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## **ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN AND KAZAKHSTANI STUDIES IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS TOURISM**

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**Analysis of foreign and Kazakhstani studies in the field of health and wellness tourism**

**Abstract.** This article presents a comparative analysis of the definitions related to the concept of health and wellness tourism, drawing on the conceptual and terminological frameworks established by both foreign and domestic scholars. The primary focus is on positioning health and wellness tourism as a form of travel specifically organized to promote, prevent, or restore human health. The study systematically examines the terms «health tourism», «wellness tourism» and «medical tourism» referencing definitions proposed by a range of researchers, professional organizations, and industry associations. Some scholars interpret health tourism as involving treatments based on natural resources, such as mineral waters or climate therapy, while medical tourism is generally associated with access to advanced, high-tech medical procedures. Wellness tourism, by contrast, typically takes place in sanatoriums or resort settings and emphasizes holistic physical and psychological rejuvenation. Following a critical review of the existing definitions, the authors propose refined interpretations of each term: health and wellness tourism, health tourism, wellness tourism, and medical tourism.

**Key words:** health tourism, wellness tourism, medical tourism, recreation, terminology, classification.

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**Емдік-сауықтыру туризмі бойынша шетелдік және қазақстандық зерттеулерді талдау**

**Аңдатпа.** Бұл мақалада шетелдік және отандық ғалымдардың тұжырымдамалық-терминологиялық аппараттарын талдау негізінде «емдік-сауықтыру туризмі» ұғымының анықтамалары салыстырмалы түрде қарастырылады. Негізінен емдік-сауықтыру туризмі адамдардың денсаулығын жақсарту, алдын алу немесе қалпына келтіру мақсатында ұйымдастырылатын саяхат түрі екені баяндалады. Зерттеу барысында емдік туризм, сауықтыру туризмі және медициналық туризм ұғымдары әртүрлі ғалымдар, ұйымдар мен қауымдастықтар тарапынан берілген анықтамалар негізінде жүйелі түрде талданады. Кейбір ғалымдар емдік туризмді табиғи факторларға негізделген емдеу шаралары деп қарастырса, ал медициналық туризм жоғары технологиялық медициналық қызметтерді алуға бағытталғанын айқындайды. Ал сауықтыру туризмі көбіне санаторийлер мен курорттық аймақтарда жүзеге асырылып, физикалық және психологиялық сауықтыруға бағытталады. Авторлар осы анықтамаларды сыни саралай отырып, емдік-сауықтыру туризміне, емдік туризмге, сауықтыру туризміне және медициналық туризмге өз түсіндірмелерін ұсынады.

**Түйін сөздер:** емдік туризм, сауықтыру туризмі, медициналық туризм, рекреация, терминология, классификация.

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**Анализ зарубежных и казахстанских исследований по лечебно-оздоровительному туризму**

**Аннотация.** В данной статье на основе анализа понятийно-терминологического аппарата отечественных и зарубежных ученых проводится сравнительное рассмотрение определений понятия «лечебно-оздоровительный туризм». Основное внимание уделяется тому, что лечебно-оздоровительный туризм представляет собой вид путешествий, организуемых с целью улучшения, профилактики или восстановления здоровья людей. В ходе исследования понятия лечебного туризма, оздоровительного туризма и медицинского туризма систематически анализируются на основе определений, предложенных различными учеными, организациями и ассоциациями. Некоторые исследователи рассматривают лечебный туризм как комплекс мероприятий, основанных на использовании природных факторов, тогда как медицинский туризм ассоциируется с получением высокотехнологичных медицинских услуг. В свою очередь, оздоровительный туризм, как правило, осуществляется в санаториях и курортных зонах и направлен на физическое и психологическое восстановление. Авторы, проанализировав указанные определения, предлагают собственные трактовки понятий лечебно-оздоровительного, лечебного, оздоровительного и медицинского туризма.

**Ключевые слова:** лечебный туризм, оздоровительный туризм, медицинский туризм, рекреация, терминология, классификация.

**Introduction.** As stated in the Concept of Tourism Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029, health and wellness tourism is one of the promising sectors. In this regard, the following measures will be implemented to successfully develop health and wellness tourism, and medical tourism types:

- intersectoral coordination aimed at strengthening, developing, and improving the quality of sanatorium-resort, recreational, and wellness services for the population;

- development of cooperation between medical organizations and sanatorium-resort organizations with tour operators to increase the provision of quality health and wellness services throughout the year;

- development of service and management in medical institutions;

- formation and promotion of Kazakhstan's medical tourism products in international markets;

- foster and support the development of this sector, drawing on successful international experiences [1].

