



# Hepatitis C Tourism Surges Between China and India

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Despite the widespread availability of new hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatments in places like the United States, Europe, the Middle East and parts of Southeast Asia, Chinese health authorities have yet to approve the breakthrough direct-acting antivirals, which can cure up to 90 percent of people in just weeks. As a result, a huge medical tourism industry between China and India has opened up, [The Wall Street Journal reports](#).

Up to 10 million Chinese people are estimated to have hep C, which is fueling an overseas medical tourism industry for HCV cures that could be worth up to \$50 billion, according to a recent analysis by international investment firm Founder Securities. Because of this, a number of Chinese companies have begun offering specially designed trips to India, where generic versions of hep C drugs Sovaldi (sofosbuvir) and Harvoni (sofosbuvir/ledipasvir) are sold at a much lower price than is offered in the rest of the world.

For example, 35,000 yuan (\$5,332) can buy Chinese consumers a four-day package to New Delhi that includes medicines, a doctor consultation, round-trip flights, a four-star hotel and a half-day tour of the city. A similar trip to Bangladesh, where generic hep C treatment is also available, costs 30,000 yuan (\$4,600).

HCV treatments from Gilead Sciences, Bristol-Myers Squibb and AbbVie are undergoing clinical trials in China and the companies are aiming for approvals in the “near future.”

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