

Specificity of Day and Resort Wellness SPA Services in Lithuania

Neringa Langviniene

Kaunas University of Technology, K. Donelaicio Str. 73, Kaunas, Lithuania

E-mail: neringa.langviniene@ktu.lt

Abstract

Wellness services have shown resistance to economic recession. Despite the crisis local citizens and foreign tourists come to pamper and relax to centres providing wellness spa. Wellness services are services that enable use of pampering and medical services at a single establishment. As history shows, wellness spa services have been used for centuries. Nowadays people use wellness services depending on what value they need: health improvement or relaxation. Empirical research shows that there are different requirements for such a value: wellness tourists may choose short procedures or stay at a resort hotel in order to get services. Furthermore, interview with providers shows that there are some possibilities to improve the service taking into account requirements of the quickly changing market. At the end of article opportunities for wellness spa services improvement are proposed.

Keywords: day spa services, resort spa services, wellness tourism, use, spa services.

Introduction

The topic of the article is rather new for both international and local researchers. Wellness tourism spa services development during the last decade is visible both globally and locally. Wellness tourism spa services industry is evaluated as a very rapidly growing industry that attracts tourists (Fontanari, Kern, 2003). Despite the global financial crisis, wellness spa services show the trend of growth, the same situation is with turnover or supply of wellness spa services. The global evolution of industry, services, economy is followed by evolution of wellness spa services industry (Cohen, 2008). Changing circumstances in the global economy also affect the changes in value creation for wellness services customers. They want to get value cheaper and quicker than before (Farid, Lazarus, 2008). Relation between price and quality is one of the most important factors influencing the offerings of wellness spa (Kamata, Misui, Yamauchi, 2010). Some customers want high quality spring waters, others appreciate accessibility of wellness servi-

ces, the rest use such wellness spa services that are not available in their home country. As these services exhibit resistance to economic fluctuation, services recently become an object of scientific research more often.

The relevance of the article is related to a new niche of tourism services – wellness tourism as a type. Tourism services are services usually provided by majority of countries. According to the Lithuanian tourism law, wellness is one of the four growing types of tourism in our country (cultural tourism, wellness tourism, active recreation tourism and conference (or business) tourism) (Tourism in Lithuania, 2011). Such services are oriented to local and foreign tourists. Recent researches on wellness services show the importance of wellness both to customers (that is, tourists) and to suppliers who can increase their turnover through various wellness activities: day, resort, medical, destination spa (Gossling, Peeters, Hall, Ceron, Dubois, 2011; Hall, 2011). Not very many countries could be called *wellness tourism providers* on the global scale. Czech, Hungary, Germany are already known as tourism countries with exceptional wellness services, engaging mood, spring water, etc. Eastern and Central Europe usually stress the profit of wellness tourism, which could be more tangible one. People come to a country with the need to recover, for treatment, massages, mud baths, etc. Situation with Lithuanian tourism is improving nowadays. Statistics of Lithuania show the growing turnover of tourism services providers, rapidly increasing number of new establishments, etc. (Tourism in Lithuania, 2011). Wellness is a niche what is not saturated in Lithuanian market. Furthermore, the first steps of wellness services providers show that our tourism in wellness could be an exceptional competitive advantage of our country. Tourists from Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Germany, Denmark, and Poland recently come to Lithuania not only to see our Curonian Spit and Nida. Druskininkai, Birštonas and other places have created a cluster of wellness services which is capable of satisfying anyone's needs and wishes. Re-

sort areas show that different services providers are able to cooperate in order to supply various services in one place. Other part of wellness spa services is provided to tourists coming to the largest cities of Lithuania: Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai or Panevezys. Day spa services could be provided at large wellness centres, or be a part of services provided at hotels. As statistical data shows, resort and day spa services constitute a very large part in services provided for tourists. That is why attention to wellness is increasing nowadays.

The existing researches on wellness tourism spa services try to disclose classification of wellness spa services, their development peculiarities according to the continent, as development of wellness tourism spa services in the United States of America and Western European countries differs a lot. Wellness tourism spa services concept also varies by continent: the USA expects from wellness spa more pampering services as value added which is created by optional services, not intended for medical purposes (Mollini, Krenkel, Wirshing, Plodkowski, 2007; Chao, Dwyer, Houser, Jacques, Tennstedt, 2008). Canadian people value not only pampering, but also healthy food (Herrath, Cranfield, Henson, 2008). Western, Eastern or Central European wellness tourism spa services are usually perceived as services delivering tangible benefit, such as recovering after illness, sanatorium services, medical consultations, therapeutic massages, etc. In addition, authors present a model of wellness spa services by distinguishing compulsory and extra attributes (Langviniene, Sekliuckiene, 2009). As spa services are not an object for investigation for a long period (Koh, Jung-Eun Yoo, Boger, 2010), there is a lack of empirical researches on wellness spa services, especially on specific categories of wellness tourism: day, resort, medicine, or hotel spa, etc.

The scientific problem analysed in this article is what are the peculiarities of wellness tourism services in Lithuania? What services are appreciated by customers, what are their expectations, what problems or service shortcomings do they encounter while using the service? What developmental directions for wellness tourism services are seen by providers nowadays, in after-recession period?

The aim of the article is to disclose the peculiarities of day and resort wellness spa services in Lithuania. The objectives of the article will be met by answering the following questions: 1) what are a peculiarities of wellness spa services as one of the branches of tourism services; 2) what are main types of wellness spa described in the scientific literature; 3) what are the peculiarities of day and resort wellness spa services provided in Lithuania; 4) what could be the main directions for improvement of wellness spa

services tailoring them to wellness spa tourists.

The object of the research is day and resort wellness spa services.

The methods of the research used are comparative analysis of scientific literature, quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) data analysis.

Use of wellness spa services: historical approach

There is no single explanation of the origin of the concept of *spa*. Two main ways for describing the origin of spa are used in scientific literature. *One trend* explains that origin of spa relates to Belgium town Spau, where in the period of Roman Empire citizens of Rome were going to mineral spring waters for medical or pampering uses. Citizens looking after their health were flowing to Spau, as they believed in benefit of water for health improvement. *Another trend* explaining the origin of spa relates to the Latin word meaning an acronym of *sanitas per aqua* that means *health through the water*. Scientists usually support the latter interpretation of origin of the term spa, as it relates to water which is the most urgent factor for using spa (Smith, Puczko, 2008). According to Lithuanian Spa Association, there is another opinion about the origin of spa. Spa could have originated from the Latin world *sparage* (shower) (Lithuanian Spa Association, 2011). However shower or using the water generally means the same: use of water for physical, spiritual and mental transformation (Voigt, Brown, Howat, 2011).

Development of wellness spa dates back to early Roman times. The use of spa and the value of wellness spa were changing throughout historical periods. Use of wellness was different through the ages: the Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the New Ages and the Modern Age. During *the Antiquity period* water was used for curing the majority of illnesses. Citizens of Rome preferred natural water. They bathed in private baths; later public baths were established. Earlier a bathhouse was perceived as a means for washing, later the understanding changed: water began to be used for health improvement. Thermos was a place for leisure time as people could exercise here, wash, eat, and visit a library or a shop. Thus, deep traditions to spend time in Thermos date back to earlier period and people have deepened them more or less later.

In the Middle Ages, with the spread of Christianity, the use of spa became socially unacceptable. Culture of bathing was perceived as negative and a prayer instead of water was used for curing purposes. Public baths were open only for aristocrats, as it was not obligatory for them to go to church. Bathing remained abandoned for a few ages, as people tried not

to bathe at all (even for longer than one year). This period impeded the traditions of spa and only at the end of the 13th century public baths became open for free entry of citizens.

