourism? If for example one of your friends would recommend you to take dental treatment in Budapest.**

- I think that would be quite positive because if it's close friend or family then they are already inside my circle of trust. And that gives me a strong filter towards this clinic or institution or hospital because I have somebody that I trust saying, you know, this is a good. Again it depends if they go for serious medical treatment or if it's cosmetic. If it's something serious, even I trust them, I would still do some investigation and do more research what is the reputation of this place and you know, the general conditions... I think one thing that is somehow connected with one of your previous questions, if I would go abroad to do medical tourism. If I have feeling that the health-care system of the place where they offer the treatment of the country... if it's very elite, I would feel hesitant about it because if it's something eager by access to because of your own wealth, but the people living in the place don't have access to it, I would feel less inclined to go. But then again that is me now without kids. If I had kids, I wouldn't have this telling.

**So this ethical consideration would prevent you from travelling there?**

- Now yes. But I'll care less about the societal or protocol ethics, if I have family, then I think I wouldn't put them as a first priority, but lower.

**And what is the biggest threat for you if you think about medical treatments abroad?**

- The what-happens-if-the-operation-goes-wrong or in military language if shit hits the fan. So what about if something happens... I mean, here in Denmark we have private hospitals, if you go into one of these and you have a heart attack while having any surgery, they have to ring the regular ambulance and the regular hospital for you to be transported to a public hospital, so say, if I go to Russia and I suddenly have a heart attack and the hospital refuses to treat me for this, then what? So somehow that is.

**Yes, I think this is my last question then. How important to you is trust as a factor in making decision for your medical treatment, also by words, but if you could make it also number-wised?**

- It's quite high, possible 7. One thing is what I can be told by Danish health experts to say okay, if you want this treatment you go to this place. It's partly knowledge it's also if I go into a situation and I feel at the hospital or clinic that well, this doesn't have a good feeling, you know, my level of trust would maybe go from 8 to a 3. Briefing from how much do I know before I'm going to what am I seeing when I'm arriving and what is my impression of what comes after the treatment: is there enough information, the package – if they offer a package – is extensive enough. So trust is big part of it, but also knowledge.

**Just one more question I recalled. In case you would go for medical treatment, would the destination matter from the touristic point of view? Because you know, most of the travellers also travel to a destination because of the climate, because they want to see something of let's say Thailand after or before the operation. Would this, the destination from touristic perspective matter for you?**

- I think if it's a small treatment that I would've done, then no because then I would just go and return as it was possible. But again it would also depend how much time I would have available for, if I have two weeks, then maybe Thailand becomes interesting, if I have a weekend, then Poland is probably better. But if it's something deadly serious, say again if a child of mine in the future develops a kind of terminal disease, then I am not that interested to go to Thailand for the tourist part. This sums for much lower priority, if any priority and then it's the treatment that matters the most. But say then again, if you travel as a family and you have the option of going to Paris in France near Disneyland and you have the option of a cheaper place in Western Ukraine, then I would probably choose France close to Paris and Disneyland to give the kids something else to think about. Because Disneyland in this case would be a - you know, something that Western Ukraine couldn't provide the kids with.

**So it's kind of a balance between the seriousness of treatment with something fun and something memorable.**

- Yeah, I would say so. But I think it probably depends on the level of destination management. Obviously Western Ukraine doesn't have the same advertising and PR budgets as Disneyland Paris does, but if they provide enough information to trust, then this might be more interesting because you have - coming as a Dane - my money would take me a lot further in Western Ukraine than it would be in Paris.

**THE END**

## Appendix 7:

### Interview nr. 5

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Date of the interview: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2012.  
Interviewer: Zofia Konieczna  
The mode of conduction: Skype interview

Short description of the interviewee: Dutch Male, 57 years old, went to Poland for a dental treatment. The interviewee is a friend of my parents who recommended him the treatment in Poland. Therefore, during the interview he uses the term 'your parents' which was changed into 'Polish friends' in order to keep the interview structure as professional as possible.  
Transcript of the interview: see below

**Could you please describe what kind of experience did you have with medical tourism? Where have you been and for what kind of treatment?**

- I went for my teeth to Poland and my experiences were rather good. The medical treatment was good. Also the service was good and that's mostly the answer I think.

**What kind of tools did you use to find the information about the place?**

- I got the information from my friend, who knew some people from Poland. Otherwise I don't think that I would come to Poland for teeth I think, because if you don't know somebody, it is rather difficult to go to Poland and then go somewhere to do something with your teeth.

**So it was your friend recommendation?**

- Yes, it was.

**Why did you decide to have this treatment in a foreign country?**

- First it was mostly because of the costs, because I asked how much would it cost in Holland to do the teeth and that was about 3500 euro. So in general, at first it was the price, because 3500 euro it was a lot, I thought. And then the experience how long they are working on your teeth, so the cost per hour is rather high.

**Were there other benefits, or only costs?**

- It was only the cost, and then to go to another country and see how it works there, so also some kind of adventure.

**Did the image of the destination (in your case Poland) have any influence on your trust level towards the doctor?**

- I can't compare it with other countries, so it is hard for me to say if it's good, positive or negative. I only know Poland and the other country is also Holland and of course there is a

difference. In Holland we know how it works here, but in Poland it is another story for us, but it was rather positive, yes.

**Have you done any tourism activities besides treating your teeth in Poland?**

- Yes, we looked at some castles and we visited some places and that is nice to do, so it was also kind of cozy.

**So it was the connection of tourism and your medical experience?**

- Yes.

**How did your friends and family influence your decision? Were they supporting you or were they rather negative towards this idea?**

- I think the most people I spoke to were rather negative. They said: do you trust it? Do you think it's good to go there? The most experiences for me were not so positive. Only the family, they know me so for them it is easier, but for people who don't know me it is mostly negative.

**Do you have any idea why would that be negative?**

- they don't have that kind of experience with these countries. In Germany I think it would be good, but in a foreign Eastern Europe, they don't have that much experience and they are a little bit afraid that hygiene and things like that are not so good as in Germany or in Holland.

**How would you classify yourself when going abroad for medical treatment: more as a patient or as a tourist?**

- I think it was more patient, because I didn't know Poland. At first I am coming there for my teeth, to do that, and then it is nice to see some other countries and then go to Poland to look at the country.

**Would you recommend medical treatment abroad to your friends or family based on your experience?**

- I had a positive experience, so I already recommended it to some people, but they are rather anxious to go to Poland or other countries. I think Germany is easier for them than going to Poland or Hungary or Czech. It is a big difference I think.

**When you were young (as a child), were you afraid of doctors?**

- No, not at all. I was not afraid for doctors, but when I was young I don't think I would go to Poland for my teeth.

**What was the general image of a doctor in your family house?**

- Good experience. The experience of doctors and dentists at our house was positive.

**Have you ever had any traumatic experience with any doctors?**

- No.

**Have you ever had any negative experience with any doctors?**

- No, no. neither.

**What is today your attitude towards doctors?**

- Still positive. I am not afraid of for doctors and if I have something I go to a doctor. If it's in France or in Holland, I don't care actually.

**How do you choose a doctor if you need to have a surgery or treatment?**

- It's not more choosing, it is more that you have a house doctor and we don't change our doctor.

