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Trends and Models of Development of Modern Global SPA Industry

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Abstract: This article reveals the essence and development of spa tourism as a form of medical and health tourism. It describes the main forms of spa centers, regional models, and key health-improving practices. Modern trends, such as ecologization, digitalization, and globalization, are noted. The importance of the SPA industry is emphasized in light of the increased interest in healthy lifestyles.

Keywords: SPA concept, SPA procedures, health tourism, organizational forms of SPA, regional models of SPA.

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Introduction. In the modern world, people are realizing the importance of a healthy lifestyle. A concern for health and increasing vitality has become an integral part of the modern system of values. The number of people seeking physical fitness and spiritual enrichment is growing. Under these circumstances, health improvement programs and health tourism in general are becoming increasingly important.

The SPA concept, which focuses on harmonious human development through spiritual and physical recovery methods, is one of the most promising and rapidly growing areas of medical and health tourism abroad. SPA procedures aim to recover and relax the entire body. However, many beauty industry representatives expand the scope of this concept at their discretion, sometimes including massages, wraps, aromatherapy, manicures, and solariums in the list of spa procedures. Hotels with a beach or small swimming pool also call themselves spa hotels.

Methodology. The scientific and theoretical basis of the article are scientific works of researchers whose works were devoted to health tourism. In the process of work the information of the International SPA Association and analytical agency was used. For studying the problem the methods of comparative, logical and conceptual analysis were used.

Analysis of the literature on the topic. There are two main versions of the origin of the term. The geographical version claims that SPA, as a concept, originated from the name of a famous Belgian resort with thermal springs located near the ancient city of Liège.[1] According to the historical version SPA is an initial acrophonetic abbreviation from the Latin “Salus per aquam”, or “Sanitas pro aqua”, which translates as “health through water” or “health through water”. [2]

Table 1 Approaches to the interpretation of the term SPA-tourism

Author	Suggested interpretation of the term
Mozokina S.L.	SPA tourism - a complex of recovery, relaxation and cosmetic procedures, not related to medical activity. [3]
Sychyova V.O.	SPA is a concept of spiritual and physical recovery. It aims to harmonize one's relationship with the external environment by combining natural and artificial factors. This concept emphasizes water procedures, a healthy diet, and physical activity.[4]
Smith M., Puczko L .	SPA - tourism that focuses on relaxation or healing of the body using mainly water resources such as mineral or thermal springs.[5]
Hashemi, S., Jusoh, J., Mohammadi, S	SPA services are part of health tourism and they are ranked between medicine and health.[6]
Lin H.	SPA -tourism exists within health tourism, where people seek to enhance and maintain their health by focusing on the holistic wellbeing of their body, mind and soul in the course of their travels.[7]
Lapochkina E.V.	SPA is a health-improving complex of physiotherapeutic procedures using water - mineral, sea and fresh water, as well as seaweed, salt, therapeutic muds and healing plants. [8]

Analysis and results. According to the author, spa is a combination of the health, beauty, and hospitality industries. It aims to improve the overall human condition and promote relaxation through professional treatments that use water and aquatic products. The main components of spa therapy include hydrotherapy, thalassotherapy, balneotherapy, and relaxation techniques. These procedures may also include facial and body care, as well as spiritual practices. SPA procedures impact all the senses, representing a holistic approach to wellness.

Thus, spa is a concept of physical and spiritual recovery focused on harmonizing human relations with the environment through the application of natural and artificial factors. This approach is based on water procedures, healthy nutrition, physical activity, and restoring internal balance.

The most common format is the spa center, which aims to achieve harmony through various professional services that contribute to the renewal of the mind, body, and spirit. An SPA center has the following elements in its complex:

1. Specialized rooms, including rooms for facial and body care, hydrotherapy, a sauna, a swimming pool, a fitness club, a spa bar/restaurant, and a room for group or individual fitness classes (Pilates, yoga, etc.). There is also a relaxation zone and a locker room.
2. A complex of spa services, including consultations, physical condition diagnostics, and services from professional doctors, such as dermatologists and cosmetologists. Wellness programs and physical activities, such as hiking, beach visits, tennis, and golf, are also included.
3. Use of cosmetic products from one or more cosmetic lines.
4. Services of highly qualified specialists and doctors who have undergone certified training for each product line presented in the spa.
5. SPA catering according to dietary or vitamin cuisine.