During *the Renaissance* more natural spring water objects were established. Mineral springs in Switzerland, Spau in Belgium, Baden-Baden in Germany, and Bat in England were thriving. The first scientific researches on spa also date to this period, as in 1522 a book on therapies in Karlovy Varai (Czech Republic) was published. However, increased popularity of leisure at public baths and swimming pools influenced the spread of communicable diseases. Starting with France, the majority of Western European baths were closed for this reason.

The most favourite pioneer of *holistic spa* was German S. Kneipp, whose impact on recovery of spa use was great (Gilbert, Weerdt, 1991). During *the New Ages* a holistic perception of spa, combining education about the concept of spa, herbal tea, water procedures and habits of people, natural environment as a balanced whole, was bandwagon. Kneipp scientifically proved the benefit of natural products, as well as philosophy of holistic lifestyle. According to Kneipp, water, herbs, exercising, diet and harmonious lifestyle are the factors that influence the human health the most. Such a philosophy was later forgotten for a while, as clinical and medical investigations opened opportunities to improve health by taking medications quicker than by using wellness spa.

Nowadays tourism wellness spa takes many forms. Spa is used for medical or wellness tourism, or a combination of these (Voigt, Brown, Howat, 2011). Consequently, such terms as wellness spa, medical spa, and destination spa are used to describe the value for a customer using spa procedures (Langviniene, Sliziene, 2010). Furthermore, understanding of spa differs depending on the continent: the USA customers prefer pampering as the main goal of going to spa, Eastern and Western European customers prefer more tangible profit, such as use of spa for medical purposes or for prevention of illness (Gilbert, Weerdt, 1991; Frost, 2004). Depending of what value customers seek, they could be divided into *two categories*: *one of them* encompasses customers who want pleasure, such as massages, herbal baths, exfoliating scrubs giving feeling of relaxation, pleasure and satisfaction; *the other one* relates to people who seek to keep balance between physical and mental wellbeing in order to prevent occurrence of a particular health problem. Depending on what value customers expect, patients and wellness tourists as customers are distinguished. A patient wants treatment, medical procedures; a wellness tourist prefers pampering, relaxation, nice environment, luxury apartments, etc. As previo-

us researches on wellness were concerned more with physical value for a customer, recently spiritual value provided by wellness spa is increasingly more underlined (Bhanich, Barrows, 2007; Chen, Prebensen, Huan, 2008).

People start to appreciate a holistic pattern of spa, as an opportunity to improve health (body), escape from pain and stress (spirit) (Zoorob, Morelli, 2008; Voigt, Brown, Howat, 2011); develop the well-being concept of all life (mind) (Smith, 2003). Balance between body, spirit and mind becomes the main goal of all visitors of a day or resort spa, medical or destination spa, etc. Wellness service contributes to general harmony of a person's health and is related to the change in life style or possibilities for healthier life (Hopeniene, Bagdoniene, 2010). Development of spa depends on a lot of preconditions. In providing the *resort spa* services a resort area with good infrastructure (developed roads and public transport, variety of entertainment outlets, souvenir shops, bars and restaurants, attractive places such as museums, journey organizers, bicycle and car rentals, water transport, etc.) is very important; while providing the *day spa* it is important that provider is not far from workplace or home of customers. Last but not least, equipment for short beauty and care procedures should be available.

Summarizing the history of wellness tourism spa, it should be noted that conception of spa has been known for two thousand years already. The use of spa was changing age by age. A huge impact on perception of tourism wellness spa could be considered the Roman times when people used bath places for entertainment and curing purposes. The spa zone was understood as a place where people could relax after work, improve their health, or meet each other. Later medicine as a pattern of tourism spa could be identified. Modern economy shows that spa is a service the value of which for a customer is very high: use of spa enables prevention of illness (medical spa), recovery after disease, rest away from home (hotel spa), use of short beauty procedures (day spa), going for tourism purposes (tourism spa, cruise spa), there also could be a combination of exercising and spa (sport club spa), etc.

Typology of wellness spa

There are many classification systems relating to tourism wellness spa services. Scientific works choose a classification of services depending on who is using a service: escapist, neutralist and hedonist (Koh, Jung-Eun Yoo, Boger, 2010). *Escapists* seek more pleasure from services. They are interested in experiencing ways to improve health and rejuvenating themselves. *Neutralists* want to relax and esca-

pe from stress. They do not want to socialize and therefore prefer individual approach of the provider. *Hedonists* want to be amused, pampered, to share the services with other family members, to escape from daily life, etc. The first category of customers prefers medical, destination spa; the second one prefers day spa, the last ones choose hotel spa as these customers want a lot of entertainment accompanying spa.

European classification of spa relates to three categories of wellness tourism spa services: the classical well-care services, the specialized health-care services, and the *en forme* services (Gilbert, Werdt, 1991). *Classical well-care services* are similar to a course of treatment. It is an intensive treatment programme with an emphasis on a current health problem. These services are characterized by the use of natural substances originating from earth, sea and climate. *Specialized health-care services* stem from the traditional therapeutic orientation to a specific health-related problem of the customer. Programmes cover holidays for skin, anti-smoking, slimming packages, etc. The last category of services relates to more relaxed and less intensive treatment, allows more time for leisure. This class of spa services is usually perceived as services for healthy people who desire relaxation opportunities.

American classification of spa more often underlines classes of tourism spa services including extra services; these are services supplied for pampering uses: *club spa, cruise ship spa, day spa, mineral spring spa, resort/hotel spa, med-spa, destination spa* (Frost, 2004). A few of them deliver a more tangible benefit (or body improvement opportunities), here belong club spa, mineral spring spa (health improvement), but generally, American perception of

spa relates more to pampering purposes than to treatment. Analysing the perception of European and American wellness spa more deeply, nowadays we already notice that global trends in tourism depart from rigorous classification in Western countries or in the USA. Americans already notice the benefit of medical spa, when they get medical consultations of professionals in addition to stay in resort area, resort hotel or even visiting a day spa. Furthermore, such new wellness categories as dental tourism, stem-cell tourism, transplant tourism, abortion tourism, and xenotourism become popular in the USA (Hall, 2011). Canadian wellness programmes also underline the importance of tangible assets in wellness services provision (Herath, Cranfield, Henson, 2008). Here nutrition, wellness programmes, sports are appreciated more than in the USA. In comparison to Western European countries, Canadian wellness customers prioritize food and nutrition instead of spa rituals, procedures, etc. Wellness services in Australian market also offer more pampering and intangible profit for wellness tourism customers, for example: beauty spa, lifestyle resort, and spiritual retreat spa (Voigt, Brown, Howat, 2011). Western European customers also notice that value is delivered not only by medical consultations and treatment in sanatorium. They also appreciate possibility to relax, to use massage even for beauty care, a possibility go from home and spend time with family, friends in a nice environment. Thus, four main categories of spa are identified both in American and European classifications: club spa, day spa, resort spa, and hotel spa.

As author of this article chose to investigate two categories of wellness spa. Figure 1 presents two types of wellness services.

