
ТУРИЗМ

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WELLNESS TOURISM: NEW HORIZONS FOR BALANCE AND HEALTH UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS

WELLNESS-ТУРИЗМ: НОВІ ГОРИЗОНТИ ДЛЯ БАЛАНСУ ТА ЗДОРОВ'Я В СУЧАСНИХ УМОВАХ

Wellness tourism is becoming an essential aspect of the modern tourism market, offering new horizons for achieving a balance between physical, mental, and social health. In a world where stress and a fast-paced life are increasingly becoming a norm, wellness tourism is a response to peoples' needs for recovery and harmony. Studies show that wellness tourism not only contributes to physical health but also helps people improve psycho-emotional state, strengthen social connections, and reduce anxiety. The relevance of wellness tourism is determined by the growing demand for healthcare services, particularly during wartime, when health has become a priority for many people. Tourists increasingly choose destinations offering SPA therapy, yoga, meditation, and other practices promoting recovery. In this case, such resorts as those located in the city of Truskavets and the Carpathian Mountains are becoming ideal places for implementing the concept of wellness due to natural resources, clean air, and a variety of healthcare services. Wellness tourism also considers social aspects since many programs contribute to developing interpersonal relationships and creating a supportive atmosphere. Offerings, including group classes and joint activities, allow tourists to make new friends and feel part of a community. The environmental aspect of wellness tourism is also important since many resorts are striving for sustainable development, using environmentally friendly technologies and practices. The article analyzes the current state and main trends in the development of wellness tourism under present conditions and its impact on the transformation of the tourism industry in Ukraine. The study considers the dimensions of the models of human well-being and the main reasons for the popularity of wellness tourism during wartime that testify to the importance of integrating health and wellbeing into everyday life, promoting active lifestyles and a conscious approach to health. Wellness tourism not only satisfies modern society's needs but shapes a new culture of health care in which harmony between body and soul becomes a vital element.

Keywords: wellness tourism, tourism industry, active lifestyle, physical recovery.

Велнес-туризм стає важливим аспектом сучасного туристичного ринку, пропонуючи нові горизонти для досягнення балансу між фізичним, психічним і соціальним здоров'ям. У світі, де стрес і швидкий ритм життя все частіше стають нормою, велнес-туризм виступає як відповідь на потребу людей у відновленні та гармонії. Дослідження показують, що велнес-туризм не лише сприяє фізичному оздоровленню, а й допомагає покращити психоемоційний стан, зміцнити соціальні зв'язки і знизити рівень тривожності. Актуальність теми обумовлена зростанням попиту на оздоровчі послуги, зокрема в умо-

вах війни, коли здоров'я стало пріоритетом для багатьох людей. Туристи все частіше обирають дестинації, які пропонують спа-процедури, йогу, медитацію та інші практики, що сприяють відновленню. У цьому контексті курорти, такі як ті, що розташовані в м. Трускавець та Карпатах, стають ідеальними місцями для реалізації концепцій велнесу, завдяки природним ресурсам, чистому повітрю і різноманіттю оздоровчих процедур. Велнес-туризм також враховує соціальні аспекти, оскільки багато програм сприяють розвитку міжособистісних зв'язків і створюють підтримуючу атмосферу. Пропозиції, що включають групові заняття та спільні активності, дозволяють туристам знаходити нових друзів і відчувати себе частиною спільноти. Важливим є також екологічний аспект велнес-туризму, оскільки багато курортів прагнуть до сталого розвитку, використовуючи екологічно чисті технології та практики. У статті проаналізовано поточний стан та основні тенденції розвитку велнес-туризму в сучасних умовах, а також його вплив на трансформацію туристичної індустрії в Україні. Розглянуто виміри моделі благополуччя людини та основні причини популярності велнес-туризму в Україні під час війни, які свідчать про важливість інтеграції здоров'я і благополуччя в повсякденність, закликаючи до активного способу життя і усвідомленого підходу до здоров'я. Велнес-туризм не лише відповідає на потреби сучасного суспільства, але й формує нову культуру оздоровлення, в якій гармонія між тілом і духом стає ключовим елементом.

Ключові слова: велнес-туризм, туристична індустрія, активний спосіб життя, фізичне оздоровлення.