Health and wellness tourism is an intensively growing sector based on the use of natural resources and cultural traditions to improve health and quality of life. This article examines the conceptual and terminological framework related to this field. The main terms are "health tourism", "wellness tourism" and "medical tourism". These concepts encompass the range of services offered within medical tourism, from diagnostics and surgical procedures to relaxation procedures and wellness programs. Health tourism includes trips abroad to obtain medical services, driven by both economic factors and the desire for high-quality assistance. In turn, wellness tourism focuses on disease prevention and maintaining overall well-being. An important aspect of both directions is the integration of traditional and modern treatment methods, which contribute to more effective health recovery.

Health and wellness tourism constitutes a significant sector dedicated to enhancing public health, facilitating relaxation, and promoting psychological recovery. Kazakhstan's abundant natural wellness resources, including therapeutic waters, muds, and mineral springs, provide considerable potential for the development of this form of tourism. Moreover, the analysis of international best practices serves to enhance the effectiveness of domestic health tourism and fosters the integration of innovative approaches. The relevance of this theme is underscored by contemporary concerns regarding health preservation and longevity, which are closely intertwined with the economic and social importance of tourism.

**The purpose** of the article is to systematize the conceptual and terminological framework of health and wellness tourism, which represents a complex set of interrelated concepts that reveal its essence and practical application. Health and wellness tourism involves not only the relocation of tourists to destinations with unique natural resources, but also the purposeful use of these resources to improve and enhance health and overall well-being. The key terms of this framework include "health tourism", "wellness tourism", and "medical tourism". Each of these concepts requires detailed analysis and justification, and their interconnection forms a comprehensive understanding of this field. Thus, this article is aimed at deepening and substantiating the understanding of key terms that contribute to the formation of scientific and practical discourse in this area.

#### **Objectives:**

- to define the key concepts related to health and wellness tourism with the aim of establishing a unified and coherent terminological framework;

- to analyze existing interpretations and conceptualizations in order to identify both widely accepted and contested aspects within the conceptual structure;

- to examine the interrelationships among terms and concepts to develop a comprehensive and systematic understanding of health and wellness tourism;

- to propose a refined interpretation of health and wellness tourism based on the analysis.

**Materials and methods.** The following research methods were used in this study:

- theoretical and comparative analysis of scientific publications (articles, dissertations, specialized literature) on health and wellness tourism;

- analysis of the conceptual and terminological framework regarding health, wellness, and medical tourism;

- analysis of official documents related to the development of health and wellness tourism at the national level;

- analysis of professional websites and online resources discussing terminology issues in health and wellness tourism.

**Results.** According to the UN World Tourism Organization, healthcare and wellness- specifically, traveling for medical treatment are among the key motivations for tourism. As a result, the number of research studies and publications on this topic continues to grow. However, today there is no consensus among specialists on the definition of health and wellness tourism. Medical, health and wellness tourism is often understood as travelling to other countries for treatment on various medical grounds. On the other hand, any trip aimed at

health recovery can be considered as health and wellness tourism.

Health and wellness tourism integrates various socio-economic groups and lies at the intersection of tourism, medicine, and the sanatorium-resort sector. It is characterized by its reliance on natural resources, the necessity of a highly developed material and technical infrastructure, and the involvement of qualified specialists. At present, effective development of health and wellness tourism requires in-depth and analytical research.

When examining the study of health and wellness tourism from a theoretical perspective, one can observe a wide range of opinions, definitions, and interpretations. Significant contributions to the theory of the formation and development of health and wellness tourism have been made by scholars such as A.V. Babkin [2], A.M. Vetitnev [3], E.L. Dracheva [4], N.V. Manshina [5], I.V. Zorin [6], T.P. Kaverina [6], V.A. Kvartalnov [6], V.S. Bogolyubov [7], A.P. Durovich [8], M.A. Zhukova [9], G.A. Papiryan [10], and V.F. Kazakov [11]. Their research primarily focuses on the socio-economic aspects of tourism and the resort

industry, the establishment of fundamental operational principles, and the identification of interconnections between tourism and other sectors of the economy. Many of these scholars conceptualize health and wellness tourism as the movement of individuals for the purposes of recreation, medical treatment, and rehabilitation to destinations distinct from their permanent place of residence.

Additionally, there is a notable body of foreign scholars who have shown considerable interest in this field, including H.L. Dunn [12], D.B. Ardell [13], W. Nahrstedt [14], K. Ross [15], W.F. Theobald [16], E. Cohen [17], A. Ikkos [18], S. Hajioff [19], M. Bookman [20], K. Bookman [20], M. Moody [21], and L. Richter [22]. Their research primarily focuses on medical tourism, with the concepts of medical, health and wellness tourism often being regarded as synonymous within their framework.

