



Health Travel Barometer 2021

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Visit Finland

Customer volume & turnover in 2021

Volume of international patients

- The total volume of international patients at Finnish clinics and hospitals was approximately **630 pax**

Turnover from international medical travel

- The total turnover of Finnish health service providers from international medical travel was approximately **7M€ - 7.5M€***

*This figure only includes medical services, not travel, accommodation, meals etc.

TOP source countries and patient numbers in 2021

- In terms of patient volume, Sweden was the biggest source market followed by Russia. The number of patients arriving from Russia was approximately 1/3 of the pre-covid level.
- However, Sweden was selected as the no. 1 source market only by one respondent while the others named Russia as the most important market for them.
- **Sweden – 337 patients** (out of which 327 in one hospital)
- **Russia – total 117* patients**

*Before Covid-19, in 2019, the number of Russian patients in Finland was approximately 400 pax
- Estonia – 18 patients
- Norway – 10 patients
- Other: Spain, Malta

TOP3 treatments among international patients

- Cancer treatment (incl. external and internal radiotherapy, medical treatments and surgery)
 - Prostate cancer
 - Breast cancer
 - Lung cancer
- Gynecology
- Neuro diseases, incl. Shunt operation (neurosurgery)
- Joint replacement surgery (orthopedics)
- MEG (brain imaging research)

Future prospects of medical travel in Finland

- Most respondents have optimistic expectations for steady growth for post-covid time. There is a constant need for services and expectations are that the number of patients will increase significantly as travel gets easier.
- Creating more awareness and activating new service providers (incl. university hospital level services) is needed
- Important factors include e.g.
 - How public hospitals can invest in medical tourism
 - How the big private health care players can utilize their newly acquired foreign service networks
 - How Visit Finland invests in the country brand at b2c marketing in the target markets

Future prospects in terms of Russia

- Most respondents still see a lot of potential in Russia. At least one respondent expects substantial sudden increase after covid that levels out as the pressure for demand has settled.
- Several competitors from e.g. Germany have totally focused on domestic patients which creates opportunities for new, active service providers
- Political risks related to possible economic isolation of Russia might affect medical tourism

Future prospects in terms of Sweden

- Opportunity to grow. Good momentum. Only one respondent did not see the Swedish market interesting for them.
- Positive outlook due to:
 - Outstanding purchase power of patients compared to the Finnish market
 - Patient mobility directive implementation
 - Challenges in the country's public health care system leading to long waiting times in specialized care
 - Short distance
 - Swedish language services available in Finland

“...once the Swedes have started and learned how to buy health care from Finland (and the Finns have learned how to sell it to Swedes), it is easier to use.”

Future prospects in terms of China

Most respondents did not find the Chinese market interesting for them at the moment, had no visibility how it will evolve or saw that it requires major investments. Only one respondent was optimistic that the Chinese market for Finnish health services will grow in the future as such.

“Requires real high quality and unique offering to be able to attract customers from China. Also, Finland tourism should be combined to this.”

“There is potential in the Chinese market, but even for post-covid time, it takes longer time to regain trust and connections (compared to neighboring countries), so the growth from this market will come only after new marketing investments and hard work. China will not be in our focus for a long time as we concentrate in nearby markets.”

Effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic for medical travel to Finland

The impact of Covid-19 on medical travel is undoubtedly significant. Despite the negative short-term impact, most respondents believe that Covid could create new opportunities for Finland in the long run.

Negative:

- Finnish service providers have shifted their focus away from international medical travel and are not visible in the markets
- Health tourism in public hospitals had to be pushed down in order to ensure health safety and care for domestic patients
- Travel restrictions

Positive

- Increased need for services in many countries will create opportunities
- Foreigners trust Finland's ability to take care. They appreciate our clean climate, fresh food etc.



“Our estimation is that covid has decreased our international sales by 75%. Yet, due to covid, we have gained new international customers especially from Sweden.”

Effects of Covid-19 on investments in international medical travel

- The responses were rather evenly divided between YES and NO
- Some respondents said that they don't invest in medical travel at all for the time being. Some have shifted their focus from Russia to Sweden.

“Yes. We practically stopped all our marketing investments in international medical travel. We only invest personal work time to keep up with the international connections related to previous agreements and participate in public procurement cases.”