Formulation of the problem. In a world, where stress and a fast-paced life have become an integral part of everyday life, more and more people are seeking ways to achieve inner harmony and physical recovery. Against this backdrop, wellness tourism – the trend combining travel with practices of physical and spiritual recovery – is developing. Wellness tourism offers travelers the opportunity not only to explore new places but integrate such practices as yoga, meditation, SPA therapy, healthy eating, and other methods for improving health into their experiences.

With the industry development, wellness tourism has become a popular choice among those who strive to improve the quality of their life, recover strength, and achieve a balance in a world where taking care of one's health is becoming a new norm. Modern wellness resorts and retreats offer unique programs tailored to individual needs, making this type of tourism an indispensable tool on the road to holistic well-being.

Analysis of recent research and publications. When conducting research, we analyzed the scientific literature on the problems of wellness tourism development under current conditions. In particular, scientists Shchuka H.P., Sokol T.H., and Bezruchenkov Yu.V. underscore that the popularity of wellness tourism is largely explained by the fact that it naturally combines the spiritual practices of the East and modern high technologies, traditional health-care methods and innovative developments in nutrition and cosmetology, methods of traditional and alternative medicine, the latest achievements in physiology and biomechanics, and an individual approach to each person [1].

Ustymenko L. and Bulhakova N. have developed new forms of work with clients of tourism and recreation centers, particularly wellness weekend tours in the domestic market of wellness tourism. The main target groups, for which wellness, SPA services, and related innovative technologies are meant, have been determined. Tentative recreation innovations, based on using foreign experiences in organizing activities of tourism and recreation complexes in Ukraine, have been proposed [2].

Halasiuk S. focuses on certain contradictions in Ukrainian legislation regarding the status of the consumers of healthcare services. The researcher highlights that such concepts as “wellness tourism” and “SPA tourism”, which are the latest trends in tourism activities and are enjoying popularity among people seeking to lead a healthy lifestyle, are almost not used in the legal field [3].

In their studies, Shchuka H.P., Kovalska L.V., and Halkiv L. presented their scientific viewpoints on defining the essence of health tourism and its structure. A surge in the number of trips for healthcare purposes is one of the trends in the development of the global tourism market. The factors determining this phenomenon are objective: globalization, urbanization, an

increase in the number of elderly people, promotion of the philosophy of a healthy lifestyle, the growth of people's purchasing power, etc. The need for healthcare services will be increasing in the coming decades, which will actualize the issue of staffing [4].

In their works, Sylchuk T.A., Kyrpichenkova O.M., and Druz T.P. define "wellness" as a concept of a healthy lifestyle, a harmonious combination of physical and mental health, healthy eating, reasonable physical loads, giving up bad habits, etc. The main characteristics of wellness tourism as a modern service innovation have been identified. The interrelated human states, which allow scientists to comprehensively define the wellness concept, have been considered [5].

In their scientific studies, Marchenko N.I. and Ditrikh I.V. presented the analysis of the main trends in the competition among modern hotel enterprises. They emphasized the necessity of updating the list of services offered by hotels. Scientists characterized the application of innovative methods in the work of hotels. They analyzed the possibility of creating wellness studios and wellness centers based on Ukrainian hotel complexes. Researchers identified the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the actualization of the need to maintain health [6].

Haba M.I. considered the value of SPA and wellness tourism, its importance for tourism activities, and characterized the current state and trends in developing SPA and wellness tourism [7]. In her studies, Boiko V.O. elucidates the prospects for developing tourism businesses in the southern region of Ukraine in the post-war period, where tourism in all its manifestations is considered one of the priority areas of economic development [8–12].

Though there are many studies on this problem, it is necessary to highlight that the peculiarities of the development of wellness tourism as a type of health tourism have not been studied thoroughly.

Formulation of the purpose of the article. The article aims to analyze the current state and the main trends in the development of wellness tourism under present conditions, and also its impact on the transformation of the tourism industry in Ukraine.