The research of Russian experts indicates that health and wellness tourism is a distinct type of tourism aimed at health restoration and prevention. This can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 – Definitions of health and wellness tourism provided by Russian scholars

№	Author (s)	Content of Definitions
1	A.V. Babkin	Health and wellness tourism as travel within national borders or across borders for the purpose of rehabilitation and prevention of various health conditions, for both residents and non-residents, lasting no less than 20 hours and no more than 6 months, based on the principles of resort studies [2, p. 39].
2	A.M. Vetitnev	Health and wellness tourism is a branch of healthcare associated with tourism, where tourists independently visit specialized resorts equipped with all necessary resources, with the primary purpose of the trip being relaxation and enjoyment, as well as health recovery. Any vacation can have health benefits, and treatment is the main goal of such a trip. Depending on the contribution of therapeutic activities to the main tourist activities, the following motivational factors can be identified: - primary goal of the trip is the wellness element; - treatment is not the main goal, but rather an additional program for body restoration; - treatment is the primary goal of tourist trips aimed at treating specific illnesses at specialized resorts prescribed by doctors (spa, hydrotherapy, mud therapy, specialized sanatoriums, clinics, etc.). In this context, it is necessary to demonstrate the diversity of the health and wellness services market: cosmetic procedures, health resorts, mineral springs, sports or other physical rehabilitation activities, etc. [3, p. 23].

Note: compiled by the authors

In defining health and wellness tourism, global tourism practices draw the attention of experts to the following aspects:

- the main purpose of the trip is health improvement;
- the composition of resort products, which includes entertainment and wellness, as well as the availability of medical services;
- the focus on the individual needs of tourists receiving medical and wellness services, and the creation of treatment programs [23].

Based on the analysis above, we provide the following definition of health and wellness tourism. Health and wellness tourism is a type of tourism aimed

at meeting the needs of the population for treatment, rehabilitation and recreation using medical technologies and natural healing resources in specialized institutions, located outside the permanent residence and providing services in the field of recreation, diagnosis, prevention, rehabilitation, treatment, health care and clinical care.

If the purpose of travel is considered as an indicator, it is possible to distinguish between health, wellness, and medical tourism. In global practice, the following terms are used in relation to health and wellness tourism: «Health Tourism», «Wellness Tourism» and «Medical Tourism». The term «Health Tourism» corresponds to improving or maintaining one's health.,

«Wellness Tourism» -aims at enhancing one's overall well-being, and «Medical Tourism» - corresponds to

receiving medical treatment. The classification of health and wellness tourism is shown in figure 1.

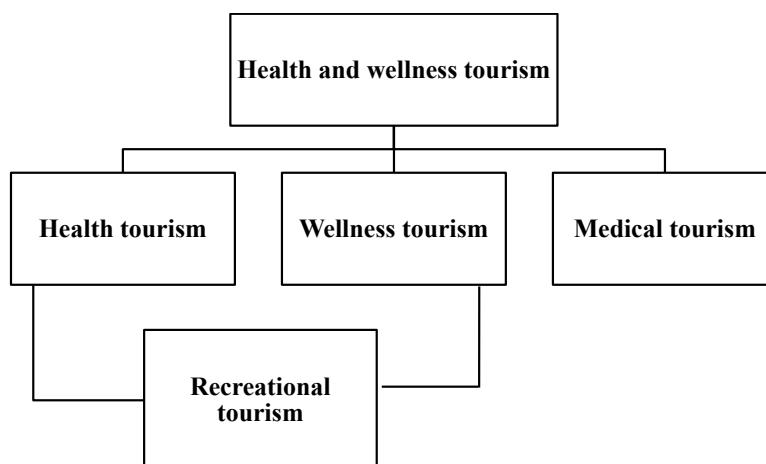


Figure 1 – Classification of health and wellness tourism (source [24])

The classification of health and wellness tourism, as shown in the above diagram, is divided into three types (health tourism, wellness tourism, medical tourism). It can also be observed that health tourism and wellness tourism are closely related to recreational tourism, as shown in the diagram above.

The main definitions of health tourism, collected by scholars, and their content-specific

features are presented. Comparative, common similarities, and differences between these definitions have been identified. This table helps to better understand the essence of the concept of health tourism and compare different scientific perspectives. The definitions of health tourism provided by foreign scholars are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Definitions of Health Tourism by Foreign Scholars and Associations