Day spa service		Resort spa service	
	Beauty and body care	Services	Variety of wellness and medical services, plus accommodation and <i>catering</i>
	From one hour to one day	Duration	From two days to one or two weeks
	Regular attendance is usual	Periodicity of attendance	Irregular attendance
	Women aged 35-60, people who care of their health and beauty	Customers	Families, couples
	Middle and higher revenue	Purchasing power	Middle and higher revenue
	Leisure time or a break during working day	Value	Relaxation, relaxation in addition to medical spa
	Dietary menu bar, rest zone	Extra to main service	Variety of entertainment services
	Ordinary city or town	Location of provider	Resort

Fig. 1. Wellness spa services: day and resort types

These two categories were chosen as they constitute the largest part of revenue globally. Of course, turnover of day and resort wellness spas depends on the continent, on the country, on the urbanization level, and other factors, but usually these two categories are dominant and the other ones (cruise, club, etc.) make only a small part of all revenues from spa. The main differences between day and resort area wellness spas relate to duration of procedures and services provided. A day spa visitor usually can decide to use the service on the same day, as he or she does not need to go far from home or job place. Day spa beauty and body care procedures are usually used by women (Zender, Olshansky, 2009) who care about their beauty or wish to prevent wrinkles. He or she can go to a day spa even during a break; as one hour is usually enough for the procedure. Meanwhile resort wellness spa services are provided far from home. Resort areas are located far from industrial districts. One of the most important services at a resort wellness spa are accommodation services, as well as nice environment, quietness, possibility to choose not only beauty and care services, but also accommodation, dining, night clubs, treatment. Possibility to get consultations of a professional is also appreciated. Resort and hotel spa services are highly related. Firstly, customers at a resort need accommodation; after that they are free to choose any spa procedure, etc. Customers can even order a service in their hotel room. Relaxing possibilities, as well as a variety of medicine, doctors, dietary consultants, wellbeing educators – all these factors could be attractive things for customers. Another important thing is that day spa wellness services are available in large towns, in close proximity to customers and require less money for using one or two services.

To sum up, it should be noticed that some wellness tourism spa services are used rather widely. Interest in preventing illnesses, maintaining good health of body and mind is increasing and customers look for new possibilities to do that in the most appropriate way. Some of them decide to use day spa; others go for vacation or a weekend to a resort place. Customers are free to choose services: tourism, medical or wellness, or even to combine them. The developmental trends in Lithuania, a country with no long traditions of spa, will be discussed latter.

Research methodology

As Lithuanian wellness tourism spa market is rather new, no law in Lithuania defines the term of spa services and what these services should cover. The objective of the empirical research was to identify future developmental trends of wellness spa in Lithuania. A subject of the empirical research is peculiarities of Lithuanian spa services.

To achieve the aim, the following objectives were set:

1. To assess the general situation of wellness spa services market (secondary data analysis).
2. To identify the demand for development of wellness spa services (customer survey).
3. To find out the main points of development of wellness spa from the viewpoint of suppliers (interview with managers of wellness spa services centres).
4. To compare development peculiarities of wellness spa services depending on the category of wellness spa and to identify the future developmental direction for spa.

To assess the general situation of wellness spa services market secondary data is analysed. This enables to improve the questionnaire for customers and questions for wellness services providers.

To estimate the demand for a service, two separate questionnaires were made: one for the users of day, the other for the users of resort wellness spa services. Users of resort wellness spa services were asked additional questions such as how long they stay in a resort, there also was a separate block of questions intended to disclose how customers evaluate the quality of resort wellness spa. The questionnaire was semi-structured. The first part of the questionnaire was designed to disclose the demographical characteristics of the customers. The second part was intended to disclose the value for a customer (goal of a visit, criteria for choosing the provider). Afterwards the customers were asked to evaluate the quality of services. This allowed disclosing current service levels. Trying to describe the possibilities to develop and expand provision, a question about whom a customer is visiting the centre with was asked (alone, with friends, with the partner, with the family). To assess the development opportunities, a question was asked about why a respondent does not use this service more often; what is the regularity of use. Trying to disclose problems related to ordering the service, a list of answers covering likely problems was given (not enough time for procedure, no possibility to order at all, no possibility to be serviced by the chosen specialist, no problems). In addition, evaluation of staff (receptionists, massagers, cosmetologists, bath staff, and beauty care specialists) was presented. At the end of the questionnaire there was an open question about what advantages and disadvantages of spa services the customer sees.

A pilot survey was carried out. The survey included 200 respondents, 100 of them were users of day spa, the rest were users of resort wellness spa. The questionnaires were filled in at the centres of wellness services. In order to analyze the peculiarities

of day and resort wellness spa services, day centres in Kaunas (one of the largest cities), and resort wellness spa in Druskininkai (one of the largest resorts) were chosen. Selection of resorts depended on places to which the resorts belong. National Resort Spa Association was established only 4 years ago (in 2007) (Lithuanian resorts and resort area, 2008). Currently the Association unites resorts such as Birstonas, Druskininkai, Neringa, Palanga, and resort areas of Anyksciai, Ignalina, Trakai and Zarasai (Lietuvos kurortu asociacija, 2011). According to statistics, wellness spa services providers in Druskininkai receive the largest amount of income from tourists attending wellness spa centres (Lithuanian Spa Association, 2011). Thus, Druskininkai as an object for research was chosen, as this resort is one of the largest in Lithuania.

According to statistics of the Ministry of Economics, there are 3 day wellness spa centres in Kaunas (Methodical recommendations for spa services classification: Applied science research study, 2009). Thus users of day spa were surveyed in all of them (in 2 departments of 'Sauleja SPA', 35 respondents in each; 'Femina Bona Spa namai, 30 respondents). There are no other day spa services providers, according to the statistics of the Lithuanian Spa Association.

According to the Lithuanian Spa Association (Lithuanian Spa Association, 2011) there are 26 wellness services providers in Lithuania; 15 of them are located in resort areas. For the analysis of resort wellness spa users' opinion, three resort wellness spa services providers in Druskininkai resort were chosen: 'SPA Vilnius SANA' (34 respondents), 'GRAND SPA Lietuva' (33 respondents) and 'Egle' sanatorium (33 respondents). Unfortunately, only these three centres allowed us to interview their customers. Other providers in Druskininkai, such as Media Hotel, Aqua Park, Sanatorium Belarus, etc., did not allow us to interview their customers; furthermore, these establishments (i.e., managers of these wellness centres) refused to participate in the interview without any explanation.

Two in-depth interviews with providers of spa services were carried out. This type of interview was chosen in order to disclose opinion of managers about development of spa services, their plans for future. One of them was conducted with a manager of a day spa centre in Kaunas (Sauleja SPA), the second one was conducted with a manager of a resort spa centre in Druskininkai (SPA Vilnius SANA). Both managers could be identified as experts, as they have been working in wellness spa services business for more than 7 years; their positions in the centres are the higher ones (they were the directors of the centres).

The selection of the respondents was objective, as it was very important to select respondents

who meet the criteria of the wellness spa services under investigation.

In organizing the survey, both for qualitative and quantitative survey the respondents were chosen at the same wellness spa centres. As mentioned above, only a few of the managers of the spa centres agreed to participate in the survey themselves and allowed to distribute questionnaires at their centre's reception desk. Results of the customers' survey were subjected to a quantitative analysis; results of the providers' interview were processed using qualitative data analysis. A comparative analysis was made, too.

Review of wellness tourism spa market in Lithuania

As it has been mentioned previously in this article, currently *in Lithuania there is no unified classification*. That is why it is rather difficult to determine the number of spa services providers and what categories they represent. Who can use "spa" in their company's name? This thing is rather important to spa services providers as they do the best to attract customers. There are many beauty salons that name themselves a spa, even if they have no bath inside. One funny example of use of the term "spa" is known: a 'spa for cars'. A joke is that it is nothing more than a carwash.

