

# **SPA TREATMENT IN ROMANIA IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM**

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Along side with Germany, Italy, France and Czech Republic, Romania is one of the richest country in mineral waters, therapeutic mud and of course in spas and health resorts.

In order to improve the quality of life, Romanian authorities provides an ample policy and strategy to protect the human health, especially in chronic diseases, using and encouraging the spa treatment, the medical rehabilitation programs and the preventive treatment in our cure centers, located in the spa network.

Most of the central European countries, as well as the Romanian authorities, agree that in the national healt system, there are 3 categories or groups of patients, including also the specific treatment provided in spas and health resorts for patients with chronic diseases.

In this new concept, most of the out patients are treated by the family physicians. In the second group are included the acute and subacute diseases, which are treated especially in hospitals. The third group, representing the chronic diseases, can be directed to the well equipped treatment centers, located in spas and health resorts, where the natural curative factors (mineral waters, therapeutic mud, bioclimat), physical medicine units and medical rehabilitation methods, can provide by highly qualified medical staff, very good therapeutic results in more attractive environmental conditions.

This last group of chronic diseases receives the treatment in cure hotels and sanatoriums located in spas, where most of the costs and expenses are much lower, comparing with the costs in hospitals. Romania has now, over 100 spas and health resorts, out of which 39 of national or international level and standards , with a capacity of accommodation of 51.000 beds and treatment capacity for more than 1.1 million patients per year.

The average period of stay in Romanian spa network is 12.4 nights per persons (3 week in sanatoriums and 11 nights in cure hotels).

From the total accommodation capacity for treatment in our spa network, the main owners are the following: SIND ROMANIA = 12.000 beds, Transylvania Investment Company = 6.000 beds, Ministry of Labour = 3.100 beds, Ministry of Health = 2.200 beds, other owners approximately 26.000 beds.

Referring on the therapeutic profiles and groups of chronic diseases treated in Romanian spa network, there are the following, in purcetages:

- Diseases of locomotoric system 53%
- Diseases of cardio-vascular system 20%
- Diseases of digestive and metabolic diseases system 11%
- Diseases of respiratory ways 6%
- Stress diseases, neuroses and psycho social diseases 8%
- Other chronic diseases 2%

In Romania, the citizens health and social protection is represented by the “Individual Contribution for health insurance” covered 7% by the employer and 6,5% by the employed people related to the monthly salary (for the active population), or 22% by the Ministry of Labour, represented by the “National Pension Insurance Rights Office” and 9,5% by the individual pensioners.

Referring an the payment of the spa tickets, the active population (employed people) can pay 50% of the ticket price, representing accommodation, meals and treatment, getting and using also the trade union support.

The pensioners can pay 50% from their monthly pension and the other 50% is payed by the Ministry of Labour (320.000 spa tickets in 2004).

This system assures a real attraction, mostly for the pensioners. The majority of the pensioners covers only 10% or less percentage from the total amount of the tickets price the difference up to 100%, being covered by the social security system.

The partly payed spa tickets used by chronic patients, represent 35-36% from the total number of the spa tickets, respectively the total number of spa clients in 2004.

Over 90% of this category of patients, based on the social support, get the accommodation, meals and treatment in 2 stars cure hotels and sanatoriums, where the facilities are assured in two bed rooms with own bath or shower. Over 65% of those rooms are equipped with TV sets refrigerators and part of them with air conditioning.

The handicapped people, children up to age of 18 and the veterans can get the full package (accommodation, meal and treatment) free of charge.

The average duration of a cure programme is 18 days, or longer, in case of medical rehabilitation tickets.

Based on the social support, the spa treatment assures an important decrease of the costs for the health care of chronic diseases of national level, as well as a decrease of payment for sick leave days and for medication of active population.

This positive fact is also because most of the spa patients use their holidays for the spa treatment and the majority of them get good and longterm therapeutic results.

That is why, the whole spa network and cure hotels pay more and more attention for improving year by year the hotel and restaurant facilities, modernising the medical facilities and equipment and enriching the environmental conditions as parks and landscape.

They also provide better attraction to the clients for spending the evenings and weekends in our spas (cultural events, relaxing games, trips, etc).

Both, the state and the private effort to increase continuously, the comfort in the cure hotels and to provide the modern medical equipment in our spas, comes to motivate and to cover the increasing number of chronic diseases of civilization, demonstrated by the European statistics.

All this effort determines the recommendation, as a priority, of this category of chronic pathology, by the family doctors to the spa treatment.

In this respect, we recently wrote, printed and distributed a specialized book, addressed especially to the family doctors for selecting the most suitable spa for each chronic patient.

Anyway the actual tendency is to direct and recommend the majority of chronic diseases, widely spread in our modern, urban and stressful life to the spa cure.

For this purpose we use educational-sanitary means and administrative-organizational means to send chronic patients in ecologic, environmental and comfortable spa treatment centers, well equipped by modern medical apparatus, agreed by the health authorities, by the Pensioners Office, by state insurance authorities and private insurance companies and by the clients.

Only this way we can expect better and better therapeutic results, higher social support, getting more and more patients, in the future in our spa network.