№	Author (s), source	Content of Definitions
1	A.M. Vetitnev A.S. Kuskov	Health tourism is the process by which tourists receive diagnostic, wellness, preventive, and recreational services in a location different from their place of residence, supported by all necessary natural, financial, and human resources for this purpose, either at the individual's or corporate expense [3, p. 24].
2	V.A. Nabadrik	An important aspect of health tourism is described as the comprehensive set of connections and conditions that arise during citizens' travel to destinations outside their place of residence, where human resources are available, with the aim of undergoing treatment, rehabilitation, improving biological systems, and preventing diseases [25].
3	V.F. Kazakov	Health tourism is the integration of recreation and treatment in a resort and sanatorium setting, where the consumer independently finances a trip to receive medical services in a resort or sanatorium, with an emphasis on the benefits of recreation and treatment [11, p. 10].
4	S. Kaspar	Health tourism is defined as a set of interactions and phenomena that occur when individuals relocate for the purpose of restoring, stabilizing, or enhancing physical, social, and intellectual health. It specifically pertains to behaviors associated with therapeutic and wellness activities. These locations, however, are not considered the individual's permanent residence or workplace. This definition aligns with the commonly accepted understanding of health tourism as employed by contemporary researchers in Europe [26].
5	The European Resort Association	Medical tourism is defined as an active form of recreation associated with movement beyond a person's place of residence, which has an impact on strengthening their health and physical development [27].



Continuation of Table 2

6	The European Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism adopts the definition of medical tourism proposed by Austrian scholar Linda Richter.	Health tourism is conceptualized as a comprehensive package combining leisure and recreational activities with individualized healthcare programs designed to cater to consumer wellness. Within this framework, the Western European model of health tourism emphasizes the prioritization of leisure and entertainment elements [22, p. 3]. This model envisions the accommodation of tourists in hotels equipped with modern professional medical technology, staffed by qualified healthcare professionals and service personnel at various levels of expertise. A distinctive characteristic of this definition of health tourism is its integration with other service offerings, wherein health-enhancement programs are intertwined with rehabilitative, rejuvenating treatments and therapeutic nutrition.
7	UNWTO	Health tourism refers to a form of tourism where the primary objective is to enhance the physical well-being of the traveler through medical services, therapeutic monitoring, treatment, and physical exercises. This form of tourism is typically associated with visits to specialized resorts and SPA centers, where the focus is on maintaining or improving health through integrated medical and wellness interventions [28].
8	W. Nahrstedt	Health tourism is a type of tourism in which domestic and international tourists, by changing their place of permanent residence, and assuming personal responsibility, pay the necessary fees to visit balneological and other resort facilities offering wellness programs [14, p. 181].
9	Aris Ikkos	This term emphasizes the health benefits and indicates that health tourism is associated with visiting mineral springs for therapeutic purposes and thermal tourism [18, p. 2].
10	Steve Hajioff	Health tourism is travel to a foreign country or another region for the purpose of receiving medical services and other health-related procedures, making the terms «health tourism» and «medical tourism» interchangeable [19, p. 102].
Note: compiled by the authors		

Analyzing the definitions presented by scholars in the table, we propose the following definition: Health tourism is a type of tourism carried out in specialized sanatorium-resort establishments located outside the tourist's permanent place of residence and operating based on natural healing resources and medical technologies, offering cultural events, as well as providing medical, wellness, preventive, rehabilitative, and recreational services, which are primarily aimed at meeting consumers' needs for treatment and health restoration.

Health and wellness tourism is aimed at improving physical and psychological health. Moreover, the main goal of this tourism is the organization of health-enhancing recreation.

A.M. Vetitnev and A.S. Kuskov included measures for the prevention of various diseases and the implementation of conditions for health preservation in the wellness tourism program [3, p. 25].

Currently, tourism manifests in various forms depending on people's goals, questions, preferences, and interests, enriching itself with new qualities in different fields. At the same time, wellness tourism has become a lifestyle that maintains physical condition and offers services to modern individuals who pay special attention to the beauty of both body and soul [29]. One of the most commonly used definitions of wellness tourism is the identification of a type of tourism aimed at maintaining the body and nervous system in a healthy state. This can be realized in two ways: active tourism (fitness) and leisure tourism (rejuvenation and beauty) [25, p. 17].

According to E.L. Drachova's definition, the goal of wellness tourism is health prevention and relaxation. It is characterized by the long duration of the trip, a small number of destinations visited, and, consequently, a long stay in one place [4, p. 2].

According to our definition, wellness tourism is a type of health and wellness tourism aimed at meeting the population's needs for health improvement and relaxation. It takes place in sanatorium-resort institutions located outside the tourist's permanent place of residence, operating based on natural therapeutic resources and offering cultural and entertainment activities, as well as wellness, preventive, and recreational services.

The definition of «wellness tourism» corresponds to the term «a state of good health, balance, and well-being». The word wellness is defined in the 1654 English dictionary as «good health» [30].

In 1961, English doctor H.L. Dunn first defined the concept of «high-level wellness» describing it as a state of complete well-being. Following this, the term gained new meaning in the mid-20th century. Dunn's explanation of wellness aligns closely with the definition provided in the preamble of the 1946 World Health Organization (WHO) Constitution, which states: «Health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity but also a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being» [12, p. 786].