**Could you please describe what kind of relation do you have with your doctor?**

- It is enormously positive, it's a female doctor, a little bit older and I have a very positive experience with my doctor.

**Do you trust doctors in general?**

- Yes.

**Do you trust the Dutch healthcare system?**

- Yes, it is very good. Very positive.

**What makes you trust your doctor?**

- Because they are very well qualified. They are knowing what they are doing. I think in general, because I don't have any negative experience, so mostly they are very good.

**In your opinion, is it medically safe to travel to another country for a treatment?**

- I think not for hospitals or something like that. I have seen hospitals also in Poland and that experience was not so positive, but for teeth I think it is no problem, but for [surgery] - because all the tools are rather old, it looks rather old, and then it's a negative side on the health care. It isn't said that the [medical] care is not good, but you see that they tools that they are working with are rather old.

But the end effect is the same as in Holland. It doesn't care [matter] what they work with only it looks a little bit modern, but it won't say that the other tools don't work.

**How important to you is the relation between you and your doctor?**

- It's nice when you can trust somebody. But in general when I am in holiday in France for experience, it don't care [doesn't matter] if I go to a French doctor or something like that, so I have rather positive experience with all kind of doctors.

**Can you please describe your attitude towards traveling?**

- I like to travel. I like to see how things work in other countries. We've been in China. But mostly European countries, in the East. I have seen rather a lot of foreign countries.

**Do you prefer to travel to faraway places or rather prefer to travel to not very distant places?**

- If it is Germany it is also good, or Denmark, or... I like the most countries.

**So do you mean to say, that the distance doesn't really matter?**

- The distance doesn't really matter and for example we go to China, because we know some people there and that is the reason I go there, otherwise I don't think I would go to China.

**Would it be because it is too far?**

- No, no, far not, but I like to see some people there, who I know and they tell me about the country, how it works there otherwise it is too short to get a good experience of the country.

**Do you prefer traveling to places that you don't know or rather places that you have seen before?**

- In Europe, I don't know... I go to other countries also, to Rome or London or Paris, but to see something in vacation I think it would be further away.

**What kind of risks do you see when traveling abroad?**

- Yes, of course Bolivia and this kind of countries, it is a high risk because of hijacks and so on, but when you choose on countries where it is not so dangerous I don't see any risks, but there are lots of countries, but Bolivia and those kind of countries, I don't think I would go there.

**So it is only some countries that you see a risk to travel there, and the other countries you don't see any risk?**

- Yes, that's correct.

**Do you prepare yourself before traveling? If yes, how do you do that?**

- Majorly in books, of what you can see or how it works there, what kind of money, the places to go to and so on, but mostly with books.

**Can you please describe your process of arranging holiday?**

- Let's take China for example, if they would call me today and say: would you come next week I think I would arrange it in a week. But when I am planning something, to go there it can be one or two weeks then [in advance] and not more than that. But you know mostly the paces you want to look at and then for the rest not.

**So if you plan your holiday for the summer, when do you start planning it?**

- A few days before.

**So very short period?**

- Yes, very short mostly.

**What is the main purpose of your vacation?**

- Because we have a house in France, the purpose is mostly to renovate the house or something like that. That is the main thing we do. But normally to look at places, we have been to Barcelona and there are some things you want to see. 3 or 4 things and then I see it in Barcelona what else is coming, so it is very short. And if I don't see anything it will be the next time I'll see it I think.

**Is there something else that is important when you are going for holiday?**

- To visit some people would be a good purpose for me I think. If there is some interesting places want to see, I would plan it I think, but no, not anymore.

**When you go for holiday, what are the important considerations that affect your decision on taking this holiday? (Price, quality, culture, friends)**

- That's hard to say, because I expect from China some other things than when going to Denmark or to ... I don't care actually how it is going there. No I don't care actually if it's China it's more primitive of course than going to France or Germany, but actually I don't care. I don't take any expensive hotels in China, but for instance we go to hostels because we can meet some people and it is nice to meet some young people. That's I think my biggest purpose.

**When you meet somebody for the first time in your life, how do you approach a person? How do you feel when meeting somebody for the first time?**

- I have some hesitations mostly. Depends of the kind of a country and what I know about the country. For instance when I go to Bolivia and someone will speak to me after 5 minutes after the plane has landed I think I would be hesitated enormously. But normally no, I have some faith in people.

**How about your own country? If you meet somebody for the first time in Holland?**

- It is easier for me. It is easier because I know the language for instance. When you are in a country like Bolivia or South Guatemala or something like that, they speak to another people in a language that I don't know and makes me always a little bit hesitated. In Holland it is easier for us of course.

**Which aspects influence the first impression that you have on person?**

- That's not so easy. Too quick making friends, that's something I think I don't like. Too confident, in a few seconds they talk to you as were in school with them.

**On scale from 0 to 10 points, what is the level of trust towards a person when you meet the person for the first time? Where 0 stands for complete lack of trust and 10 is the maximum level of trust.**

- I think I would start at 5, in the middle.

**When you meet someone for the first time, which qualities increase your trust towards that person?**

- That they talk normal to you, that they don't offer you some things or trying to let you do some things that you don't want. Those are the most things that I don't like.

**Why does it decrease your trust towards a person?**

- It is always kind of danger when you are meeting some people you don't know and who ask you to do something or take something with you or in general to do something you don't like or you don't want.

**Do you generally trust medical professionals (doctors, nurses) about aspects connected to their field?**

- Yes, I think so, they are professional.

**Why do you trust them?**



- When they have an education in the small field, they know more about that field than I do and that creates a kind of trust I think.

**Which characteristics/ qualities make a doctor trustworthy in your opinion? Why?**

- When they give you an independent meaning of something in what you have to do or not to do; and if it is dependable it is for me more trustable than if they say: you have to do this or you have to do that.

**So you mean, it is better if they advise you?**

- Yes, advising and saying what you have to do.

**Which characteristics, on the opposite, would make a doctor untrustworthy?**

- If he does something too quick. Before the treatment start he doesn't tell you what he is going to do or how is he going to do it, so that I can get some idea of what's going on.

**What kind of feelings do you associate with the term "medical tourism"?**

- If you look at other countries it is mostly about the costs (the most reasons), and in Holland there are some kind of treatments where you have to wait very long. So if it is fairly important for me to do something in a short time then you have to go to another country, because in Holland it is rather difficult.

**Is it rather positive or negative when you hear the term "medical tourism"?**

- I think it is more negative. You don't have to do something only for the costs I think, but also you have to be very positive if it is a good treatment and that makes it mostly a little bit negative to go somewhere else or doing the treatment somewhere else.

**After your experience in Poland, what do you think about the concept of going abroad for a medical treatment?**

- I know them, so it is for me very easy to go there, because I know how they do it, where they do it, what I can expect before I'm there and it makes it a little bit easier to go there.

**What kind of difficulties could a person expect from going abroad for a medical treatment?**

- You don't know for 100 % how it is going there, because now [the people I know] were there and they can tell you: it goes like this and this and this, but when you go there and you go only for tourism and you come into a [dental] practice and you say: I want to do my teeth - I don't think I would do that, because you don't know what can you expect there.

**Would you say that you have trusted the doctor that did your teeth in Poland?**

- Yes, I trusted, because [one of the doctors I know from Poland] was there and she said that it was a good doctor.