Presentation of the main material. "Wellness" is a modern word with ancient roots. The key principles of preventive and holistic health improvement can be traced back to ancient civilizations from the East (India and China) to the West (Greece and Rome). Various intellectual, religious, and medical trends developed in parallel with traditional medicine in Europe and the United States in the 19th century. Focusing on holistic and natural approaches, self-healing, and preventive practices, these trends provided a solid foundation for health improvement today. Since the 1960–1970s, the holistic methods oriented towards health improvement, developed by the unofficial network of US doctors and thinkers (such as Dan Halbert, Jack Travis, Don Ardell, Bill Hettler, and others), have gained significant importance. As they evolved, spread, and gained popularity, becoming a source of a healthy lifestyle, self-help, self-care, fitness, nutrition, dieting, and spiritual practices, they developed into a thriving wellness movement in the 21st century [13].

Wellness is more than just physical health. Most models of human wellbeing include at least six dimensions (Fig. 1).

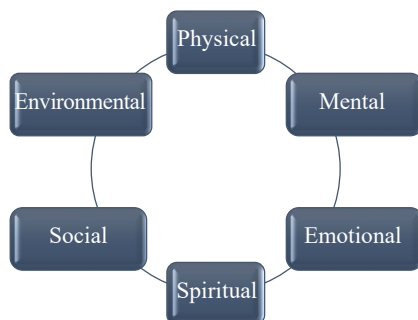


Figure 1. Dimensions of the human wellbeing model

Physical dimensions allow for individual selection of health improvement programs, tailored to the needs of a particular person, and ensure their safety and efficacy during the wellness journey. Mental dimensions help people create a holistic wellness program, which not only heals the body but harmonizes the mental states of tourists, improving their emotional wellbeing. Emotional dimensions in wellness tourism create individual programs, which contribute to emotional recovery and balance, which is the key to achieving harmony between the body, mind, and emotions. Spiritual dimensions in wellness tourism are very important since they are aimed at achieving inner harmony, self-discovery, and personal development. Social dimensions in wellness tourism are also essential since interaction with other people and the social environment can affect the individual's overall health status. Considering environmental dimensions in wellness tourism improves tourists' health and wellbeing and contributes to the protection and preservation of natural resources for future generations.

Ukraine has significant opportunities for developing health tourism. The Carpathians, with their rich mineral springs and clean mountain air, are an excellent place for health improvement. There are numerous SPA resorts, such as Truskavets, Morshyn, and Skhidnytsia, which offer high-quality services and unique natural resources for health improvement. The Black Sea coast also has substantial potential for developing SPA and wellness tourism. Sea air, therapeutic mud, and salt lakes promote healing and relaxation processes. The famous resorts of Odesa, Zatoka, and Koblevo offer various treatments for restoring health and improving overall wellbeing [14].

The popularity of wellness tourism in Ukraine during wartime is growing for several reasons related to psychological and socioeconomic factors:

1. Psychological need for recovery and relaxation.

During wartime, people experience severe stress, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and uncertainty in the future. Wellness tourism offers restorative practices such as yoga, meditation, massage, SPA treatments, and other techniques which help people reduce stress levels. It becomes an important resource for restoring an emotional balance and improving mental health, especially in times of crisis.

2. Physical and mental health improvement.

Many Ukrainians are facing the physical and psychological consequences of the war, including deterioration of their physical conditions due to stress, lack of sleep, and limited opportunities for active recreation. Wellness resorts offer opportunities for holistic health improvement, including healing waters, therapeutic practices, and a healthy diet, which help tourists improve overall health.

3. Availability and safety of domestic tourism.

International travel becomes limited during wartime, hence many people choose domestic tourism. Wellness resorts and retreats located in safe regions of Ukraine are becoming ideal options for recreation without the necessity to cross borders. Many resorts in the Carpathians, in Transcarpathia, and in Western Ukraine remain popular due to their environmental friendliness and natural beauty.

4. Need for distraction and anxiety relief.

Under conditions of constant uncertainty and information overload, people seek ways to distract from negative news and immerse themselves in calm atmosphere from time to time. Wellness tourism provides this opportunity offering calm and isolated retreats, which help people switch off and escape the war realities for a while.

5. Strengthening solidarity and supporting the economy.

During wartime, supporting local communities and economies is becoming important for many Ukrainians. The choice of domestic wellness resorts contributes to the development of local businesses and the creation of jobs in the country's safe regions that has a positive economic impact.

