
Dental Tourism

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Complex dental treatment in Australia is expensive. The cost of dental equipment and materials used ARE expensive. Maintenance and running of a dental practice includes so many factors that make expenses rise. All of these considerations and much more are the reason dental treatment is expensive. However, the regulations and high standards required and policed by governing bodies in Australia means that patients can rest assured they are receiving the best possible care. It also ensures that we have a means to resolve any issues that may arise along the way.

There is a growing trend towards “dental tourism” where the strong Australian dollar is not only drawing Australians to travel but also, some travellers are undertaking dental procedures overseas in the hope of saving money. There is no doubt that some of the treatment provided is of a high standard but some dentists report an increase in the number of Australians returning from overseas having had dental treatment with problems that are very difficult to address. There are many things for you to consider before having dental work done in another country:



- Not only are you depriving people in your own community of the ability to provide you with high quality dental care but many overseas dental practitioners are those that would not be able to register as Dentists in Australia. Dentists in Australia comply with high standards of practice quality and safety, and maintain high levels of professional competence.
- Patients treated in Australia can seek recourse if there are problems with dental treatment. They have easy access to their Dentist to remedy problems and their rights are protected. Complications to health from dental treatment performed overseas are not always covered by travel insurance and may not be covered by Australian Health Funds. Overseas treatment leaves no recourse if the treatment fails. Patients may need to return overseas for possible rectification. If that happens patients will have paid for the overseas treatment and its rectification, possibly costing more than if the treatment was performed in Australia in the first place.
- Dental treatment often needs to be performed over a long period of time, so as to allow each stage of treatment to settle before proceeding to the next. Provision of dental implants, for example, cannot be done over the typical holiday period of a week to 10 days. Implants especially need time between various stages of treatment, otherwise you will find work is being placed in areas that haven't settled and therefore may fail. Fitting such treatment within a holiday schedule without allowing this time risks complications and failure.
- The majority of the dental work that is performed overseas is very complex. Unfortunately, the more complex the treatment, the greater likelihood that something will go wrong. And so when complex dentistry fails, it fails big time.
- If you do want to risk the consequences of overseas treatment, you are strongly advised by the Australian Dental Association, to be very careful in your selection of Dentist. Your travel agent may not provide independent advice – make independent enquiries from family and friends.
- To find out more information, visit the Australian Dental Associations webpage: www.ada.org.au/oralhealth/dentaltourism.aspx