The term «Wellness» refers to an approach to life that is based on a healthy lifestyle. Supporters of wellness value all that is beneficial, constructive, and creative, and advocate for balanced and comfortable

physical activity, proper nutrition, comprehensive skincare, good rest, optimism, and positive thinking.

According to one of the founders of the wellness movement, Donald Ardell, wellness is primarily about the willingness to take responsibility for the quality of one's life, making conscious decisions about choices, and creating a healthy lifestyle [13, p. 3].

According to the definitions provided by Hansruedi Mueller and Eveline Lanz Kaufmann, wellness is a state of health achieved through the harmonious integration of the body, mind, and emotions. This is facilitated by responsibility, physical fitness, beauty, proper nutrition, treatment, rest, meditation, mental activity, knowledge, and care for the environment and social connections as fundamental elements [31].

In the works of Russian researchers, the concept of wellness is understood as the health of both the body and mind, based on the adoption of a healthy lifestyle, increased physical activity, attention to water procedures, and the use of both natural and artificial elements, aimed at the harmony between humanity and nature [32].

Despite some differences in the definitions of wellness adopted by various Wellness associations across different countries, all of them align with the definition of wellness tourism. A wellness tourist is primarily an individual interested in enhancing their health and preventing the exacerbation of chronic diseases; however, this group typically consists of people with a relatively high level of health, constituting about 7-8% of the healthy population of the Earth [31, p. 7].

Modern wellness hotels offer a broad range of services aimed at relaxation, stress relief, and maintaining physical health. These include fitness, massage, proper nutrition, movement therapy, various therapeutic courses, training sessions and lectures, restorative treatments, cosmetic services, and more.

Within the concept of wellness, the notion of spa has a narrower scope. It represents only one essential element of the broader wellness definition. Currently, spa services are in high demand in the tourism sector and play a significant role in the provision of therapeutic and wellness services. The concept of spa aligns with the idea of wellness.

In recent years, clinical treatments and surgical interventions have become important elements in wellness tourism. Consequently, the concept of medical tourism has also gained prominence.

The subject of medical tourism has been explored to varying extents in the works of scholars such as M.S. Sokolov [33], N.G. Kucevoll, M.N. Mulikhov [34], A.I. Zorin [35], A.V. Babkin, T.V. Chubarov, T.L. Bazhenova, N.S. Grigoryev, G.P. Dolzhenko, S.A. Belousova, A.F. Arbuzov, A.A. Glushko, A.M.

Vetitnev and L.B. Zhuravleva [36]. In the publications of I.V. Zorin, T.P. Kaverina, V.A. Kvartalnov, and K. Shainyan [37], various issues related to medical tourism in both Russian and Western contexts are discussed in detail. However, it is important to note that the majority of these works do not focus exclusively on medical tourism as a distinct field. Rather, the terms «medical», «health» and «wellness» are employed as near-synonymous terms, reflecting a lack of a clear demarcation between them. This suggests that medical tourism remains a field in need of further research. There has been a noticeable increase in interest in this topic among medical sociologists; however, they typically do not treat medical tourism as a standalone research theme. Over the past decade, there has been a rise in medical-social research by scholars such as V.V. Delaryu, V.A. Arkhangelsky, V.N. Dyachenko, E.N. Ilyukhin, D.I. Kaznacheev, N.A. Perepelkin, K.S. Sviridov, T.A. Khadikova, and M.A. Chudnovsky [37]. These authors have largely concentrated their attention on resort regions, which combine wellness and health services, rather than directly on the concept of medical tourism itself.

The term «medical tourism» which emerged in the 1980s, was a result of globalization, the integration of European countries, the expansion of the European Union, as well as the facilitation of tourist migration and the increasing costs associated with healthcare. Currently, this term refers to organizations providing medical services to patients outside their permanent residence.

To date, medical tourism is often equated with health and wellness tourism, although their characteristics differ. More specifically, the primary objectives include undergoing surgery, receiving pharmaceutical treatments, and engaging in preventive and wellness measures [38]. Therefore, medical tourism can be understood as specially organized health trips conducted outside the resident area based on medical indications.

Medical tourism differs from health and wellness tourism due to clinical interventions. Medical procedures include dental treatments, various types of surgeries, including heart surgery, transplants, and other surgical operations, as well as the treatment of tumors, neurosurgery, and the installation of prosthetics, which are performed through specialized medical assistance.

Medical tourism is a sector of tourism that allows combining a vacation abroad with medical treatment. Patients receive professional medical care at modern medical centers with a global reputation. There are two main directions: the first involves diagnostics, clarifying diagnoses, and examinations, while the second focuses on surgeries, rehabilitation, and further treatment [39].

