

Companies and Transplant Tourists to China

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Abstract : Introduction Transplant tourism is a controversial method of obtaining an organ, and that goes all the more for a country such as China, where sources of evidence point out to the possibility of organs being harvested illegally. This research aimed at listing the individual countries these tourists come from, or which medical companies sell transplant related products in there, with China being used as an example. Materials and methods The methodology of scoping study was used for both parts of the research. The countries from which transplant tourists come to China were identified by a search through existing medical studies in the NCBI PubMed database, listed under the keyword 'transplantation in China'. The search was not limited by any other criteria, but only the studies available for free - directly on PubMed or a linked source - were used. Other research studies on this topic were considered as well. The companies were identified through multiple methods. The first was an online search focused on medical companies and their products. The Bloomberg Service, used by stock brokers worldwide, was then used to identify the revenue of these companies in individual countries - if data were available - as well as their business presence in China. A search through the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission was done in the same way. Also a search on the Chinese internet was done, and to obtain more results, a second online search was done as well. The results and discussion The extensive search has identified 14 countries with transplant tourists to China. The search for a similar studies or reports resulted in finding additional six countries. The companies identified by our research also amounted to 20. Eight of them are sourcing China with organ preservation products - of which one is just trying to enter the Chinese market, six with immunosuppressive drugs, four with transplant diagnostics, one with medical robots which Chinese doctors use for transplantation as well, and another one trying to enter the Chinese market with a consumable-type product also related to transplantation. The conclusion The question of the ethicality of transplant tourism may be very pressing, since as the research shows, just the sheer amount of participating countries, sourcing transplant tourists to another one, amounts to 20. The identified companies are facing risks due to the nature of transplantation business in China, as officially executed prisoners are used as sources, and widely cited pieces of evidence point out to illegal organ harvesting. Similar risks and ethical questions are also relevant to the countries sourcing the transplant tourists to China.

Keywords : China, illegal organ harvesting, transplant tourism, organ harvesting technology

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