The National Spa Association gives a definition of spa services used in Lithuania: *spa services are procedures performed and accompanied by professional specialists and provided on special premises; water may or may not be used for the procedures; the purposes of these procedures are improvement of physical and mental health, relaxation, stimulation of wellbeing, cosmetics of body and pampering* (Lithuanian Spa Association, 2011). The Association distinguishes a few different categories of spa, such as sport club spa, day spa, mini day spa, salons with day spa, aqua parks, medical spa, and hotel spa. This classification could be supplemented by subcategories based on extra service offerings: health spa, medical spa, wellness spa, combined medical and wellness spa, etc. Typology of wellness spa, which is used by Lithuanian spa services providers, is closer to American wellness services typology (Frost, 2004). However, the Association itself is a member of the European Spa Association. Because of this reason more and more medical spa services are included into the package of wellness spa. Yet it should be emphasized what two main categories of spa are usually mentioned when explaining the offerings of services providers: wellness spa and medical spa. In addition to certification confirming the quality of services, the main term – *wellness* or *medical spa* – is indicated by the provider.

Unfortunately, activities of wellness spa services providers as well as the National Spa Association are at the level of infant. Classification of wellness spa services is not a formal one. It acts as recommendations for Lithuanian Government, what should be taken into consideration, that health tourism and well-

ness tourism are types of tourism, furthermore, they are very popular nowadays. As the first steps to standardization of use of the term “spa” in Lithuania have already been taken, we will substantiate the general overview of market by using the Lithuanian data of the Association (Table 1).

Table 1

Suppliers of two categories of wellness spa in Lithuania: day and resort services

	<i>Name of enterprise</i>	<i>Location</i>		<i>Name of enterprise</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>Resort wellness spa</i>	SPA Vilnius SANA	Druskininkai	<i>Day spa</i>	Idzumi	Vilnius
	GRAND SPA Lietuva	Druskininkai		SPA Vilnius DIA	Vilnius
	Egle	Druskininkai		Sauleja SPA	Kaunas
	Vanagupe centrum Golden SPA	Palanga		Life energy SPA	Druskininkai
	Tulpe	Birstonas			
	Energetikas	Palanga			

As we can see, the official (acknowledged by the Association) list of spa services providers is not long. Besides these two categories, two hotel and one medical spa services providers are identified.

Different websites also classify spa services providers by categories of spa, but analysing their range of services one should bear in mind that they more resemble beauty salons, salons with a spa zone, mini spa cabinets, etc. than spa centres. One of the countryside spas – ‘Spa Hotel Belvilis’ – according to the services provided to customers could be regarded as something similar to a resort wellness spa provider. However, a resort spa cannot be limited to a package of services. It must also include a place (a resort area).

Defining the peculiarities of wellness spa of the two analyzed categories, it should be noticed that firstly it relates to the title of category. In Lithuania, *day wellness spa* is perceived as wellness spa service, the duration of procedures of which is no longer than one day and the centre is in close proximity to a living or working place; a regularity of visiting is noticeable; swimming pools inside the facility are not obligatory (but desired). Day spa services provider runs activities on separate facilities in the town centre or near visiting zones, on premises of hotels, sports clubs, and malls. Cosmetics or other wellness products are rather often sold inside, too. *Resort wellness spa* in Lithuania firstly relates to a resort area. In addition, accommodation is necessary, as procedures usually take more than one day. Other conveniences are desirable; however, accommodation delivers the highest value, followed by procedures of spa, swimming pools, massages, consultations of professionals, entertainment, car and bike rental, healthy nutrition, etc. However, as it has been mentioned before, currently there is no unified classification of wellness spa in

Lithuania. That is why it is problematic for the providers to determine what to supply and for customers – what to look for. The term *spa* emphasizes the use of water in the procedures, but does not describe the terms how it should be done. There is still no unified list of spa services that should be offered on premises of day spa, and what should be offered on premises of resort wellness spa. Additionally, to sum up the overview of wellness resort and day spa market, it should be emphasized that not all the resort places in Lithuania have their spa services providers. There is still a niche in Anyksciai, Ignalina, and other resort places. Surprisingly, Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, as well as other large cities, are not famous for large day spa centres. There are only a few that satisfy the general requirements for proper spa provision. Offering a massage in Vilnius or Panevezys is not enough to use the term “spa” in the company’s name. That is why both the Association and separate members of the spa market should combine their attempts in order to unify the system of spa, to create competitive advantage, to find a specific niche, and to gain from increasing numbers of local and foreign customers of spa.

Quantitative data analysis

In this part of the article, an analysis of customers’ viewpoint is presented. *Demographical characteristics* of customers inquired during the survey have shown that day spa is attended mainly by women (81%); while resort wellness spa is attended by both women (43%) and men (57%) nearly equally. Most of the respondents were 41–50 years of age (43% of day spa and 39% of resort spa). Furthermore, it should be noticed that resorts are visited by older people: 51–60 years of age (42%), while people of this age are rare visitors of day spa (6%). The second group of cus-

tomers of day spa consists of 31–40 year old respondents (26%).

Value for a customer or criteria to evaluate wellness spa services vary by type of spa (Table 2). Criteria of importance are presented as follows: the 1st place indicates the most important criteria in evaluating the service, 2nd – less important criteria, and so on to the 9th place, which denotes the least important ones. Comparing day and resort wellness services customers' value we can see that their preferences

differ a lot. For a day wellness spa customer the most important is quality of beauty procedures; while a resort spa customer prioritizes the quality of wellness services. The second important criteria of value for a day spa customer is price, the third place belongs to price and quality of servicing. The second place for a resort wellness spa customer is also quality of servicing, along with wellness procedures quality. Price is the third most important aspect for customers of resort services.

Table 2

Value criteria – two typologies of spa

Value	1st place		2nd place		3rd place		4th place		5th place		6th place		7th place		8th place		9th place	
	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R
Quality of beauty care	57		21		3		4		2		2					38	11	62
Quality of wellness care	31	34	22	30	6	24	2	12	1									38
Range of main services	5	16	19	14	13	26	34	36	17	8	11		1					
Price	7	24	24	22	35	30	19	22	12	2	3							
Range of extra services			1		17		24		36		19		2	2		60	1	38
Loyalty programmes								2	4	39	27	34	28	25	20		21	
Quality of servicing		26	13	34	26	20	17	20	28		16							
Location of centre										25	6	36	27	37	46	2	21	
Cosiness								8		26	16	30	42	36	33		9	

Evaluation of quality of services by category of services is presented below (Figure 2). Day spa services customers particularly appreciated baths, massages and spa procedures; while resort wellness spa customers appreciated bathhouse and facial care procedures, too. For evaluation of quality of services three options were available: very well, average, and bad. Some words should be said about that. The majori-

ty of procedures were estimated by the customers to be average. Answers were not different in the category of wellness spa. Even baths in resort wellness spa centres were considered bad (7% of customers), the same was said about massages (2%). Furthermore, approximately 5% of resort and day customers considered bathhouse bad.