Table 3 – Definitions of medical tourism by Foreign researchers

№	Author (s)	Content of definitions
1	K. Ross	Medical tourism is understood as a form of tourism where individuals travel to another country for the purpose of health recovery [15, p. 3]. Additionally, the movement from one place to another for medical treatment also falls within the scope of medical tourism. For example, the «borderless doctor» service is included in this area of tourism [40].
2	W. Theobald	The concept of «medical tourist» refers to an individual who seeks medical services outside their region for more than 24 hours. If the individual receives services for less than 24 hours, they are not considered a medical tourist; instead, they are regarded as a transient visitor [16, p. 103].
3	Milica Bookman, Karla Bookman	The economic activity that combines medicine and tourism is referred to as travel and trade services aimed at improving health [20, p. 133].
4	M. Moody	A notable trend in medical tourism has emerged where individuals travel internationally for cosmetic or dental treatments, or to recuperate following such procedures during their vacation. The primary drivers for seeking medical services abroad include the superior quality of healthcare, cost-effectiveness, and the assurance of patient confidentiality [21, p.114].
5	Eric Cohen	In the field of medical tourism, a classification of demand has been developed from the perspective of different types of tourists. According to the author, medical tourists can be divided into five main categories: - ordinary tourists: visitors who do not utilize medical services; - tourists receiving treatment during their vacation: individuals who require medical assistance due to illness or injury while traveling; - tourists combining treatment and leisure: typically, these tourists do not come for full treatment, but instead choose destinations and regions with available therapeutic options for some treatment; - recuperating patients: these tourists come for treatment but remain in the area for rest after recovery or completion of their treatment course; - solely patients: this group consists of tourists for whom the primary purpose of travel is medical treatment or surgery, and leisure is not part of their plans [41].
Note: compiled by the authors		

In a narrow sense, medical tourism is understood as the migration of patients to specific regions or countries for receiving medical care and recovery.

In a broader context, medical tourism can be defined as an evolving infrastructure connected to the common market system, which, in addition to medical institutions, includes various business sectors such as insurance, banking services, legal assistance, transportation, communication, as well as medical management, accreditation organizations, medical tourism agencies, tour operators, and specialists in the field of medical travel.

Analyzing the definitions provided by both foreign and domestic scholars, we arrived at the following definition: medical tourism is a type of health tourism aimed at satisfying the population's medical needs through the provision of medical, diagnostic, rehabilitative, and clinical services offered

by medical institutions located outside the tourist's permanent residence, based on high-tech medical services.

From a technological perspective, mass travel for maintaining health can be viewed as travel or paid medical services.

The development of resort and sanatorium-resort institutions and targeted scientific research on resort studies in Kazakhstan began in the 1950s.

During this period, works by scholars such as S.I. Zamyatin, K. Nurgaliyev, and M.Sh. Temirkhanov were published. In the 1980s-1990s, the pace of scientific research in the field of resort studies in Kazakhstan significantly decreased, and publications began to appear sporadically and in small volumes. The works of domestic scholars in the field of health and wellness tourism are analyzed in the table below.

Table 4 – Works of domestic scholars in the field of health and wellness tourism

№	Authors	Research and Commentaries
1	S.I. Zamyatin	Resorts: Sanatoriums and Healing Places of Kazakhstan [42].
2	N.D. Beklemishev	Published collections of scientific works on the resorts of the country [43].
3	V.F. Khomnyuk	Defended a candidate thesis on the topic of Kazakhstan's natural healing resources and their usage perspectives [44].
4	I.G. Zheleznikov	Published a monograph on Kazakhstan's resorts [45].

Continuation of Table 4

5	M.P. Grinberg	In 1973, authored the popular science work <i>Resorts of Kazakhstan</i> . Conducted research on identifying the natural, health, and tourist potential of the country's resort resources and worked towards creating the scientific foundation necessary to enhance the competitiveness of the country's resort industry.
6	T.A. Sorokina, O.B. Tuktibaev, P.E. Markus, V.I. Emelyanov	In the late 1980s and early 1990s, significant changes occurred in the resort industry due to political conditions in the country, and these changes are reflected in the scholars' articles.
7	S.R. Erdavletov	The first studies in the field of tourism in Kazakhstan were conducted on the need for excursion services, medical treatment, sports recreation, and cognitive leisure, as well as the phenomena and harmony of the surrounding environment, which were referred to as «tourist-recreational resources». Additionally, in the classification in the textbook on tourism geography, medical-recreational tourism was classified as a separate category of sports-recreational tourism [46].
8	O.B. Mazbayev	In academic works, the researcher has employed the term «health and wellness tourism» instead of «medical tourism.»
9	O.A. Sardorov	Analyzes medical tourism separately from sports tourism
10	O. Abdiraman O. Tuktibaev	During the period of independence, several scholarly publications on Kazakhstan's spa and resort industry, authored by these researchers, were released.
11	J.M. Dyusembekova	A candidate dissertation titled «Management of Quality in Spa and Resort Institutions Based on Marketing Principles» was successfully defended.
12	E.N. Nikiforova	A candidate dissertation on the «Management Aspects of the Development of Spa and Resort Institutions in Kazakhstan» was successfully defended.
13	N.Yu. Sargeeva	A candidate dissertation titled «Management of Marketing in Spa and Resort Institutions: A Case Study of Kostanay Region» was defended.
14	G.A. Rakhimova	A candidate dissertation on «Financial Provision for the Development of Spa and Resort Institutions in Northern Kazakhstan» was successfully defended.
15	A.Kh. Esengabilova	A dissertation titled «Enhancing the Development of Health and Wellness Tourism in Kazakhstan: Challenges and Solutions» was successfully defended in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in «6D090200 - Tourism.»
Note: compiled by the authors		