**To which countries would you consider going for a medical treatment?**

- In Europe, I think the most countries, Eastern Europe. When it comes to other countries, I don't go to South America or South Africa or that kind of countries, because I believe that it is

not very healthy there, but for Europe, Western Europe- all the countries I think and for Eastern Europe- the places that somebody else recommends.

**What is important when choosing a place for a medical treatment?**

- That you feel confident there, that you know that there is a good treatment, they know what they do - and that's very important, because it can't depend only from the money how it is going. If I would know that the treatments in Poland were not good, I wouldn't go there. Mostly the recommendation of [friends] that made me feel to do that, but otherwise I don't think I would quickly go there, no.

**What is the biggest threat in your opinion, when going abroad for a medical treatment?**

- The first that you know them and the second the money I think [misunderstanding of the question].

**What kind of conditions would have to be fulfilled to make you feel comfortable in the country that you would go to for a medical treatment?**

- Very positive, I think, when you know somebody there. That would make me to go also to another place if I know someone and he says: it is all right, I go there also. That makes me more positive about the country I think. And most of the people also, because when I tell some of my colleagues that I do my teeth in Poland, they say: oh, why are you going there? And I tell them how is it going there and how they do that, they also say: can you make me an appointment and where is it; you can see that they are more interested. When I only would say: it is that and that clinic and I don't know how it goes there, I think nobody would go there.

**Do you think that trust is an important aspect/ issue of medical tourism?**

- Yes. If I didn't trust it, if I didn't know [my friends from Poland], I don't think I would go there.

**How important from 0 to 10 to you is trust, as a factor in making decision for your medical treatment abroad. Where again 0 is not important at all and 10 is the most important?**

- 8 or 9

That was it, thank you very much for the interview.

**THE END**

## Appendix 8:

### Interview nr. 6

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Date of the interview: 8<sup>th</sup> May 2012.  
Interviewer: Zofia Konieczna  
The mode of conduction: Face-to-face interview

Short description of the interviewee: Dutch Female, 61, went to Germany for a knee operation. The interviewee use to work in a hospital as a nurse.

Transcript of the interview: see below

#### **Could you describe what kind of experience did you have with medical tourism? Where have you been and for what kind of treatment?**

- Let's say I wasn't a real tourist, because I live here in Holland and I needed an operation very soon - if that's called medical tourism, then I am. I've been in Germany and I really had a good experience there. The operation succeeded and though I still have much problems with my knee, but technically everything is very good. I've been in Germany during 4 weeks, 10 days in a hospital and after that I was rehabilitated during 3 weeks, and that felt very, very comfortable for me. I could not imagine that my insurance could pay all the treatment I got. [Regular Dutch insurance].

#### **What kind of tools did you use to find the information about the place?**

- It was very easy for me, because I had quite a lot of problems with my knee and I couldn't walk or go by bike because it hurt too much. Then I went to my doctor, and then she said to me: well, you have to go to orthopedist, so I wanted to go very quickly, but in Holland it took quite a long time, so I contacted my insurance and I asked them to help me and then they said: if you want we could support you in going to Germany if you want. I never thought about that. I just was thinking - I have to be operated. And then the insurance said that they could give me a number of special office in Holland related to the insurance, especially for patients from abroad and I made a telephone call to them. And then they said: if you want, we can make an appointment for you so I could go there within 3 days. And they gave me at the same moment quite a lot of information by phone and besides that of course by means of internet - I could read about the possibilities, I could phone them if things wouldn't be clear for me, and they made an appointment and after 3 days I had an appointment with orthopedist in Germany.

#### **Why did you decide to have the treatment in a foreign country?**

- Because in Holland it would take too much time. The only reason.

#### **Did you have to pay anything for the treatment in Germany?**

- No, my insurance covered everything.

#### **While abroad (in your case in Germany), have you utilized some tourism facilities?**

- No. Nothing. Because I was in a hospital and after that in the rehabilitation center.

**How did your friends and your family think of you going abroad for the operation in Germany?**

- My friend, my husband – he supported me, because he knew my problem and he knew about my pain, so he supported me. He also was very, very surprised that the treatment could start that quickly. My family reacted as well. They said: go.

**In that case would you classify yourself as a tourist or as a patient?**

- As a patient.

**Would you recommend a medical treatment abroad based on your experience?**

- Yes, yes.

**And what kind of arguments could you use for that?**

- There are several arguments: the first one is that I was really surprised about the way they communicated with me. I could not believe it existed, because I was used to the way of communication here in Holland. It was better quality. They really made contact with me and I felt connected. Not alone the doctors, but also the nurses. I also saw that especially the nurses, they acted for me very confidentially [she meant confident], because when they didn't know what to answer, they were very clear and said: well, at the moment I don't know it, but I will check it and I'll tell you. They always did. So that's second or third argument why I say to you for instance: go there.

**Which language did you use to communicate with the doctor and the nurses?**

- German, but there was also the possibility to speak just Dutch, because if it was necessary they could call somebody, but I can talk German a bit.

**When you were young (as a child), were you afraid of doctors?**

- No.

**What was the general image of a doctor in your family house?**

- That doctor is very big, and you have to be decent, because he is a saint. So yeah, that is my education.

**Why do you think that was the image in your family about a doctor?**

- The way they talked about them. Because when I was a little child, my mother had a very serious accident, had been in hospital for a long time, very long time, had quite a lot of operations. That's what I know from the time when I was a little child. And there I learned how important a doctor was, especially for my mother. And how important is to be very, very, very polite to a doctor. And I don't like that at all, but they educated me in that way. Especially my mother.

**Have you ever had any traumatic experience with doctors in your life?**

- Yes. But it is also related to my profession, because I met a friend when I was a nurse in Nijmegen and during the time that I was working in a hospital and also many years after that, I

have been working in hospital all together for 15 years- I saw terrible doctors, but I also saw very good doctors. But the traumatic experience, some very impolite behavior to patients. When I was a young girl, at 17 I went to the starting to work as a nurse, then I worked in Den Boss, it is close to Tilburg and there I had a terrible experience with a doctor, with a woman who was dying, young woman. I still imagine [remember] what happened between her and him, very aggressive. And there are some more experiences. Not my personal experiences, but sometimes it feels personal, when somebody is impolite to you and I am with you, well, I don't like it at all.

**What is today your general attitude toward doctors?**

- In general I am open, because I really think everybody, this is him and this is him and this is her, so I am open, I am really open. I react what is happening between the other person and me, so also with the doctor.

**Do you trust doctors in general?**

- Yes. In general. But also critically.

**Do you trust the Dutch healthcare system?**

- Less than the German. Less.

**Why would that be?**

- They are more rude I think and less patient to the patients. And of course not everybody, of course also in Holland are very good doctors. But when I have to compare, my experience in Germany, it was really very, very good. And I know also from sister in law, she died couple of years ago, she had a cancer and she went for a treatment in Belgium and her husband had direct communication by telephone with her doctor. In Holland, that will never be possible. In Belgium it is. When I was in Germany, I also got a telephone number from a doctor and he said: if you need me or if you have questions for me, you can call me. Unbelievable to have it here!

**How do you choose a doctor when you need to have a surgery?**

- Normally with my house doctor [GP]. And in this case, it was a big surgery, with the insurance, very clear for me.