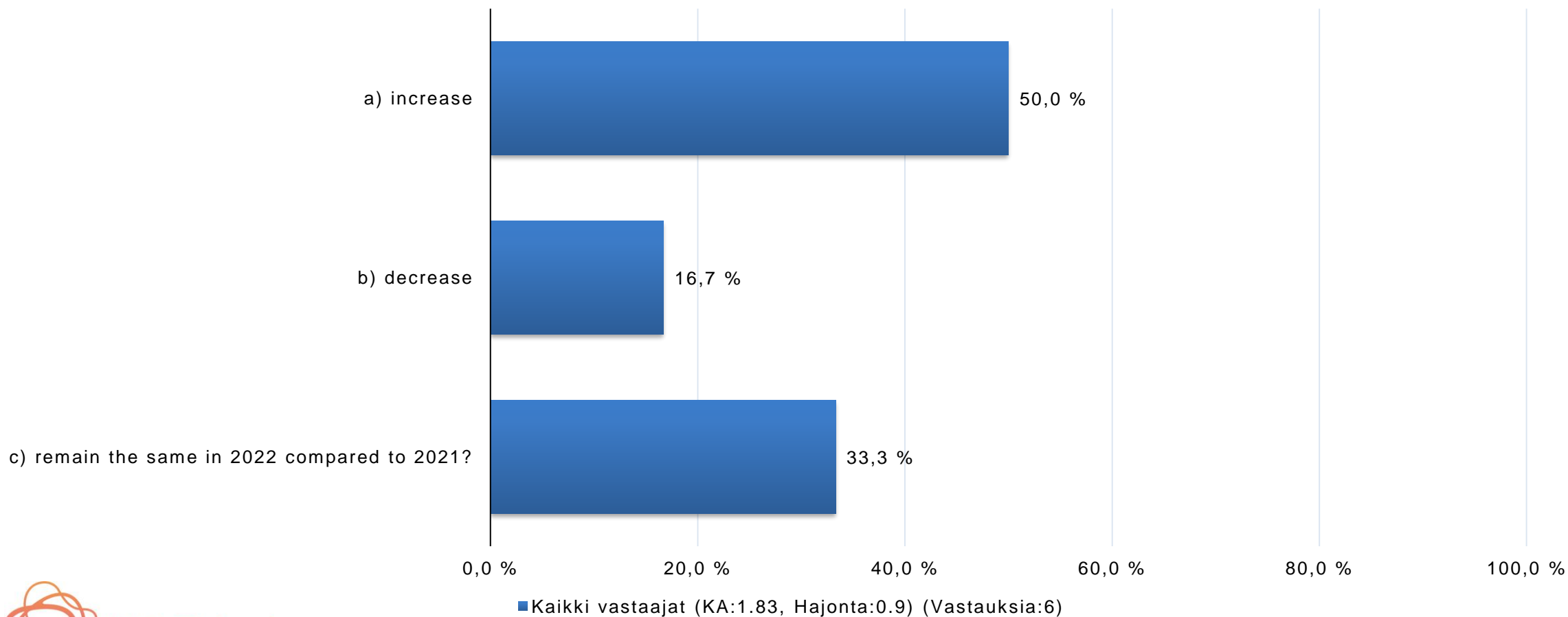
Marketing / sales promotion investments in international medical travel

Some respondents didn't do any marketing / sales promotion investments in 2021. Those who did, mainly focused on digital marketing. For some, that meant updating or renewing their website. A couple of respondents also did paid advertising. On B2B side, one respondent mentioned that they tried to find new partners e.g. in UAE.

“We have had several and constant campaigns in various media channels during 2021 in Sweden and in Russia. At the same time, we have cut the marketing in other markets down.”

“No active campaigns in 2021. For 2022 some plans are being prepared.”

Changes in marketing budget for 2022. The budget will...



Changes in business model

- Those who responded YES, were planning following changes:
 - New location
 - Educational co-operation
 - Establishing a limited company
 - New website for inbound travel
 - Looking for new partners

Biggest challenges / threats for medical travel to Finland

Motivation

- Finnish companies don't see medical travel as a "must" strategy to increase sales. They tend to find other solutions (new services for domestic markets, expanding their ownership to international companies etc.).
- Legislation related to welfare areas may reduce the opportunities for international health service sales. The biggest challenges for public hospitals are related to the traditional operating model, culture and possibly also ideological reasons.

“Health services are thought of as a human right rather than a potential export product.”

Product / service

- International competitors do better job in the service design
- Product offering is lacking enough luxury
- Lacking cultural knowledge

Marketing / sales

- Finding customers: Finland is not well known as a medical destination compared to “bigger players”
- Those who invest in medical travel have a rather low amount of staff and small marketing and sales budgets for promoting services for international markets



Emerging business opportunities

- Novel treatment techniques; requires strategic focus and investing heavily on new technologies
- Public procurements and the Swedish market in general

“We see Sweden as a big potential. First because they need to find solutions because of the long queues and after that when they learn to seek treatment from Finland it is easier to do it again later. This concerns both private patients as well as institutions.”



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