

Medical entrepreneur

MWT talks to founder, Spine Surgery Croatia, Roberto Posavec about why he decided to enter the medical tourism industry, his service offering and what the future holds



Latest minimally-invasive spine surgery treatments

MWT: At such a young age, what inspired you to enter the medical tourism industry?

There are two main reasons. Firstly, my family situation, in which my mother suffered from a spinal disorder and had five spine surgeries. Her situation connected me to world-leading spinal surgeons from whom I adopted much knowledge that allowed me to offer advocacy and advising services. Secondly, spinal medicine is rapidly advancing and most patients are not aware of this. They are not aware that modern spine surgeries do not include any cutting or tissue damage and patient satisfaction is very high.

MWT: What do you currently offer patients visiting your facility?

Our team offers the most advanced minimally-invasive spinal surgery treatments whilst caring and honest patient consulting and advocacy services are also provided. We educate patients about their disease and help in connecting them to leading spinal surgeons and help them choose appropriate treatments when considering their diagnosis. The range of our service offering is endless but some include being the middle-man in connecting patients and doctors together; translation services while we are also able to provide documentation digitalisation services. When you choose

to be operated on by one of our surgeons you need not worry as we help in managing visas and other documentation, airport or hotel pick-up, accommodation and we can also support patients with a direct communication line to family and friends back home.

MWT: Who are you targeting and how do you market your company?

Most of our patients are from the European Union countries. Spain, Portugal, Germany and Slovakia provide the majority of our business, however, enquiries are coming from all over the world. Right now we are mainly focusing on the European market but there are

plans afoot to expand to the US and Middle East as well.

With regards to marketing, our website is extremely user and search engine friendly where we promote our services and the clinic. We mainly focus promoting our site via the Internet, especially using other sites dedicated to medical tourism. In order to reach as many patients as we possibly can, we also offer support and information via our social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, MSN and Skype. Our first enquiry actually came through Skype and that is what helped us very much.

MWT: How did demand grow for the business and what are your plans for the future?

Demand grew primarily through doing more promotional activities via the Internet but mainly from the spreading of minimally-invasive surgery worldwide patients are starting to search about it themselves. Now when they are searching they all see our clinic.



Hope turns to reality

Going through infertility issues can be a terrible ordeal for some, especially as dreams come crashing down and finances are drained in the pursuit of conceiving the miracle that is a baby.

For loving partners, Magdalena Cogbil and husband Jeremy, going through such an experience was understandably upsetting but it inspired them to co-found My IVF Alternative, which is designed solely to help other couples who are going through the same situation.

"We are focusing on patients in need of fertility treatments offering IVF using the patients own eggs, donor eggs, donor sperm, donor embryos, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) amongst others," explained M. Cogbil.

"To help our patients feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible, we are offering pampering services as well."

With an average success rate of 55 per cent for women using their own eggs, 65 per cent success with egg

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donation treatments and with frozen embryo transfers at 35 per cent, the couple are certainly doing their part in helping patients achieve their dream of starting up their own family.

Part of this success is due to the fact that the company has been able to market itself through various media

channels, becoming more visible to international markets. Utilising online pay per click advertising, print media, blogs, forums and workshops have enabled the couple to target markets such as the US, Canada, Australia and the UK, receiving over 2,000 enquiries each year.

Cheap costs for treatment have also helped in the continuing success of the company but M. Cogbil informed MWT that this is by no means at the expense of quality service: "Our costs, in terms of services that are covered, are very competitive. Patients are assigned co-ordinators based on their treatment experience and can share personal feelings with them in comfort. This is greatly appreciated by our patients as they are working with someone who truly understands what they are going through."