Analyzing the works of domestic scholars presented in the table above, it can be concluded that various studies have been conducted in the field of health tourism, focusing on the factors influencing its development, identifying potential tourist resources, and examining the economic significance of this sector. Their works comprehensively address the natural and resource potential of the country's resort and therapeutic regions, as well as the properties of therapeutic muds and mineral waters. Additionally, the scholars have explored the infrastructural issues related to the development of this type of tourism and ways to improve the quality of medical and service provisions. Overall, domestic research indicates that a comprehensive approach is required for the effective development of health tourism.

**Discussion.** In the introduction of the article, the significance of health and wellness tourism in modern society is clearly and comprehensively presented. According to the authors, interest in this type of tourism is growing at a global level. Referring to data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the article cites evidence that health and wellness tourism is becoming one of the prominent sectors in the tourism industry. This fact enhances the scientific and practical relevance of the article. Furthermore, the increasing number of academic works related to this field and

the diversity in definitions highlight the need for a well-founded scientific study.

The article provides a systematic comparative analysis of scholarly perspectives on the definition of health and wellness tourism. From a theoretical standpoint, the authors examine and contrast the interpretations proposed by both domestic and international researchers, identifying key conceptual similarities and divergences. Notably, Russian scholars (A.V. Babkin, A.M. Vetitnev, and V.A. Kvartalnov) define health and wellness tourism as a form of organized travel primarily aimed at the restoration of an individual's health. In contrast, international scholars (Cohen, Bookman, Moody, Dunn, Ardell, and Nahrstedt) adopt a broader conceptual framework, viewing health and wellness tourism as a multidimensional phenomenon that contributes to the enhancement of physical, psychological, and social well-being.

This comparative analysis highlights the necessity of a more precise classification and conceptual delineation of tourism types. As the authors aptly note, while the terms «medical tourism», «health tourism», and «wellness tourism» are often used interchangeably, they exhibit substantial distinctions in their conceptual scope and practical implications. This further emphasizes the significance of clarifying and refining the theoretical framework of the field.



The article provides a comprehensive review of the contributions made by both domestic and international scholars to the development and conceptualization of health and wellness tourism. The authors demonstrate a high level of scholarly analytical competence by highlighting the coherence between the works of Russian and international researchers. Notably, the systematic classification of health tourism by A.M. Vetitnev and A.S. Kuskov, the socio-oriented interpretations of European scholars such as S. Kaspar and W. Nahrstedt, as well as the philosophical and socio-psychological perspectives of wellness pioneers like H.L. Dunn and Ardell, are thoroughly examined. Through the integration of academic literature, the authors establish a holistic approach to the subject of study.

The authors clearly distinguish between the terms «Health Tourism», «Wellness Tourism», and «Medical Tourism», accurately describing their semantic and practical distinctions. This represents one of the significant strengths of the scientific article. For example, «Medical Tourism» refers to travel associated with clinical and surgical interventions, whereas «Wellness Tourism» encompasses types of travel aimed at enhancing psycho-emotional well-being and maintaining physical health. In contrast, «Health Tourism» is considered a broader, integrative concept that includes both aforementioned forms. This classification ensures scientific precision and conceptual clarity.

The terminology and structural classification propose the Kazakh equivalents for English terms such as «Health Tourism», «Medical Tourism», and «Wellness Tourism», which are rendered as «Емдік туризм», «Медициналық туризм» and «Сауықтыру туризмі», respectively. This classification helps define the clear boundaries of goals and approaches within the field. Moreover, it enables industry professionals, marketers, policymakers, and investors to effectively plan tourism directions.

Scientific definitions and the comparative analysis tables provided by Russian, international, and domestic scholars encompass the concepts of health tourism, wellness tourism, and medical tourism. On the one hand, these definitions share a common recognition that each involves travel undertaken to improve health. On the other hand, they differ in terms of treatment methods, tourist motivations, and the nature of the journey. For example, wellness tourism is directed toward individuals who pursue a healthy lifestyle, whereas medical tourism serves those who require clinical interventions.