**Can you please describe your present relationship with your doctor?**

- That's a very good one. Really, a very good one. Besides that it is now 5 or 6 months ago there was a very funny, hmm... I didn't like the experience, I will explain to you. In my family my mother and two sisters, they are getting older and they forget everything (dementia). So, my mother died 6 years ago and she was dement [she had dementia] and two of my sisters [have the same problem]. And I think that it won't happen to me, but I know that when it happens I don't want to live very long. I don't want to be in a house, sitting and not knowing who is my husband, who is my family, who are my friends. Because in Holland, the last year there is quite a lot of information about what to do as a patient when you are related to somebody who has dementia and what are the possibilities. And a conclusion of all that publicity and the information is that when you really are concern about that, then you really have to talk with your own doctor, that is the first step you have to take. Well, sometimes I have to go for my

knee, so I have to see her [the doctor] sometimes and then I thought that one day I would like to talk to her about that, do I have to make an appointment, do we need more time? What do you prefer, what do I have to do? Just to talk, and not because I am getting dement, but because I want to know what is her opinion. Cause that's very important when let's say in 10 or 20 or 30 years the problem would be with me, then I feel the confidence that my own doctor is open for my problem and for my question. And I know her for about 20 years I think and I really feel comfortable with her. So that's my question, I would like to talk one day. Not tomorrow. Maybe this year or next year, but there is no pressure. And then she had to laugh a bit and then she said to me: one thing, I don't want to go to a prison. I don't want to go into a prison. And I was very much surprised, to a prison? Sometimes there are problems here in Holland with doctors who are active with this problem, but I didn't understand it, so I told her that I didn't understand and then she said it is gonna be all right, but it is a very difficult problem, and that's a thing I had not expected from her.

**But why would she say that she would go to prison?**

- There are quite a lot of problems here in Holland, especially for people who are dement and they ask the doctor: I don't want to live anymore...

**Oh, you meant euthanasia?**

- Yes. But I feel comfortable with her.

**So, are you satisfied with your doctor?**

- Yes.

**Do you trust your doctor?**

- Yes, I trust her. Yes completely.

**How important to you is the relationship between you and your doctor in a matter of medical treatment? Why?**

- Very important. Especially for the problem I just meant [described], very much. Because I know what the impact is, because I see it quite a lot. Maybe that's the most important, because I do not go very often to my doctor. Yeah, for my knee, but that's all. I am very healthy. I am very healthy. Just my terrible knee. And well, my conscious, that is important for me. That's why she is important to me. I have to feel trust.

**In your opinion, is it medically safe to travel abroad for a treatment?**

- I think for me it depends on the country where you go to. Because I traveled quite a lot, and then it is important to realize what kind of country do you go to.

**So you mean that in some countries it would be safe and in other countries it would not be so safe?**

- Yes, more risky.

**Could you please describe your attitude towards traveling?**

- I like traveling. I prefer traveling not in a group, but just together with my friend or alone. And I like traveling in a bus or in a train, not by car, just sitting around a little bit and talk with people. But I like traveling.

**And do you prefer traveling to faraway places or rather places that are not very distanced?**

- Both. Both. So next summer, I will travel to Cuba.

**Do you prefer to travel to places that you don't know and you have never been to or to places that you have visited before?**

- No, the first one.

**And what kinds of risks do you see when you travel abroad? When you go to another country?**

- The most fear is when I should need treatment, and I should have to go to a hospital and the doctors or nurses would not use clean materials. That's my fear. Sometimes, I have been two times to Indonesia and in Thailand and in Africa, and of course there are places where the doctor is very far away. So that's the think, in how many hours do I need to see a doctor if necessary. But I feel trust that they are professional. I don't think that doctors in Africa or Indonesia they are less good. I don't think that. I think they are also very good educated as here in Holland. But more the facility in a country, that's more my fear then.

**Do you prepare yourself before traveling?**

- Yeah, sometimes when it is necessary. Sometimes when I have to swallow pills for malaria and I am allergic for wasps, so every summer I have to go to my doctor and then I need some medicine to take with me to go abroad.

**And if you go to another country, do you prepare yourself, as to get familiar with the place or the country that you are going to?**

- A bit, yes. But it also depends on the country, and most of the time I buy a book, and I read about the country a bit, and about the political system cause I am interested in that. I also would like to know where are the little villages, cause I don't like the big cities. I don't prefer the big cities, where everybody is going to, so that's what I try to know before. So there, for instance I travel to a big city and then I want to know, can I take a bus to go 20 or 30 kilometers from the big city. I like it more.

**Can you describe how a typical process of arranging your holiday looks like? How much time before you do you start preparing yourself, how do you choose your destination?**

- It depends on the country I would like to go to. When I know that I want to go to make a big journey, then I prepare long before. And long for me is about 3 - 4 months. And that means that I decide, most of the time together with my husband, and we know each other for 32 years, so we know each other very well. I know what he likes and he knows what I like. So in this case, Cuba we really wanted to go for a very long time and now, this year we go. So then 3 - 4 months before. When it is just to go to France or 3 years ago I've been to Poland, I've been visiting Auschwitz and I have been biking in Poland during two weeks, so I went first to Auschwitz and after that I've been biking. That was also very special to me, going to Auschwitz especially. So that I prepare before. And other holidays, so France or England, maybe 5-6 weeks before.

**What is usually the main purpose of your vacation?**

- Just relaxing. Relaxing, but when I go to a very special country like for instance Africa, Mexico I've been to, Indonesia, then it is because I want to meet other cultures and I want to learn and explore what's going on there, how does it feel to be there, what about the art there, I always want to go to the exhibitions there and that's what I like. Very much. That's also a motive for me to go to Cuba and Indonesia.

**Which factors influence your decisions when choosing holidays? (price, quality, culture, friends)**

- Price.., me and [my husband], we really like to meet other cultures, so we really feel the need to meet other cultures in our lives, so we try to meet other cultures every two years. So last year I could not go, because of my knee, but the year before we've been to Mexico and we've said last week that Cuba is maybe a little bit related to Mexico, but it's not because it still has a bit of a communism system and that's and we both are interested in the way it is now there, because it will end - the traditional communism system, we think and might be interesting to see and feel it a bit. It will be different than the Holland culture I think and that is very important.

**When you meet somebody for the first time in your life how do you approach a person? How do you feel when you meet a completely new person?**

- Most of the times I am very curious, I always want to know who is he or she and what is going on in her or his life. When we meet for instance in restaurant and then we are going to talk a little bit I am interested most of the time.

**Which aspects influence your first impression of a person?**

- Most of the time it's my intuition in meeting somebody. Most of the time it can be behavior or the way of looking, making contact with me or somebody else. Most of the time, let's say the final judgment I only make when I meet and talk, before that it's my intuition and when I don't like the way he/ she is talking then I don't feel connected and then I won't start talking. But most of the time it is not a decision, it is going on like in a restaurant or in a café, sometimes things are going because they are going... then I talk to somebody and sometimes not. I can things let happen between another person and me.

**On scale from 0 to 10 points, what is the level of trust towards a person that you meet for the first time? Where 0 stands for complete lack of trust and 10 stands for maximum level of trust.**

- 8, I trust people most of the time, 9 or 10. Yes. I trust people. Sometimes my husband says that I should be less than 10 for instance, because I trust people and it is my problem sometimes.