Spa centers typically have interiors with soft colors, elegant furniture, and adjustable lighting. They also have relaxing music with a different theme for each area, textile details such as towels, robes, and slippers that emphasize customer care, and natural fragrances selected for each area that promote relaxation and well-being.

In September 1991, the International Spa and Fitness Association (ISPA) was founded to promote and preserve the general welfare of the spa and fitness community. The organization's constitution defines seven types of spas:

- "Day spa" — "City spa," "nail spa," and "spa salons" are located in urban areas. They provide a full or limited set of spa services with an emphasis on the aesthetic aspect. They are designed for clients to stay for one day.
- "Hotel/Resort SPA": The name of this category reflects its location in hotels or resorts. These entities are characterized by the free provision of a number of spa services to residents, or the option to choose between health spa programs and ordinary recreation.
- “Destination SPAs” are designed for long stays (from several days to several weeks) to help clients achieve specific goals, such as weight loss, smoking cessation, stress relief, and restoration of physical form and appearance.
- "Mineral Springs Spa": This category includes sanatorium-resort complexes that specialize in hydrotherapy and balneology. Following the domestic sanatorium-resort tradition, classical sanatoriums can be considered medical spas.
- "Club SPAs" function within the structure of sports clubs, offering a wider range of services mainly based on club membership.
- "Cruise SPAs" are the least accessible category. These are SPAs located on cruise liners that work on the "dei spa" principle.
- "Medical SPAs". This group includes medical establishments where traditional spa services and procedures complement the primary medical services.

According to some scientists who have been engaged in research of the essence of medical and health tourism, there is a regional specialization of SPA models. In particular, they distinguish European, South-Eastern, Indian and American. [11]

The European spa model is based on climatotherapy and tradition. The most common method used by European spas is thalassotherapy, a physiotherapeutic method based on the therapeutic use of seawater, algae, and mud. This multifaceted recovery method is used in many programs, both aesthetic and health-improving.

The Southeastern model of spa is based on Thai and Balinese massages, which introduce an exotic element to any spa. It also uses manual massage techniques that have a therapeutic effect.

The Indian model of spa is based on the principles of the unique Ayurveda system. Although it is not a physiotherapeutic method, it allows clients to relax quickly.

The American model of spa is aimed at creating so-called spa capsules in metropolitan areas — a therapeutic environment for the complex rehabilitation of the body, aesthetic cosmetology, and complete relaxation.

The modern spa industry is developing worldwide, uniting large enterprises and international networks and demonstrating common development trends for all participants.

In recent years, one of the priority trends in the development of the global spa industry is the greening of activities, also known as eco-bio-orientation or "greening" spa. This concept receives wide coverage at professional conferences and forums. Systems of certification for the

environmental sustainability of SPA enterprises are being actively implemented. Energy-saving standards are being developed, and criteria for the conscious choice of environmentally responsible services are being formed.

Digitalization processes in the economy are also reflected in the sphere of SPA services. Today, most SPA complexes offer clients the option to book online and select programs individually. They also actively use internet advertising tools as the main channel for attracting consumers. E-marketing elements are widely implemented, including selling gift certificates and goods through online platforms.

An important trend is the globalization of the spa industry worldwide. One of its main manifestations is the active development of international companies and transnational networks of spas: Examples include "Hyatt Pure" (65 facilities in 25 countries), "Mandara Spa" (70 facilities in 20 countries), and "Starwood Spa Collection" (53 facilities in 25 countries). [12]

Another common feature is the development of travel spas, which are represented by facilities located in airports and railway stations. Designed for active travelers, this service format varies from compact express service zones to full-fledged premium spa complexes in airport VIP lounges.

Conclusions. Thus, the modern spa industry is a rapidly growing segment of the global service market focused on meeting the increasing demand for health-promoting and preventive services. According to the DBMR Cloud intelligent platform, the global spa services market size was USD 76.35 billion in 2024, and it is forecasted to increase to USD 197.3 billion by 2032, growing at a compound annual rate of 12.6% [13]. These figures reflect consumers' growing attention to health and well-being, especially in the post-pandemic period. In response to these trends, spa enterprises are actively diversifying their services by integrating comprehensive wellness programs and innovative approaches. This indicates a high degree of adaptability and significant potential for the industry to grow in response to changing consumer demands.

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