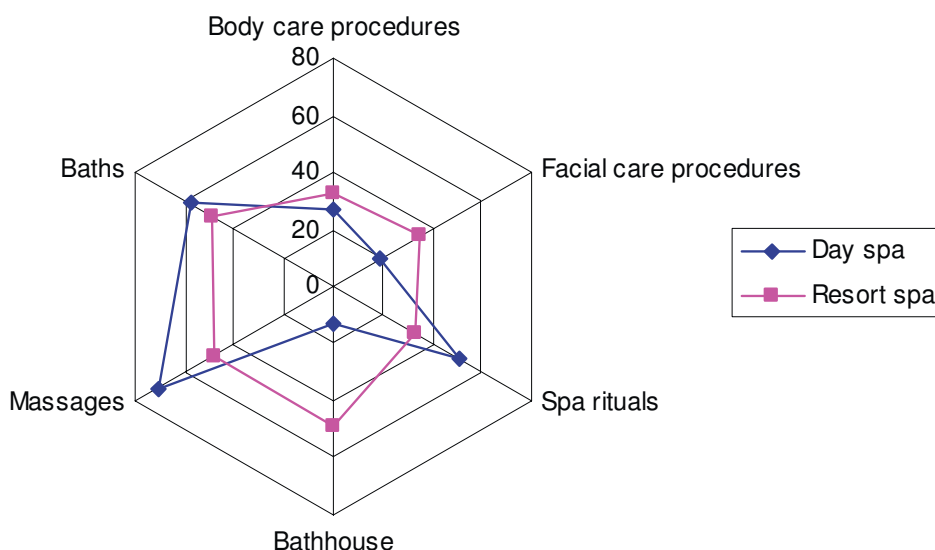


Fig. 2. The best evaluated services of two categories of wellness spa in Lithuania: day and resort

There are great differences in *whom wellness spa customers visit a centre with*, depending on a category of spa (Figure 3). The most important value is presented in bold italic font. Day spa wellness customers usually use services alone; while resort wel-

ness spa centre customers come with a partner or family. According to the survey, an entire family or a couple are rare visitors of day wellness spas; and only one of ten resort wellness centres visitors comes together with friends.

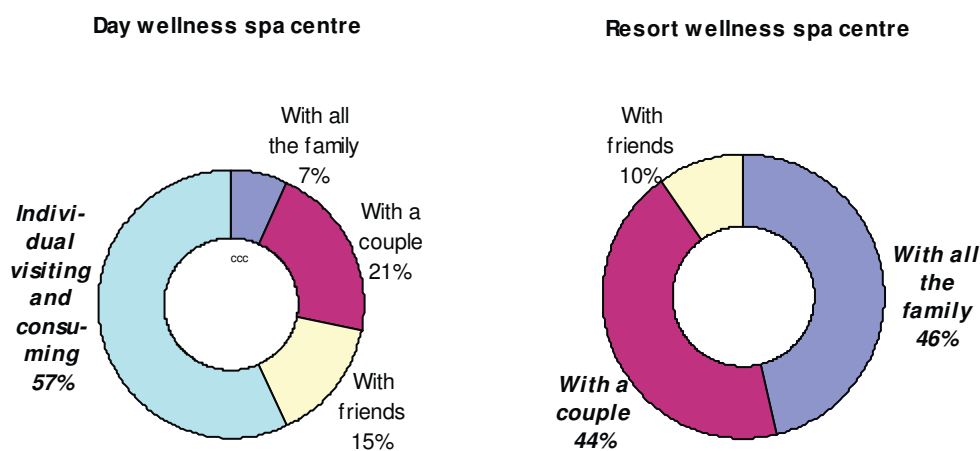


Fig. 3. Visiting a wellness tourism services centre

Another aspect for evaluation of the usage trends is *regularity* of attendance. There is difference in how often customers use day and resort spa services. One third of day spa customers (37%) visits a centre once a month and one third of resort wellness customers (39%) does this once a half-year. The same part of customers of day and resort wellness providers was first-time users.

Reasons why respondents do not use services more regularly do not differ very much. The majority of the respondents replied that more regular usage of spa is limited by costs (32% of resort spa and 42% of day spa). The second answer by frequency was the lack of time (25% of resort spa and 26% of day spa). No need for more frequent usage was indicated by 15% of resort spa customers and 11% of day spa customers.

Problems encountered while booking wellness spa services also do not differ among categories of spa. A little bit less than a half of customers of both day and resort spa mentioned that they had no problems booking a service. Approximately one quarter of the respondents mentioned that they have not booked a service, as they had no time for the procedure; the same part of them told that time offered by staff was not suitable. A smaller part of respondents mentioned that they could not access a desired specialist as he/she was busy.

Staff of wellness spa services enterprise was evaluated rather similarly, except for staff of baths. 62% of day spa customers and 48% of resort spa customers evaluated work quality of staff well. Other staff, such as receptionists, massagers, cosmetologists, and beauty care personnel, was evaluated well

by customers of both day and resort spas.

Answers to an open-type question on *advantages of day wellness spa* have shown that as advantage there were mentioned a wide range of services, good specialists, “everything under one roof”, and all physical conveniences such as towels, bathrobe, hairdryer, etc. available at the centre. *Advantages of resort wellness spa* for a customer were a wide range of inside and outside entertainment services: bicycle rental, recreation parks, aqua parks, bowling, billiards, etc. Furthermore, nice environment and clean air were appreciated.

Customers of day and resort wellness spa services more seldom mentioned *disadvantages* of the centre. *Day spa* customers considered a zone of baths where there was no swimming pool as disadvantage. Furthermore, a lack of exercising equipment, trainings of yoga or regular exercising was mentioned. *Resort wellness spa* services customers would like a lift inside, better air conditioning at some of the rooms and at the sports hall, too. Customers also named obstacles to reach the centre or book a service. Not all of them were satisfied with accommodation.

To sum up, the largest part of wellness spa visitors are people aged 41–60. Day spa wellness is used by women, resort spa is used by both men and women. Day spa services are purchased by single people, resort wellness services – by families and couples. Price of services is very important for day spa customers, while quality of services – for resort spa customers. Range of services usually satisfies the customers, but wellness services providers should ensure higher quality in baths, qualification of baths staff and cosmetologists, beauty specialists.

Qualitative data analysis

In this part of the article, an analysis of providers' viewpoint is presented. **Factors influencing the development** of wellness services for a representative of **resort spas** are the changing needs of customers: *'wish to satisfy customers' needs'*. He also mentioned that *'it is possible to seek new markets, but they need special conditions, mineral waters and other healing factors, as only in such territory it is possible to create resort wellness enterprises'*. And that requires researches, analyses, which mean additional costs, says a representative of a resort wellness provider in Druskininkai. An interview with a **day spa** representative also revealed consideration of wishes of customers: *'we always react to wishes of customers. If we get any complaints or comments, we always try to eliminate mistakes and improve services for future customers'*. A representative of a day spa centre mentioned that wishes and needs of customers change very quickly, thus they improve services regularly on the basis of requests of customers.

An interviewee of a **resort** wellness spa firstly told that there are no **opportunities to develop** in Lithuania. After that he argued that *'as a consequence of economic recession we should concentrate on activity which was already done before and not to allow place for others'*. He also emphasized a lack of funds: *'<.> of course, subsidies for projects are provided, but not for everybody and only cover half of the costs'*. A reconstruction of the resort centre was made recently, and now half of the costs (another half was subsidies of the EU Structural funds) should be worked off. Interviewee of a **day spa** centre mentioned that there are many centres providing similar services, and *'it is very important to outperform competitors'*. Usually other spa services providers compete by price and provide narrow range of services, or *'even similar to ours'*. She also mentioned that *'<.> it is necessary to create a service which is not provided by other centres and to attract customers by idiosyncrasy'*. It could be new services not provided elsewhere, new niches or new methods to provide old services which increase the idiosyncrasy, said the interviewee.