**And when you meet someone for the first time, which qualities increase your level of trust towards that person?**

- When people judge negatively about groups, then I go.

**So this would decrease your level of trust?**

- Yes. Or maybe when he or she is behaving aggressive to somebody or rude then I wouldn't feel confidentially [comfortable] also I cannot accept if for example you would behave rude to a drug addicted person or people who live on the street, because I really think that everybody



needs respect. And I really don't like it when people are rude to vulnerable people, also when they are vulnerable to nature or animals that would decrease my trust as well.

**And then on the opposite site, which qualities could give positive effects on trust?**

- It is difficult, I don't have special things like that and that, most of the time it is intuition. I don't care what people wear or how they look... When I can laugh a bit, I like that, making fun and I like that or dance or discussing a bit or also very tiny little things in a bus for instance, giving water to each other when I should see that you give some water to somebody - I like that behavior, you understand? Sharing things, that's what I like.

**Do you generally trust medical professionals about aspects connected to their field?**

- In general, yes, yes.

**And why would you say that you do trust them?**

- Cause at the beginning I trust you and I trust people and medicals doctors or nurses are also people who have their profession and my attitude to professionals or to people, but I will always think: I believe that you are good in the things you have learned or what is your profession. And I will work with you and then we will have the experience and then it will be good or not and that is the same attitude I have to the medicals.

**Which characteristics in your opinion make a doctor a trustworthy person?**

- When he or she really listens to the patients and he or she must connect with the eyes, that is for me very important. They have to be open to the patient, they should not conclude: well, you are looking well patient so I think you are good, no when I am a doctor I have to ask you: well patient, how are you doing now? And then really listen. And not that we have 5 minutes and

**Why do you think that those aspects are important? Why are they making the doctor trustworthy?**

- Because my opinion is that doctor has to give treatment to a patient and when the doctor does not know what is going on with the patient, he cannot give a treatment. He has to listen and ask to you: hello Zosia, what about your head or your stomach? And listen - that's for me the most important thing. And when there will be a treatment in my opinion it is important that doctor has to give some possibilities of the treatment. It is not one. There are always more and you can talk together: well, this is my situation, I think that this would be the best treatment for me. Doctor, what's your opinion about it, can we decide together? So he or she is professional, besides that there can be equality between them. And when they realize that, I think that's a good doctor.

**And on the opposite site, which aspects make a doctor untrustworthy?**

- When he is using the computer and the patient is sitting there [on the other side of the table]. I don't like that. I hate that. I don't believe it, because there is a human being, there is the person you have to talk to. When he or she does not ask to you, let's say I am a doctor and I know that I have 10 minutes time for you, but you don't know that always, then I have to tell you, well... we have 10 minutes together for our appointments. What are the things you want to ask me? Cause when the doctor does not give the opportunity, but just beginning write down things, I don't like that. Then he or she is not honest.

**Why would that be?**

- I don't like it when the doctor would not be honest to me. I think when the doctor is honest, people or patients can better choose and make decisions: well, this is my situation and I have to decide what to do. Also when it is for instance cancer or things like that. I really think people should tell. I always think so. Honest. Yes.

**What kind of feeling do you associate with the term 'medical tourism'?**

- For me it means that you need a treatment in another country.

**Does it sound rather positive or negative?**

- It is not positive not negative for me. It is neutral.

**What do you think about going abroad for a medical treatment? What do you think about this concept?**

- I think it is good. It is not just home the good country, I don't think so. Of course other countries have good doctors, I really think so - in Germany and France, in England, in Africa, in Indonesia, I really think so.

**Would you go abroad for a medical treatment again?**

- When it is necessary, yes. The only negative thing for me was that my husband could not meet me... I saw him 2 or 3 times because it was very far and we don't have a car. That's a negative aspects besides.

**But if it was not necessary, some other motives could make you go abroad for a medical treatment?**

- Well, I think it is good if you can find treatment in your own neighborhood, so I would try to have it in my own country, in my neighborhood because it is more convenient. So I cannot imagine that I just would like to go abroad, to France for a treatment when it was not necessary. It would be something else, if I would get a cancer and I read about a treatment in France that is very important for my type of cancer, I could imagine that I should talk with my own doctor and talk about my thoughts about that.

**What kind of difficulties would you expect to appear when traveling abroad for a medical treatment?**

- The distance I think, just for my family and my friends that would be a disadvantage. The language could be a problem, that's of course very important. Maybe the most important, well, my English is not that good but I can help myself with English, I can help myself with French and German. If that's not possible then it would be more difficult for me and for everybody I think. So language is a problem, also when I have been to Africa two times, during six weeks and then it is a problem. The first country I could talk English, and the other one French so that's no problem then, but for instance when I would travel to Sudan or Somalia then it would be more difficult I think.

**Do you see yourself as person that would be able to trust doctors from another country? Why?**

- Yes. Yes. Why not? Maybe also last 10, 15 years I meet some doctors from abroad for my work and it is just the same personas you and as me. I don't know. I just trust. I just trust. For instance in my family, I have two brothers and both of them are most of the time very negative ,

especially when I went to Germany they said to me: you're crazy! They supported me, because they knew my pain, but they said also: I would never go! I would feel the best in Holland – well, I don't feel that. But they've never travelled abroad, they just go to Holland or Austria and that's it. I think it is good, but I don't feel that. Maybe it is not always... [understandable]. Sometimes my husband says to me: you trust too much people.

**To which countries would you consider going for a medical treatment abroad if you were to go?**

- I think because of the distance, it would be Belgium, Germany or France, because of the distance. When I am in Cuba next summer and then I need a treatment there and there will be very good doctors I think. Because they are in every country and there are universities and of course there could also be doctors where I could have the experience that I don't like it at all, but that could be in Amsterdam as well.

**What is important for you when choosing a destination?**

- Knowing about specific professionalism [professions] from that country or that hospital or that doctor, because somebody told me for instance or I heard about it or I read about it.

**Which aspects could influence your decision when choosing a place abroad?**

- Yeah, just what I said. Distance. Knowing about the professionalism [profession] from a special hospital or doctor and it could be that there is a doctor in Paris who knows everything about a special problem and I would know that it is difficult to have a good treatment in Holland. Then I would go there.

**What kind of negative factors could stop you from seeking a medical treatment abroad?**

- When the continent that comes first in my head is the continent Africa, because of HIV problems in Africa who are much bigger in Western. That would prevent me. But I cannot imagine why would I have to go to Africa for a treatment. When I was there and would need treatment I would be very aware of the situation and when I have my conscious I would ask if it is all clean, are the materials cleaned or not. So there can be a problem in infecting with HIV.

**What kind of conditions would have to be fulfilled to make you feel comfortable with a medical organization abroad?**

- The conditions in which the medical treatment can be given to me must be as good as possible. And when I say as good as possible, I do not say as good as here in Holland, because when I am somewhere abroad and doctor or a nurse is working in situations absolutely different from here, but they create good conditions then I feel comfortable and then they try to make contact with me. I must feel connected to them. So that's the same feeling as I need here in Holland. I have to feel connected to somebody. And I always must have the feeling that a doctor really listens to what's going on.

