

Improving the quality of life through Balneotourism practices: the Bulgarian experience

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Balneotourism is a traditional element of the image of Bulgaria as a tourist destination. The tradition of using water healing qualities, climate and mud deposits has been laid from the Thracian tribes, inhabited the Bulgarian lands thousands of years ago. Bulgaria is able to develop balneotourism and attract foreigners not only with its natural resources, but also with affordability of the offered health services. This is an opportunity to overcome the seasonality in tourism, as well as an increase in revenues in the sector and the national economy. At the same time, balneotourism and the established in the country health system rules enable a real contribution to improving the quality of life of the health insured people and especially to people with disabilities.

In regards to that, this paper analyses the origin, the process of development and the current situation of balneotourism in Bulgaria. Special attention is paid to the definitions of the words “balneology” and “balneotourism”. Under observations are some theoretical issues as well as significant aspects of the Bulgarian health system connected to the consumption of balneotourism product. Based on the conducted research and analysis, some recommendations are made in the aim to the further development of balneotourism and the improving the quality of life for the sick and disabled people.