6. Integration of therapeutic and rehabilitation services.

Some wellness resorts adapted their services for military and civilians, who need rehabilitation after injuries or stressful situations. It concerns both physical and psychological

aspects of treatment. For instance, rehabilitation programs for veterans impacted by the war, particularly psychological support, physical therapy, and restorative practices, are becoming an important component of recreation.

In addition to natural resources, significant emphasis is placed on implementing modern technologies and innovations in SPA and wellness services. Many businesses use advanced techniques and innovative equipment to achieve optimal results. This provides customers with a high level of service and maximum comfort during their recreation.

The wellness industry is growing steadily in Ukraine, especially in Truskavets. This is an excellent place for health improvement, relaxation, and harmonious recreation. The resort offers private and public hotels, which fully comply with the principles of wellness ideology. The natural conditions of Truskavets contribute to restoring strength and achieving harmony between body and soul. For about a hundred years, this resort has been attracting tourists from around the world who need treatment through the healing waters of 25 local springs. Moreover, not far from Truskavets, there are deposits of ozokerite – warm wax – used to treat and prevent many diseases. The mountain air, saturated with phytoncides of coniferous trees, is another natural asset of the resort. A wellness course, including the use of these natural resources, demonstrates a significant effect in strengthening immunity, and maintaining youth and natural beauty.

The European SPA Association sets specific requirements for wellness hotels:

- presence of at least one wellness professional around the clock;
- availability of cosmetology rooms;
- procedures for skin and hair care;
- availability of water or dry treatments for overall health improvement and wellness;
- availability of a gym and fitness room;
- equipment of health diagnostics;
- offerings of entertainment programs;
- availability of a kitchen with a balanced menu, national dishes, a vegetarian menu, and mineral waters [15].

The Carpathians are another important center of wellness tourism. Vacationing in the Carpathians offers a unique opportunity to combine health improvement, outdoor activities, and enjoyment of nature. This region is famous for its picturesque landscapes, clean air, and diversity of natural resources, which makes it ideal for wellness tourism. The Carpathians are rich in mineral springs, which are used to treat different diseases. SPA centers offer a wide range of treatments, including hydrotherapy, mud therapy, and massage, which contribute to restoring strength and improving health. The mountain slopes invite tourists to engage in sports at any time of the year. In the summer, hiking, cycling, and mountains excursions are popular. In the winter, the region offers opportunities for skiing, snowboarding, and other winter entertainment.

The Carpathians are a place with rich flora and fauna, which creates ideal conditions for eco-friendly walks and nature observations. Tourists can observe clean forests, mountain rivers, and picturesque water bodies, which helps them restore connections with nature. Vacationing in the Carpathians also includes the opportunity to discover the local culture, traditions, and cuisines. Tourists can taste traditional dishes, visit local festivals and workshops, which makes the recreation more diverse. Due to the unique and modern wellness centers, vacationing in the Carpathians offers an opportunity for deep relaxation and energy recovery. Meditations in nature, yoga, and other practices, which contribute to harmonization, help tourists achieve inner peace. Thus, vacationing in the Carpathians is an opportunity to improve health and a chance to experience the beauty of nature, enjoy outdoor activities, and immerse oneself in the local culture.

The prospects of wellness tourism in Ukraine look very promising due to unique natural resources that can provide high-quality healthcare services. The unique nature of the country's western region creates ideal conditions for the development of SPA hubs,

wellness centers, and eco-tourism. The growing interest in a healthy lifestyle and recovery from current stress offers new opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs in this business. Attracting international tourists and developing domestic tourism can have a considerable impact on the economy, contributing to creating jobs and infrastructure improvement.

Conclusions. The war in Ukraine is increasing the demand for services which help people reduce stress and maintain physical and mental health. Wellness tourism satisfies these needs, offering safe and affordable ways to recover from stress during a difficult period, providing both individual and social benefits for people who want to achieve a balance and inner peace. Health tourism, including SPA and wellness services, plays an important role in the modern travel market. It contributes to physical health improvement and helps tourists achieve inner balance, and enhances the quality of life. By choosing a health-oriented vacation, tourists invest in their future, gaining significant benefits for body and soul. With its rich natural resources and top-notch SPA centers, Ukraine is a great destination for this type of recreation.

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