**Do you think that the issue of trust in medical tourism is important? Why?**

- Yes, of course. Because when it is not there, there will be problems with the patients. Because when a patient doesn't have the trust then he will not follow the therapy. When a doctor says: you have to take every day this tea, which the patient does not trust and think: well, I don't trust in what the doctor said, then they will not take the tea.

So working on trust is the most important condition I think between a doctor and a patient. So it is also with being abroad. It is very important, because if it is not there it will be a problem with solving the problem with the health.

**How important to you from 0 to 10 is trust as a factor in decision making for a medical treatment abroad? Where 0 is not important at all and 10 is the most important.**

- Yes, It is important! It should be 10 and when it is 7 or 8 it is also really good. 10 would be best, but it too ideological I think.

**I don't have any more questions, but is there anything that you would like to add?**

- No.

**Thank You for the interview.**

**THE END**

## Appendix 9:

### Interview nr. 7

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Date of the interview:	28 <sup>th</sup> April 2012.
Interviewer:	Zofia Konieczna
The mode of conduction:	Face-to-face interview
Short description of the interviewee:	A 32-years old woman, former employee of a medical company situated in Belgium (Bariatric Surgeries Manager)
Transcript of the interview:	see below

**Could you please tell us a little bit about the company that you worked for? What exactly was the goal of the business?**

- It was English owned company in Belgium and there was a man who started it, who lived in Belgium for many years, for 7 or 8 or 9 years. And it is a big news in UK that the costs of NHS (National Health Care) surgery is really really high if you go private, and then NHS waiting lists are very long, you have to be approved, go through a lot of hubs and bureaucratic red tape, but in Belgium it's really easy and it's really cheap. All the Clinique's there are like 1/3 of the price of going private in the UK. So he became the middle man. He talked to some doctors in Belgium and they agreed to it and then he started to market it in a UK. That's how he started. Basically he saw a gap in the market.

**Ok, so he was a British man starting a company in Belgium.**

- Exactly, and a lot of people in UK wouldn't think to go to Belgium because of the French-Flemish issue, so he decided to be the middle man for it.

**What kind of procedures was the company offering?**

- We did cosmetic surgery, bariatric surgery (which is obesity surgery) and orthopedic surgeries, so hips and knees. And some other small things, sometimes when people's ear stacked out, little plastic, cosmetic surgeries.

**What were your responsibilities at the company?**

- I started with answering enquiries, if people wrote or filled in a form on our website I would reply back with prices and questions, and I started with all of the surgeries, but then we slowly started to grow bigger and bigger, so eventually I just took care of the obesity surgery. So people who ride in or call... if it was a specific question health related I go to the doctor and ask him and then get back to the people.

**So would you say that you had a direct contact with the patients?**

- Yeah, definitely. But we never met in person, almost never.

**But still, by phone or email...**

- Yeah, phone, emails, a lot of contact.

### **How could people find your company and how did the procedure of accepting patients look like?**

- They found us mostly through Google searches, we were the only company at that time doing it from Belgium, and then word of mouth was quite popular in certain markets like Ireland – people would tell other people and other people and other people. So they would contact us, I give them prices, answer questions, send them the brochures, tell them exactly what was going to happen step by step, and then they would come back and say if they want it or not. Sometimes they were just calling different countries and different companies just to get the prices, but when somebody decided on the surgery we would then take a deposit from them, organize their flights, the hotel, the taxis, organize everything with the doctor, ask them to fill in a medical form that the doctor would review to see if there is anything that they needed to do beforehand and tell them what to do. For example you have to start slimming out your diet a little bit before surgery and other things like that.

### **How long did the process take from the starting point?**

- Sometimes it could be 2 or 3 months, and sometimes it was very last minute, like if they decided that they wanted to do it, they wanted to do it right now and not to have any time to think about it, because they were afraid that they would back out. So sometimes it was 2 or 3 weeks in advance which I think is really fast.

### **Was there a direct contact between the doctor and the patient?**

- Not usually, we were the person in the middle, except if the patient had so many questions which we couldn't answer (because we were not doctors – I am not a doctor or a nurse either). Then I would send to the doctor, the patient telephone number and ask if he could call back and answer all questions – and that usually worked really well.

### **Was there only one clinic that cooperated with you as the middle man?**

- We worked with a hospital in Brugge, a cosmetic surgery clinic in Leuven and then eventually we changed hospitals and worked with a different doctor from Antwerp.

### **How did the company try to attract customers?**

- We have spent a little bit of money on internet marketing; we got other patients to give recommendations for our website and actually UK celebrity once came to us and then gave her story to the papers, so that also attracted a lot of business and then again the word of mouth.

### **How long ago was it?**

- It started around 2004 – 2005 and then I worked there until 2008 (for about 3 years).

### **Do you personally think that trust is an important issue when people decide on having a medical treatment abroad?**

- Yes, definitely, because at least in the UK where our biggest market was, there were a lot of horror stories in the papers and in magazines, like: I went abroad for a surgery and it was completely horrible and it went wrong and even in TV all the time. So I guess it is worth to trust who you are going to for something like this especially. A lot of other people had worries about

anesthesia and also there was a certain virus that you could pick up in British hospitals (especially older people) and that was a huge issue.

**With all this existing concerns, how did you manage to make people trust your company?**

- That was a really hard part of the job actually, because we were approaching people through phone calls, emails, websites – there was no personal contact, there was no office that they could come to, and if things were to go wrong, that was their question – what if something will go wrong when I am back to England? And we had to answer that in a way to make people feel comfortable. And a lot of people kind of said: how do I know that you won't just take my money and run? So we had to explain that they could talk to the doctor and we also did patient reveal – we had a list of people who had the same surgery and they agreed to be phone contact, and that worked really well, because some of the women would actually go and meet the other women and show them how they look now (it was the obesity surgery), explain the difficulty of going through it, so that was the biggest way we got people to trust.

But a lot of people when they asked: how do I know that you won't just take my money and run? I would explain that if we were in a business of doing that, we wouldn't still be in business. We could show that we've been in business for so long. But it was a tricky subject for sure.

**Which aspects in your opinion influenced patient's perception towards the company?**

- When they would talk to other patients who had the same surgery. Because that person had been through everything, the whole process. From the enquiry process, through the surgery and then the aftercare, so they were able to relate a lot better. And if that person said- yes, this is a legitimate company, legitimate doctor, this surgery helped me then it would influence the interested person a lot more than I could. Because I never had this surgery. They don't know what I look like, they don't know who I am. So I think that this probably did the best.

**Since there was no direct connection with the doctor, was there anything that influenced the patient's perception towards the doctor?**

- Well, this doctor in particular was very good in what he did, so all they (patients) had to do was to put his name in a search engine and they would find lots of history about him. We would also send his CV to the patients, so they could see where he studied. I also sent a lot of links about all the organizations that he belonged to, that he was a board member to most of them, patient's could see online that he gave a lot of lectures concerning bariatric surgery, so that was enough. They knew that he was legitimate most of the time.

**But still, there was no direct contact?**

- In most cases not. Sometimes they (patients) wanted to speak to him personally, and he was very good at that, very charismatic on the phone and also in person. However he was really, really busy, so sometimes it would take a while for him to get around with it- 2,3,4 days, which was a little bit tricky, but when they finally spoke to them it was all fine.