Development directions firstly mentioned by an interviewee from a **resort** spa was quality: *'we can analyse from philosophical point of view. One restaurant in England survives for many years already. They have the only dish on their menu – a steak. And they always have many customers. Who could say where is the limit for our business?'* It is possible to offer all possible procedures at one place, according to a resort spa provider, but *'<...> so what? We would not be able to provide them properly, because we do not have appropriate staff, and customers would not*

be able to choose from such a great variety'. Quality was mentioned as the main development direction which will be maintained; after that staff education and regular improvement of their competence are important. No new markets will be evaluated as this needs extra money. A **day spa** manager repeated that exceptional services are important: *'we think about procedures based on Lithuanian traditions or something like that, which is unknown to customers'*. Besides that the interviewee mentioned that some services will be discontinued because of high costs and prices, as they are not popular enough among users of day spa. *'Quality, of course, is very important for services'* said the interviewee, as users appreciate quality. Thus quality control will be implemented and quality will be improved, as *'<.> a customer with bad experience brings with him negative information and does not come back, as well as puts off other potential customers'*.

As an **obstacle for development** of **resort** wellness spa the actions of government and municipalities were mentioned. *'Previously we thought about development in Neringa, but with our Government it is impossible'*. A manager of a resort wellness spa centre said that Government is likely to create a museum instead of business on the shore of the Baltic Sea. Furthermore, *'<.> the society in the resort area adds harm; people should be educated that they shape the image of the resort, too. Everybody who engages in any kind of business should communicate with visitors of the resort very kindly, regardless of nationality'*. The interviewee underlined that resort wellness spa image depends on nice environment, cleanness of the resort and many other factors. A **day spa** services provider underlined the main obstacle: the lack of money. This stops any initiative. *'To provide a high quality service, equipment is also necessary, as well as competent staff. Training of staff constitutes additional costs'*. Regulation of the Government was also mentioned by the day spa centre's manager: *'<.> new licences for new activity are also necessary, obtaining them is not very easy in our country'*.

To sum up, there are some opportunities to improve the activity of resort and day wellness spas. However, it usually requires additional investment into the centres. The starting point of resort wellness spa services providers is better, as they have already prepared for growing demand of services before crisis. Day spa centres should discontinue expensive services and introduce new ones, which would increase the idiosyncrasy of the centre and create competitive advantage. Greater attention to staff training is necessary for both categories of providers. Partnership with governmental institutions and municipalities should be improved, too.

Conclusions

Developmental trends of wellness resort and day spa centres are governed by many factors. Certainly, the economic ones are very important both for demand and supply of wellness spa services, as new services require new technologies, staff training, full reorganization of services process, which take additional expenses and time. However, the attitude of wellness services providers is also very important, as well as the starting point of suppliers: were they prepared to change the model of organization thus adapting to rapidly changing demands from customers and other economical trends, or not.

With reference to the theoretical and empirical research, the following directions for development of two categories of wellness spa could be distinguished:

- *Day wellness spa*: quality improvement, servicing improvement, and changing of range. *Core value* for a customer of day wellness spa is greatly related to short and cheap spa procedures. Implementing these development directions, day spa specialists should care about improvement of facial and body procedures; including more traditional and cheap procedures for customers; attracting a new segment of customers, as usually singles attend the centre, and creating a package for men (focusing on couples), a room for child care (in order to attract families). *Wide range is not so important*, as survey shows, it is better to look for niches and to create an idiosyncratic service that differs from competitors a lot (one could offer a swimming pool, another could organize yoga exercise, the other could supply specific facial care, such as amber massage). *Pricing* of services at a day spa centre acts as the main factor in choosing a provider, so cheap services should be provided in order to attract potential customers or partners of people who use the services already. *Regularity of use* of day wellness spa could be increased by extra services to supplement core facial and body procedures (for example, consultations about well-being conception, about using medical and cosmetic means, wellness products) combined with attractive price for more regular attendance of the centre.
- *Resort wellness spa*: servicing improvement, quality improvement, and differentiation of services. *Core value* of a resort wellness spa includes more than a spa procedure. Major

attention should be paid to improvement of *competence of staff*: administrative or massagers, wellness specialists, etc., and *servicing improvement*: motivation of staff, customer complaints analysis would be helpful. Resort wellness services providers also should see about *accommodation*, as it one of the most important services while staying at a resort, the quality of which is currently insufficient. Accommodation should vary from cheap single rooms in sanatoriums to luxury apartment in five star hotels. Another strategic direction of development should be *co-operation with other resort services providers*, which is very important in providing high quality services, focusing on specialized services. *Outsourcing* of services enables to provide resort services package at high level of quality without making investments in service provision system. *Differentiation of services* should be made to attract new segments of customers, as resorts are also visited by families or couples. Educational courses on wellness concept and wellbeing will let attract a new segment of customers who care about their health and disease prevention; as well as a service package for seniors could be offered. *Regularity of visiting* would be increased by a combination of attractive price and offerings of entertainment at the centre, differentiation of services and identifying what to offer for the entire family: mother, father and their children.

Besides the peculiarities of day and resort wellness spa services in Lithuania, there also are some similarities which should be taken into account by providers, too. The initiative of providers of wellness spa services (*both day or resort spa*) to co-operate with the government, municipalities in order to concentrate on how to attract local and foreign tourists and to keep them satisfied, is urgent. Wellness spa services sector in Lithuania is still in its infancy, thus partnership with governmental institutions, co-operation with the National Spa Association, the National Resort Association, the Tourism Department, etc. would enable standardization of provision of wellness spa services. These actions would limit provision of wellness spa services by providers that do not offer adequate quality of spa, that provide whatever they want and wherever they want. Preparing the right strategy for development enables to develop a wellness services market in Lithuania and attract more tourists coming for pampering, medical purposes, or both.