The significance of Kazakhstani research is evident in the contributions of domestic scholars to the field of health and wellness tourism, which highlight the historical, resource-based, and socio-economic

peculiarities of this sector. The studies provide a scientific foundation for understanding the wealth of Kazakhstan's resort resources, the potential of its natural therapeutic factors, the state of infrastructure development, and the issues related to government support. However, the research also reveals a lack of systematic approaches and a deficiency in strategic perspectives.

The article also provides a comprehensive overview of the historical development and current state of research on health and wellness tourism in Kazakhstan. The author reviews the works of prominent scholars such as S.I. Zamyatin, V.F. Khomnyuk, I.G. Zheleznikov, and S.R. Yerdavletov, highlighting their influence on contemporary academic discourse. Notably, S.R. Yerdavletov's introduction of the concept of «tourist and recreational resources» laid the groundwork for examining the impact of Kazakhstan's geographical and natural assets on health and wellness tourism. Furthermore, the contributions of S.I. Zamyatin, V.F. Khomnyuk, and I.G. Zheleznikov were instrumental in establishing the foundations of domestic resorts, thus enabling evidence-based decision-making in the field. The growing number of PhD-level dissertations defended over the past decade further indicates the steady development of this field in Kazakhstan.

In numerous scholarly works, the terms «health», «wellness», and «medical» are often treated as synonymous in meaning. This conceptual overlap underscores the lack of a clearly defined theoretical foundation for health and wellness tourism. Future research should aim to establish a more precise classification of these terms by identifying their distinctive characteristics. Furthermore, the development of this field requires an approach, integrating perspectives from the social sciences, public health, tourism management, economics, and environmental studies.

In conclusion, the authors propose their own definition of health and wellness tourism. This definition is comprehensive in scope and supported by scholarly reasoning. «Health and wellness tourism» is a type of tourism aimed at meeting individuals' needs for treatment, rehabilitation, and recreation through rest, diagnosis, prevention, rehabilitation, treatment, wellness, and clinical services provided by specialized institutions located outside one's permanent place of residence and operating on the basis of medical technologies and natural therapeutic resources".

This definition is broad, as it includes not only treatment and wellness but also recreational, preventive, and diagnostic functions. Moreover, it conceptualizes health and wellness tourism as an integrated form of service positioned at the intersection of the healthcare and tourism sectors.

The article clearly outlines the specific characteristics of wellness tourism and emphasizes its transformation into a lifestyle for the modern individual. This form of tourism, which focuses on spiritual and physical well-being, proper nutrition, and stress reduction, is substantiated through the perspectives of numerous scholars (H. Mueller, D. Ardell, and E. Kaufmann).

Wellness is not merely about healing - it is about enhancing one's quality of life, living responsibly, and maintaining spiritual balance. It represents a new yet enduring trend within the tourism industry.

The main distinction between medical tourism and health and wellness tourism lies in the former's reliance on clinical, high-tech medical interventions. This feature is clearly highlighted in the article. Furthermore, Eric Cohen's tourist typology highlights the analytical depth of the study. His classification aids in understanding the motivations of medical travelers, thereby enabling the development of more targeted medical tourism products.

The article provides a comprehensive analysis of health and wellness tourism from both theoretical and applied perspectives. The systematization of scientific research in this field, the clarification of conceptual terminology, and the inclusion of national experiences make the study a valuable source of information for the academic community. In the future, it is essential to strengthen the integration of research in this area and enhance collaboration with the international scientific community.

Health and wellness tourism is a sector with high potential that responds to modern demands by com-

binning health and tourism. Its successful development requires scientifically grounded approaches, sectoral coordination, modern infrastructure, and qualified professionals. In Kazakhstan, the advancement of this sector should be recognized as a strategic national priority.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, it can be stated that clear definitions and classifications regarding health and wellness tourism have not yet been established. However, depending on the purpose of the trip, it can be considered as health, wellness and medical tourism. According to foreign experiences, health tourism corresponds to the term corresponds to improving or maintaining one's health, wellness tourism refers to enhancing one's overall well-being, and medical tourism corresponds to obtaining medical treatment. Additionally, both health and wellness tourism are included in the framework of recreational tourism.

Furthermore, to create a unified terminological space, the key concepts related to wellness tourism were identified, and the interpretations and definitions in use were analyzed to identify both agreed-upon and disagreed-upon aspects. The connections between terms and concepts were examined in order to form a unified understanding of wellness tourism. Based on the analysis, the authors propose the following conceptual and terminological apparatus: health and wellness tourism, health tourism, wellness tourism, and medical tourism.

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