**What in your opinion is important for creating a trustworthy relationship? First of all between the patient and the doctor and second of all between a patient and a company like you (middle man).**

- Between the patient and the doctor, I think professionalism with a big slice of humanity – it has a lot to do with it. It is really a chemistry thing. If you feel all right with the doctor. The doctor

doesn't really have a choice with the patient. But if the patient feels right with the doctor, asks questions and doesn't feel stupid about it – especially with obesity surgeries it is really sensitive, because people have probably gone through bullying as a child, several diets, jo-jo dieting, putting on weight, trying to starve themselves and a lot of mental issues associated with that. So it is really important if they feel comfortable with him or her in that sort of way. Because you have to trust this person when you are under anesthesia, you are really putting a lot into somebody's hands with that kind of surgery. And you are choosing to do it. It is not like a life or death thing like in some cases.

Between the customer and the medical company, I think you just have to be as honest as possible, what people appreciate with me sometimes and I am not so sure if it helped my sales pitch, but I was always extremely honest with what could happen. If one patient came back and said: I've had these symptoms ever since and it is causing problems – and it did happen once in a while that the surgery would go wrong, I would mention it to other people who were asking, because their number one question was: what is the worse that could happen? What problems could happen? I would say that a previous patient had certain complications (like trouble with eating rice), so you have to understand that this can happen to you as well. And I think that was important. It helped the sales that I did get, but maybe it drove some sales off as well.

#### **Which countries were the majority of patients from?**

- It started out with England and there were also lots of people from Ireland, also some from North America, but I think they had other places they could go to (like Mexico). So, yes mostly, UK and Ireland.

#### **What were the main reasons that these people chose to have a medical treatment abroad, so in Belgium in that case instead choosing their own country?**

- In the UK it was being on the waiting list on the National Healthcare System, it is hard to be even approved for this kind of surgery. On the waiting list you could be waiting for a year or more, if you went private, it was like 10 thousand Pounds, whereas with us it would have been more of a 4 thousand Pounds. And then this virus was also one of the reasons (I can't remember the name of it now). You heard all the time about this virus in NHS hospitals, whereas there was almost to instance of it in Belgium, because the hospitals were so clean.

So there was just a lack of trust in their own country. And Belgium felt like the more professional, cheaper alternative. And I have no experience with UK hospitals so I don't know.

But in Ireland there were only 2 people in the whole country who did the surgery (bariatric surgery). So it was almost impossible to get it there for that reason.

#### **What were the patient's fears when considering going abroad for the treatment?**

- When they were still asking questions, they were worrying that we weren't legitimate company and that we will run away with their money. Anesthesia was a big worry – that they go in anesthesia and that they will never wake up again. And there were also concerns that it just wouldn't work. That they've spent all this money, they had weeks of recovery time and then it would be nothing. And also when they return, that they would have nobody see to them if there was a problem (post operational care). Sometimes in the UK the doctor wouldn't see you if you haven't had the surgery in NHS, so people were facing a bit of a problem about where to find aftercare.



**What kind of actions could help to overcome those threats? Were you (as a company) trying to do something to make your patients more comfortable?**

- Yes, we started a forum on our website. We asked one previous patient to give advices. So everybody who had any concerns could go to the website and write about it and then everybody else would answer how did it go. There was also an international forum for the same thing where a lot of people were active and they've spent a couple of weeks or months on that before surgery and then afterwards. They would track the progress as they were going through the process, and that was also big for recommendations as well.

We have also put them in touch with somebody who had the surgery before. In Ireland there is a really big word of mouth – it is better if you know somebody, that's how business goes there. So one lady that we got from Ireland, she would go to another patient's house and meet face to face, and that would do a world of good to them.

**How the medical travel impacted the patients? Were they satisfied or did they lose their trust in treatment abroad?**

- If you did it once, I don't think that you would do it again. Because it is a really emotional thing, a lot of people told me. It is a personal thing. Some people would go over there (to Belgium), have their surgery, have a bed rest for a day and then be up exploring the city, because it was Brugge and Antwerp – beautiful cities to visit. I had one lady on the far extreme side of that, who immediately after the surgery called me crying, saying that she made a mistake, and she can't believe that she did it to herself, she wished she could undo it. And she wanted me to speak to the doctor to fix it again. She had emotionally and mentally a horrible time with it – not even physically.

I think that the surgeon put a lot of trust in people, but the whole process of doing it is hard. And hopefully you wouldn't have to do it more than once.

**Would you ever yourself decide to have a medical treatment with the company that you worked at?**

- Now, that I know how it works, probably not. I would try to go directly to the doctor to cut out the middle man. And now that I worked in that company I see that there is lots of companies and lots of industries that do this, so for instance the hotel industries, going through booking.com and then going directly to the hotel. People think that having the middle man is easier, but I would prefer going directly to a surgeon.

**Would it be due to the costs, or other reasons?**

- I am really concern of having the extra costs of having the middle man in between.  
  
\*Oh, one more thing for reassuring people, we started insurance so if something went wrong we would flight them back to Belgium and that helped people a lot as well. But there was an eye surgery that I did go to, it was because the obesity surgeon that we worked with in Belgium knew the eye surgeon in Turkey personally and he said that he is the best. So that was a personal recommendation.

**Would you say than that personal recommendation or family recommendation is an important issue here?**

- Absolutely, definitely. I would feel the same way.

**Did the Belgium company that you worked for feel that trust is important in the relation with their patients?**

- Yes, definitely. It was always something that we were trying to overcome, because some people booked the surgery and then said no, no, no, I don't trust anything. And then we would cancel. One guy didn't even show up even though he paid for everything himself, on the day he decided not to. Or sometimes they got there and they decided not to (participate). Yes, it is one of the most important factors when it is not a walk in place that you are dealing with.

**How then as a company did they try to create an image of being trustworthy?**

- Personal recommendation on the website, like little quotes from people who have had it before. Also to have the surgeon say that we were a legitimate company did a world of good as well, because he had a good reputation internationally. So if he was recommending us, that was important. It is all the same - it is about the personal touch to it.

**Was there a difference in treating patients with serious problems and smaller problems (let's say cosmetic surgeries)? Was there a difference in approaching them?**

- There is a sensitivity issue, but there wasn't any different process of dealing with people. For example if there is somebody with a flat chest and wants a breasts augmentation versus somebody who is obese for the most of their life, there is more emotional sensitivity issue with the obese person. There was no difference in dealing with them, but you still had to be sensitive when speaking to them. We had to be understanding.

With the cosmetic surgeries you go under anesthesia, you hear horror stories that the breasts are not even and things like that, but with the obesity surgery it was the anesthesia worries and also some people were so big, that it was really detrimental to their health (there are heart issues related to it, your joints would hurt, you couldn't breathe properly at night so you had to be hooked to a machine), so that was kind of more a life or death sort of thing. And that's often a reason why they came to us. They were saying: if I continue this way I am not going to survive to see my grandchildren. Whereas the people who wanted the breast augmentation or nose done, they didn't have that whole thing with them. But they all felt that there was something important that they are going into.