References

1. Bhanich, A., Barrows, D. A. (2007). Canadian Health and Wellness Tourism: Obstacles Impeding International Competitiveness. *The Innovation Journal*, 3 (12), 1–18.
2. Chao, S. Y., Dwyer, J. T., Houser, R. F., Jacques, P., Tennstedt, S. (2008). Express Stress Both Wellness and Amenity Aspects of Food and Nutrition Services in Assisted Living Facilities for Older Adults. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 10 (108), 1654–1661.
3. Chen, J. S., Prebensen, N., Huan, T. C. (2008). Determining the Motivation of Wellness Travellers. *Anatolia-Ankara-International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 1 (19), 103–116.
4. Cohen, M. (2008). Spas, wellness and human evolution. *Understanding the Global Spa Industry*, 1–25.
5. Farid, M., Lazarus, H. (2007). Subjective well-being in rich and poor countries. *Journal of Management Development*, 10 (27), 1053–1065.
6. Fontanari, M., Kern, A. (2003). The “Comparative Analysis of Spas” – An Instrument for the Re-Positioning of Spas in the Context of Competition in Spa and Health Tourism. *Journal of Tourism Review*, 3 (58), 20–28.
7. Frost, G. J. (2004). The spa as a model of an optimal healing environment. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 1 (10), 85–92.
8. Gilbert, D. C., Weerd, M. (1991). The Health Care Tourism Product in Western Europe. *Journal of Tourism Review*, 2 (46), 5–10.
9. Gössling, S., Peeters, P., Hall, C. M., Ceron, J-P., Dubois, G. (2011). Tourism and water use: Supply, demand, and security. An international review. *Tourism Management*, XXX, 1–15.
10. Hall, C. M. (2011). Health and medical tourism: a kill or cure for global public health? *Tourism Review*, 1/2 (66), 4–15.
11. Herath, D., Cranfield, J., Henson, S. (2008). Who consumes functional foods and nutraceuticals in Canada? Results of cluster analysis of the 2006 survey of Canadians Demand for Food Products Supporting Health and Wellness. *Appetite*, 51, 256–265.
12. Hopenienė, R., Bagdonienė, L. (2010). Lithuanian wellness cluster: pros and cons. *RESER 2010* [electronic issue]: *The Resilience of the Global Service Economy*: 20th Anniversary Conference, 30 September – 2 October, 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 1–18.
13. Kamata, H., Misui, Y., Yamauchi, H. (2010). How to attract more tourists? *Tourism and Hospitality*, 2 (65), 28–40.
14. Klerk, J. J. (2005). Spirituality, meaning in life, and work wellness: a research agenda. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 1 (13), 64–88.
15. Koh, S., Jung-Eun Yoo, J., Boger, C. A. (2010). Importance-performance analysis with benefit segmentation of spa goers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 5 (22), 718–735.
16. Langvinienė, N., Sližienė, G. (2010). Services Value Chain: Changes in Consuming Wellness Services. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 4 (70), 31–40.
17. Langvinienė, N., Sekliuckienė, J. (2009). Factors of Influence on Successful Development of Lithuanian Resort Wellness SPA Services. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 4 (66), 72–81.
18. Langvinienė, N., Sekliuckienė, J. (2010). Preconditions for Lithuanian wellness spa services development. *Journal of Advances in Food, Hospitality and Tourism*, 1 (3), 69–85.
19. Lietuvos kurortų asociacija (2011). *Lietuvos kurortų asociacija*. Birštonas. Available online at <http://www.kurortuasociacija.lt>.
20. *Lithuanian resorts and resort area* (2008). National Health Resort Association in Lithuania, National Spa Association, Birštonas, 27 p.
21. Lithuanian Spa Association (2011). *Lietuvos nacionalinė spa asociacija*. Vilnius. Available online at <http://www.spalietuva.lt/apie-spa>.
22. *Methodical recommendations for spa services classification: Applied science research study* (2009). Ministry of Economy, Tourism Development Institute, 58 p.
23. Mollini, M. M., Krenkel, J. A., Wirshing, S. T., Plodkowski, R. A. (2007). Using the Wellness Benefit for Insurance Reimbursement of Weight Loss Services at a Medically Supervised Weight Management Center. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 8 (107), A50.
24. Smith, M. K. (2003). Holistic holidays: tourism and the reconciliation of body, mind, and spirit. *Journal of Tourism Recreation Research*, 28, 15–24.
25. Smith, M., Puczko, L. (2008). *Health and Wellness Tourism*. Butterworth-Heinemann, 416 p.
26. *Sveikatingumo ir poilsio kompleksų poreikio ir plėtros Lietuvoje studija* (2007). Mokslinio tyrimo darbas. UAB „BGI Consulting“, 86 p.
27. *Tourism in Lithuania* (2011). Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania. Available online at http://www.ukmin.lt/lt/veikla/veiklos_sritys/turizmas/.
28. Voigt, C., Brown, G., Howat, G. (2011). Wellness tourists: in search of transformation. *Tourism Review*, 1/2 (66), 16–30.
29. Zender, R., Olshansky, E. (2009). Promoting Wellness in Women across the Life Span. *Nursing Clinics of North America*, 3 (44), 281–291.
30. Zoorob, R., Morelli, V. (2008). Disease Prevention and Wellness in the Twenty-first Century. *Primary Care: Clinics in Office Practice*, 4 (35), 663–667.

Dienos ir kurortų sveikatingumo SPA paslaugų specifiškumas Lietuvoje

Santrauka

Sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų tema yra gana nauja užsienyje ir Lietuvoje. Sveikatingumo SPA paslaugų plėtra pastaruojamu metu yra akivaizdi tiek globalioje rinkoje, tiek vietinėje rinkoje. Sveikatingumo SPA paslaugų industrija yra vertinama kaip ypač greitai auganti industrija, gebanti pritraukti vis daugiau turistų (Fontanari, Kern, 2003). Nepaisant globalios finansų krizės, sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugos išlaiko augimo tendenciją, vertinant tiek pajamų augimą, tiek pačių sveikatingumo paslaugų pasiūlą, jos įvairovę. Besikeičianti sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų rinka turėjo įtakos ir vartotojiško lygmens pokyčiams. Sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų vartotojų poreikiai sparčiai kinta. Jie vis dažniau nori greitesnio šių paslaugų efekto ir pigesnių paslaugų (Farid, Lazarus, 2008). Santykis tarp kokybės ir kainos tampa vienu svarbiausių veiksnių, lemiančiu sveikatingumo SPA paslaugų pasiūlą (Kamata, Misui, Yamauchi, 2010). Vienas vartotojų pirmenybę teikia aukštos kokybės mineraliniams vandenims, kitas vertina sveikatingumo paslaugų prieinamumą, trečias naudos tas sveikatingumo SPA paslaugas, kurių nėra jo šalyje. Kadangi šios paslaugos pasirodė esančios atsparios įvairiems ekonominiams svyravimams, tai paskatino ne tik verslininkus, bet ir mokslininkus atkreipti dėmesį į šias paslaugas, įvertinti jų specifiką, teikiamą naudą vartotojui ir pan.

Straipsnio aktualumas siejamas su nauja turizmo paslaugų sritimi – sveikatingumo paslaugomis kaip turizmo paslaugų šaka. Turizmo paslaugos paprastai siūlomos daugelyje šalių. Pagal Lietuvos Respublikos turizmo įstatymą, sveikatingumas yra viena keturių augančių turizmo šakų mūsų šalyje (kultūrinis turizmas, sveikatingumo turizmas, aktyvaus poilsio turizmas ir konferencijų (arba dalykinis) turizmas) (Turizmas Lietuvoje, 2011). Šios paslaugos yra orientuotos tiek į vietinius, tiek į užsienio turistus. Pastarųjų metų studijos rodo sveikatingumo paslaugų svarbą tiek vartotojams, t. y. turistams, tiek šių paslaugų teikėjams, kurie geba didinti apyvartą, siūlydami įvairias paslaugas: dienos, kurortų, medicinos, tikslinio SPA. Tačiau ne visos šalys pasaulyje galėtų būti įvardytos kaip *sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų teikėjos*. Čekija, Vokietija, Vengrija yra jau žinomos kaip turizmo rinkos, teikiančios išskirtines sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugas, naudojančias purvą, mineralinius vandenius ir pan. Rytų ir Centrinę Europą dažniausia pabrėžia sveikatingumo turizmo naudą, kuri yra labiau apčiuopiamo pobūdžio šių paslaugų vartotojui. Žmonės atvyksta į šalį tikėdamiesi pagyti, gauti procedūrą, masažą, purvo vonių ir pan.

