

**IVth International Health
Tourism Congress
Mashhad: 26-27 November
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Tunisia, Health Tourism, Thalassotherapy
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History of thalassotherapy(1)

- ▶ Romans in Tunisia and pharons in egypt
- ▶ 5th centry before JC; Euripide wrote: « **the sea cures the harms of the Man** »
- ▶ Only on 1865 that we started to use the word « thalassotherapy » and this by Dr Joseph de la bonmandière



Carthage

History of thalassotherapy(2)

- ▶ Last 3 decades of the 20th century: Considerably diversified
- ▶ New concept of WHO for health(1946):
« A state of complete physical, mental and social **well-being** and NOT merely the absence of disease or infirmity »
- ▶ Give more eligibility to hydrotherapy in general and thalassotherapy specifically



Tunisia

- ▶ Over all area of 162,155 Km²
- ▶ Important maritime cover (1298 Kilometers);North and east; Mediterranean sea
- ▶ Sahara in the south; 40 % of the total surface
- ▶ Average Temperature: 12°c in december; 30 ° C in July
- ▶ Rate of sun > 3000 hours a year



Tunisia and thalassotherapy(1)

- ▶ **Before the 90**; thalassotherapy=**France**
- ▶ **After 90**; Tunisia emerged
- ▶ National law on 1992 that covered: implementation and use of thalassotherapy centers
- ▶ First center opened its doors on 1994
- ▶ Improvement of the legislation on 2006
- ▶ National standard on 2007



Tunisia and thalassotherapy(2)

- ▶ **Centers:**
 - 50 centers,
 - Actually, 8 centers on construction and 10 under study
- ▶ **Capacity:** receiving an average of only 170.000 curists a year, but we can attract 600.000 people.
- ▶ **Curistas** namely come from: France, Switzerland and Germany then comes Russia



Tunisia and thalassootherapy(3)

- ▶ Local people are encouraged to use those centers; half the prices
- ▶ National and private health insurances refund part of the cost when indicated for chronic diseases.



Legislation(1)

- ▶ Ministry of health via office of thermalism
- ▶ In collaboration with Ministry of environment
- ▶ The decree: n°2006-3174 du 30-11-2006 that replaced the one of 1992
- ▶ National standard: NT 126.05 (2007)
- ▶ Tunisia one of the major participants in elaboration of the future ISO for thalassotherapy



Legislation(2)

- ▶ **Decree:**
 - 5 chapters
 - 41 articles
 - 90 standards
- ▶ **Chapter 1:** General disposition
- ▶ **Chapter 11:** quality of water and using conditions
- ▶ **Chapter III:** Standards for the spaces and equipments
- ▶ **Chapter IV:** Standards for exploiting spaces and equipments
- ▶ **Chapter V:** Human resource standards

Decree

Chapters

Legislation(4)

- ▶ **Chapter II: quality of water and the use of it**
 - Ecological study: site, marine and soil flore; neighbourhood implementations
 - Open(circuit): conservation of sea water< 48 hours
 - Samples: same characteristics as the sea water:
 - Same colour, taste and smell
 - Physico-chemical criterias: salinity; Ph; desnsity, microbiological



Legislation(3)

▶ Chapter I: General disposition

- Definition
- Services provided
- Implementation conditions
- Permissions of ministry of health(obligation)
- Documentation with the needed specifications
- Deadlines for informing the ministry of health: Opening, closing or selling



Legislation(4)

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Legislation(5)