**You mentioned that in Belgium you cooperated with the doctors from Antwerp and Brugge, which were nice cities to see. So did the destination play an important factor in choosing this particular medical company?**

- I think yes. A lot of people really wanted to be able to see the town a little bit and to explore, but I think that just as many people went to clinic in Brussels or Paris - clinics that we heard about and that we knew that they were our competition. So I don't think it was that important, but it was a nice afterthought (if they felt better they could go and explore the town).

**Would it then be a secondary factor?**

- I think countries are important but not towns. Belgium had a good reputation whereas for instance India didn't. Because India has pretty big destination surgery as well, but there are certain stereotypes, if you think about it: Belgium hospital and Indian hospital, a lot of people

would think that the Indian hospital is in a third world country, so it must affect the healthcare system. So I think that the country is important, but not so much the city.

**Was there any language problem between the patients and the company?**

- Not with the doctors, because the doctors spoke perfect English and the patients were always really happy about that, but some of the nursing staff didn't speak English, or didn't speak English very well and sometimes that was a problem. Because once you are done with the surgery, you have the pre-meeting with the doctor, you have the surgery where the doctor comes in for the anesthetic and say: you are going to be fine, that is what I'm going to do. Then after, the doctor might come around once, but then it was the nurses coming in to change your dressing, to give you food - it was more common to have the daily contact with the nurses and if they didn't speak English, yes that was a problem sometimes. It was a problem for the doctor as well. He really wanted the level of English to improve in the whole hospital, so yes, that was an issue sometimes.

**What or who influence patient's choice for traveling abroad for the medical treatment?**

- Traveling abroad versus staying home?

**Yes**

- I think that price was the bigger factor. Definitely. The patients, where they were coming from that we got, it was because it was just ridiculous expensive in their home countries and they couldn't afford that., but they really, really wanted it and so they were willing to go abroad for it. And Belgium is the next closest place.

**Would you say that there was some influence of other people?**

- I don't think so. There was a time that there were a lot of articles in magazines about going abroad for surgery - good and bad, pros and cons, so it probably had a lot to do with it. And then really price. Price was a big one. People were looking for what they could afford.

**Are there and characteristics of medical tourists? Did you see anything in common? Who are medical patients?**

- Yes, for this surgery (bariatric surgery), it was mostly women between 26 and 40, sometimes a little bit older and they mostly had families. There were a couple of young people. There were of course guys once in a while. But definitely family people. And personality... I couldn't really string them together with personality traits. Some were really shy and nervous, others were ready to go and sign me up tomorrow, how quick can you take me and stuff like that, but heavily women.

**Did your patients have some previous travel experience?**

- Mostly they have been abroad. I remember maybe one or two Irish girl who haven't been abroad before, so they were a little bit nervous. They were a bit like country folks, but in the end they referred more people to us than anybody. Everybody else from the same area and it seemed as we got the whole neighborhood over two or three years. So the personal word of mouth was really important.

**THE END**

## Appendix 10:

### E-mail correspondence

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Date: 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
Subject: Odp: RE: medical tourists  
Content of the e-mail: see below

*Hi Zosia!*

*What a wonderful subject you have for your thesis! I'm really curious what the results will be like.... I don't know much about it though and this weekend I was thinking about someone I know who did this or might be interested in getting a treatment abroad one day but I still haven't thought of someone yet! We don't really learn about this subject in college only that it might be lower educated people who go for these treatments.*

*I'll ask around and will definitely let you know when I know more!!*

*Good luck with everything and hopefully see you soon!*

*Victoria*

## Appendix 11:

### Transcript of the phone call with a dental tourism intermediary

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Date of the interview: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012.  
Interviewer: Zofia Konieczna  
The mode of conduction: short phone call

Short description of the interviewee: Managing director of a dental tourism intermediary located in Budapest, Hungary

Transcript of the interview: see below

- Hi. I will put you to our managing director. He will be able to answer your questions, okay?

**Okay, thank you very much.**

- Thank you. Bye-bye.

**Bye-bye.**

- Yes, Adam here.

**Hello. My name is Zosia. Good morning. I'm doing a research about medical tourists and I was wondering if you could maybe help me a little bit.**

- Okay. Let's see if I can.

**I'm writing a master thesis about trust and distrust in medical tourism and I'm looking actually for some interviewees, especially if possible for people who has experienced medical tourism or have the desire to do it in the future. And it's really difficult, I realized, to find somebody in Holland right now, to have an interview with. Could you maybe recommend me some place that I can go or anybody who would be willing to take a part in this studies?**

- It's very difficult thing that you are asking. First of all, I will not be able to give you a name because we just have... you know I'm not able to give you information on patients that I had before. I would suggest maybe to look at any clinic that have... maybe it's not even a clinic. Maybe I would do something on some blog or internet you can write something... and people who have had it done and there may be somebody who would be willing to help you.

**Do you have maybe any idea which blog I can use? Because I'm interested in Dutch people mostly who go abroad for medical treatment.**

- For what people?

**Dutch people. People from Holland.**

- Dutch people, ach. I'm not sure. The Netherlands are not exactly the top priority of ours. We don't really advertise or we don't really do blog write-ups or we don't... so it will be hard to recommend me one.

**Because you company, it's a... you offer dental treatments abroad.**

- It's correct, yes.

**And is it situated in Amsterdam or Holland?**

- No, it's situated in Budapest, Hungary.

**So you try to find people from all over Europe to come to your place or how does it work?**

- Yes, it's correct. Yes, there are people... most of them come from England and Ireland, but we have had Dutch people as well. We have had Swedish, French, Italian, German, so they come from all over Europe. Yes, you are correct about that, but the clinic is in Budapest.

**And could you just tell me how do you try to find people from Holland? How do you target this market?**

- We just advertise online and people find us, just like you did. And they call and we're trying to help them and keep them close over the Internet and through the telephone. Some of them come for consultation; some of them just come straight for the treatment itself.

**And would you say that trust issue is quite important in whole idea of traveling abroad for a medical treatment?**

- We need to go back little but further, I think that the patient and dentist that's the first trust that need to be built. The fact that people travel abroad is very common for quite some time. They come because of the experience and because of price. And yes, that's why many people try to come for consultation first to see if they trust that clinic, that company or that dentist and then if they feel that, then that's when they start it. So yes, of course.

**So every time you have a new customer is always like the first visit is kind of a recognition visit to speak to the doctor and see how things go.**

- Not necessarily, but some people come for a week already, because they want the treatment done because they read about us or they heard from a friend or whatever information we provided was comforting enough. But every treatment starts with a consultation, obviously. So it will take about close to an hour when the dentist and patient talks and through the time they can decide that 'yes, I want to go ahead with it' or they say 'I wanna think about it'. So it's hard to say, but everything starts with consultation and I think dentistry is based on trust. If you don't trust your dentist, you don't want to open your mouth and you don't let him to do any treatment on you.

**Would you maybe from your experience say what makes people, the potential patients who are calling you, built this trust? What is the most important in this relation? What happens in this hour or?**

- Well, I think. That you have to ask from the patient, not me. I'm sitting on the other side. But I think just the knowledge of the actual work or the case or dentistry in general and the experience that we have. I believe that could be the one that makes the difference. But to answer your question, I think a clinic is not the right source, you need - like you called to ask for help - you need to ask the patient. I don't know.

**Thank you very much, sir.**