Turizmo situacija Lietuvoje pastaruojamu metu gerėja. Šalies statistika rodo augančią turizmo paslaugų apyvartą, atrandant naujus turizmo objektus. Sveikatingumas yra ta niša, kuri nėra perpildyta mūsų rinkoje. Be to, pirmieji sveikatingumo paslaugų teikėjų žingsniai rodo, jog sveikatingumas gali tapti išskirtiniu mūsų šalies konkurenciniu pranašumu. Turistai iš Baltarusijos, Ukrainos, Rusijos, taip

pat Vokietijos, Danijos ir Lenkijos į Lietuvą atvyksta ne tik aplankyti Kuršių Nerijos, Nidos. Druskininkai, Birštonas ir kitos vietovės kuria klasterius, gebančius patenkinti bet kurio norus ir pageidavimus. Kurortinės vietovės parodė skirtingumų paslaugų teikėjų gebėjimą kooperuotis bendradarbiaujant tarpusavyje ir teikiant įvairias paslaugas vienoje vietovėje. Kita dalis sveikatingumo SPA paslaugų yra teikiamos turistams, atvykstantiems į didžiausius Lietuvos miestus: Vilnių, Kauną, Klaipėdą, Šiaulius ar Panevėžį. Dienos SPA paslaugos gali būti teikiamos dideliuose sveikatingumo centruose arba būti dalis paslaugų, teikiamų viešbučio patalpose bei kuriančių papildomą apgyvendinimo paslaugas teikiančių įstaigų vertę. Kaip rodo statistika, kurortų ir dienos SPA paslaugos kuria daug paslaugų, teikiamų turistams. Dėl šių priežasčių susidomėjimas sveikatingumo paslaugomis šiandien itin auga.

Dabartiniai tyrimai, kuriuose analizuojamos sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugos, dažniausia analizuoja šių paslaugų klasifikavimą, tipologiją, atkreipiamas dėmesys į sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų plėtros specifiką, priklausomai nuo šių paslaugų vartotojų, rinkos, kontinento. Pavyzdžiui, sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų plėtros tendencijos Vakarų Europoje ir Amerikoje, Kanadoje ypač išsiskyrė. Sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų vertė skiriasi nuo kontinento, pvz., JAV vartotojai pirmenybę teikia poilsio paslaugoms, lepinimosi procedūroms, kurios sukuria pridėtinę vertę (Mollini, Krenkel, Wirshing, Plodkowski, 2007; Chao, Dwyer, Houser, Jacques, Tennstedt, 2008). Paslaugos neretai naudojamos nesiekiant apčiuopiamos naudos, tik norint pagerinti sveikatą ar turint kitų medicinos tikslų. Vakarų, Rytų ir centrinės Europos sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų vartotojai paprastai vertina apčiuopiamą sveikatingumo paslaugos naudą, t. y. kaip galimybę reabilitacijai, atsigavimui po sunkios ligos ar operacijos, sanatorijos paslaugas, medicinos profesionalų konsultacijas, purvo masažą, druskų procedūras ir pan. Tyrimuose (Langvinienė, Sekliuckienė, 2009) dažnai pabrėžiama ir sveikatingumo paslaugų vartotojų gaunama nauda, išskiriamos pagrindinės ir papildomos paslaugos. Kadangi SPA paslaugos yra palyginti naujas tyrimų objektas (Koh, Jung-Eun Yoo, Boger, 2010), ypač trūksta tyrimų specifinėms šių paslaugų rūšims, tipams, tokiems kaip dienos, kurortų, medicinos ar viešbučių SPA.

Mokslinė **problema** formuluojama iškeliant šiuos probleminius klausimus: kokia sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų specifiška Lietuvoje? Kokios sveikatingumo, paslaugos yra vertinamos vartotojų? Kokie jų lūkesčiai, kokios problemos arba paslaugų kokybės spragos matyti vartojant paslaugas? Kokios yra plėtojimo kryptys sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugoms, kurias išvelgia teikėjai, pokriziniu laikotarpiu?

Straipsnio **tikslas** – atskleisti dienos ir kurortų sveikatingumo paslaugų specifiką Lietuvoje. Iškelti tokie **uždaviniai**: 1) atskleisti sveikatingumo paslaugas kaip

vienos turizmo paslaugų šakos specifika; 2) išskirti pagrindinius sveikatingumo tipus, remiantis moksline literatūra; 3) išryškinti Lietuvos dienos ir kurortų sveikatingumo SPA paslaugų specifika; 4) numatyti sveikatingumo SPA paslaugų, orientuotų į Lietuvos turistą, tobulinimo gaires.

Tyrimo *objektas* – dienos ir kurortų sveikatingumo SPA paslaugos.

Tyrimo *metodai*: lyginamoji mokslinės literatūros analizė, kiekybinių duomenų (anketinės vartotojų apklausos) ir kokybinių duomenų (interviu su teikėjais) analizė.

Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, jog daugiausia sveikatingumo turizmo SPA paslaugų centrų lankytojų yra 41–60 metų žmonės. Dienos SPA paslaugomis naudojasi moterys, kurortų SPA paslaugomis – ir vyrai, ir moterys (poros, šeimos). Dienos SPA paslaugomis dažniausia naudojamos individualiai, kurortų – grupėmis, šeimomis, su draugais ir pan. Kainodaros aspektas dienos SPA paslaugų vartotojams yra vienas svarbiausių, o kurortų SPA – paslaugų kokybė. Nors pagal paslaugų asortimentą galima pateikti daugiau paslaugų vartotojui ir gebėti identifikuoti jo norus, pateikti jam norimą paslaugą, paslaugų teikėjai turi garantuoti teikiamų paslaugų kokybę, aukštesnės kokybės vonių procedūrų paslaugas, aukštesnę aptarnaujančio personalo kompetenciją, geresnę grožio paslaugų kokybę.

Sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų teikėjų apklausa parodė, kad dar yra galimybių plėtoti sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugas. Deja, tai paprastai reikalauja papildomų lė-

šų, todėl, pasak šių paslaugų teikėjų, reikėtų pergalvoti savo teikiamų paslaugų strategiją. Dienos SPA paslaugų teikėjai, atsižvelgdami į sveikatingumo paslaugų vartojimo pokyčius, artimiausiu metu numato eliminuoti brangias, nepopuliarias paslaugas ir pereiti prie išskirtinių paslaugų, nors ir siauresnio asortimento. Kurorto paslaugų teikėjai suvokia, jog turėtų siūlyti platų paslaugų asortimentą ar savo pajėgomis, ar organizuodami kelių paslaugų teikėjų pasiūlą viename kurorte, ir tai numato savo strategijose artimiausiu metu. Paslaugų diferenciacija užtikrintų skirtingų rinkos segmentų pritraukimą į SPA centrą, o tai padidintų apgyvendinimo paslaugų, SPA paslaugų ir kitų paslaugų poreikį, taigi ir apimtį. Tiek vienos, tiek kitos rūšies sveikatingumo turizmo paslaugų teikėjai turėtų dėmesį skirti personalo kompetencijai didinti. Kurortų sveikatingumo paslaugų teikėjai atliko paruošiamuosius darbus ir artimiausiu metu, kooperuodamiesi su Vyriausybe ir atsakingomis organizacijomis, ketina imtis veiksmų, įteisinančių vieningą sveikatingumo paslaugų klasifikavimo sistemą. Nacionalinės kurortų asociacijos, Turizmo asociacijos ir kitų susijusių organizacijų bendromis pastangomis turėtų būti aprašyta ir patvirtinta aiški sveikatingumo paslaugų terminologija, teikimo sąlygos, kokybės reikalavimai ir pan.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: dienos spa paslaugos, kurortų SPA paslaugos, sveikatingumo turizmas, vartojimas, spa paslaugos.

The article has been reviewed Received in June, 2011; accepted in July, 2011.