▶ Chapter III: Standards for the spaces and equipments

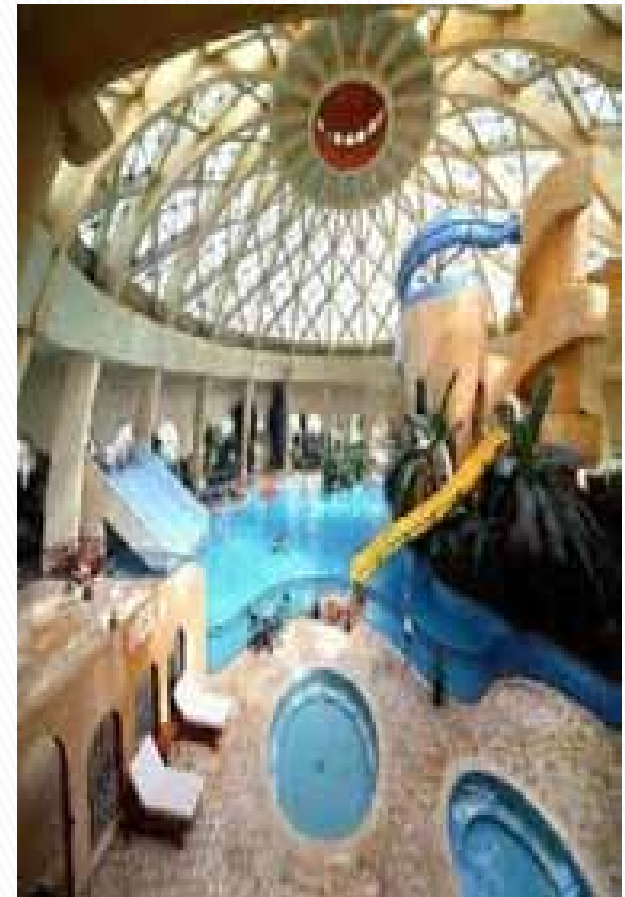
- Very strict hygienic specifications(same as health care institutions)
- Capacity: proportional with nbre of curistas and equipment used
- Conditions for accesibility to the center but also to the other spaces of the center
- Treatment spaces classified by groups: dry, humid...
- Conditions of lightening and ventillation: ambient T°(18-25°C)

.....



Legislation(6)

- ▶ **Chapter IV: Standards for the spaces and equipments**
 - Specifications for swimming pools
 - Specific surfaces for each specific space
 - Specific equipment for each specific space
 - Characteristics of clothes



Legislation(7)

- ▶ Chapter V: Human resource s Standards
- ▶ Employees fit for their positions(health state)
- ▶ Director of the center:
 - Permanent; preferably a physicianIf not, must be assisted by a technical medical director
- ▶ Employees:
 - Number replies to stanbdars and according to: capacity and activity of the center
 - Permanent work



Outcomes

- ▶ Tunisia has more thalassotherapy centers than anywhere else in the world, aside from France,
- ▶ Combining both traditional Arabic and French influenced treatments using heated seawater
- ▶ Tunisia has maintained its position as the **Second** World thalassotherapy destination after France= **Quality of the service**



Quality(1)

▶ Quality as seen by experts

- Hygienic aspect
- Security
- Equipments
- Products used
- Human resources
- Protocoles of the care
- Efficient communication



Quality(2)

- ▶ **What is the perception of quality for the Curistas ?**
 - Respect
 - Comprehension
 - Exact and complete informations
 - Technical performance
 - Fair treatment
 - Outcome: differs according to the curitas(stressed, chronic diseases...)



SWOT Analysis

▶ Strengths:

- A 1300 km coast
- Smooth weather,
- Diversified offer
- The quality of services
- The best standards
- Performant HR,
- Specific training schools

▶ Weaknesses:

- Not enough communication with foreign facilitators
- Not much Targetting of new markets

▶ Opportunities:

- STILL have the capacity of targetting new markets
- More open governance
- Medical professionals believe more in such therapy

▶ Threats

- Attract Curistas by low costs and not a good service

Conclusion

▶ What's next ?

- Promotional activities namely targeting Western Europe, Arab countries, North America
- A study on the development of balneotherapy and thalassotherapy in Tunisia by the year 2020 has been scheduled by the ONTT
- Maintain the same level of quality **or better...**

AND NEVER TRY TO ATTRACT PEOPLE BY LOW COSTS ONLY



WELCOME IN TUNISIA

