

**Health tourism advantages in tourism attraction Case study (Sarein, Ardabil city)**Majid Rahmani Seryasat<sup>1,\*</sup>, Ahmad Pour Ahmad<sup>2</sup>, Taghi Karimian<sup>3</sup>, Mehdi Hajilo<sup>4</sup>, Shahram Samadi Khadem<sup>5</sup><sup>1,3</sup> Ms.c Student, Faculty of Geography, Department of Tourism Planning, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran<sup>2</sup> Professor, Faculty of Geography, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran<sup>4</sup> Ms.c Student, Faculty of Geography, Department of Rural Planning, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran<sup>5</sup> Ms.c Student, Environmental Engineering, Lahijan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Lahijan, IranEmail: [ma.rahmani@ut.ac.ir](mailto:ma.rahmani@ut.ac.ir)

**Abstract:** Considering the fact that health tourism is one of the Tourism type that have both The effects of the economic and cultural And medical aspects that To reduce neurological disorders, muscle aches, etc are used. The Sarein in Ardabil province Due to the special geographical conditions and unique natural hot springs and mineral can be considered as one of the major poles of health tourism. So the current survey that is on a Descriptive - survey manner And using questionnaire tools was carried out that The sample size was estimated to be 350 that After gathering the information To analyze the data using T-test And Spss software variance were done so The findings show that Between favorable variables And infrastructure development With tourism increasing in the area there is a Significant relationship and As well as health tourism Have increased on the Other types of tourism in the region And finally some Guidelines In order to boost the tourism sector were presented.

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**Keywords:** hot springs, health tourism, Sarein, Ardebil province

**Introduction and Statement of Problem:**

Tourism is of such activities that Expanded rapidly in recent years. And is in first row of the world's largest sources of revenue accordingly. Experts know tourism activities one way to understand the development and creation of prosperity. According to Travel and Tourism Council, 9/10 percent of total GDP, 7/10 percent of employment, 4/11% of investment And 11 per cent of the global financial is from The tourism industry (Lee, 2006: 85). Besides tourism various functions of economic, social and political well and that is why we are witnessing its growing importance in the world (Carrea, 2010: 107). Medical Tourism is one of the Tourism markets. This economic sector leads to the tourism market into two segments: Medical and Tourism. Medical tourism, Today's tourism markets has allocated growing sector of the market (Zargham, 2000: 69). Medical tourism is based on two bases: each base is essential and no one treatment is not enough for the tourism sector. Each, on its related industries in many sub-sectors has high growth in the world (Richards, 2002: 101). In The medical tourism it is noted that by combining these two sections the Potential growth much more than the sum of each individual will develop (Book Man, 2006: 11).

Health tourism is one of the significant drawbacks of modern tourism. From 1990 a number of factors go hand in hand so health tourism is promoted. Meanwhile, in developed countries The

high cost of medical service, Long time that patients must wait turns And also a time when Must just have to get approval from their insurance was the motivation Despite some difficulties receive these service in other countries (Ross, 2001: 78).

Southeast Asian countries Such as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore health tourism is one of the pioneers (Shalbafyan2007: 3). India now is the world center of medical tourism And has done greater efforts For the equipping of infrastructure, upgrading technology and medical devices, Holding down costs and Medical protocol has been signed (Coonell, 2006: 153). Iran having climate conditioning And the nature of the four seasons, Tourist attractions, historical, religious, cultural and natural, Modern and well-equipped medical centers With human resource professionals and a world-renowned Especially in the countries of the region, Culturally appropriate environment for Muslim countries, A significant number of Iranians outside Iran are Treatment applicant in Iran, high demand of region Patients For lifesaving treatments; Beautiful and unique both The operating conditions and demand conditions, has a good condition (Ranjbarian et al, 1990: 64).

In The strategic and competitive context, the most important advantage of the lower healthcare costs is summarized as the Global and regional scales. In Dependent part and the supporting part the only advantage is having several medical schools that can be quantitatively provide health care HR

professionals (Divine et al, 2012: 4). The Ardabil Province Due to the special geographical conditions can be one of the major hubs of health tourism to be considered among the world's nations, Because of its natural Such as hot springs and mineral that can be the best way to treat many diseases (Ahmedi, 2006: 33). by Ranking of selected springs with healing properties of Ardabil Province Based on the therapeutic properties based on common diseases in the country, Significant results were obtained with This suggests that Some of the hot springs and mineral of Ardabil Province Due to its quality, are Very useful for the treatment of some diseases, Respectively Five sisters Spa(Bash Bajylar) In terms of health benefits on The most common disease are Cardiovascular diseases has First place, Spa Coffee House of Hemmat In the second place, Deep green flowers in spring-third grade; Springs Easti Soue(Elanjiq) Mineral Springs (Villa Darq) Fountain of seven blocks (irony), Premium spas of coffee houses, Qynrejehe springs, Saqezchy Springs are ranked fourth, Fountain bushely (Borjlou), Shiran Cranberry Springs (Bath) ranked fifth, Fountain Bileh Valley sixth And hot spring of water in the eye (Guz Soue) are ranked seventh of Health benefits (Rashid et al, 2012: 57). After considering the above mentioned One of the potential value of Ardabil And especially the city Sarein is Mineral springs and spa that Requires special attention and planning To develop medical tourism by The operation principle and the correct placement And reduced health care costs, Increased employment and prosperity Areas to be exploited And naturally their productivity in the province and the country will be developed, Accordingly The research questions were stated as follows:

is there Significant relationship between The optimal advertising And increasing health tourism In the area ?

Is there significant relationship between demographic characteristics of tourists and choice of health tourism?

Does Health Tourism is Able on other types of tourism to Have primacy?

#### **Theoretical Principles and background of research:**

##### ***Tourism:***

Travelling and Tourism Industry is as the world's largest and most diverse industry. In many countries this dynamic industry is known as the main source of income, employment, growth of private sector and development, infrastructure, (Milman, 1995: 24). Tourism industry around the world Particularly in developing countries, that Other forms of economic Such as the production or extraction of

natural resources is not efficient - Is highly regarded. (Turani, 2010: 251).

Tourism is the world's most useful industry and makes up about 13 percent of gross domestic product. This industry is part of that Number approximately 100 million employees - Employs the largest manpower. Tourism Affects on economic activities, Including:

- Employment
- Development
- International Trade
- Balance of payments (Vela, 1384: 152-151).

Health tourism is Kind of tourism that In order to maintain, improve and achieve ones physical and mental health For more than 24 hours and less than a year take place (Bouchard1, 1995: 51-39).

Variety of health tourism Traveling to the Health Village And areas with mineral springs and spa, to Escape from the stresses of everyday life and revitalizing without medical supervision, Intervention In cases where there is no physical illness on tourists is called Health tourism (Caballero 2,2006: 21). Travelling to natural health resource using (Mineral water, salt, mud, etc.) To treat some diseases or livelihood recovery under the supervision of a medical is called medical tourism (Blanshard, 1994: 15).

Travelling to treat physical ailments or do some kind of surgery under the supervision of physicians in hospitals and medical centers is called Medical tourism (Jones, 2006: 19). In this type of tourism, Patients may after treatment requires the use of spaces and Services of medical tourism (Such as mineral waters) (health tourism sites in Asia, 2010).

According to the World Tourism Organization definition one of the goals that could prompt tourists Willingness to travel is travelling for health. Travel to the health village And areas with mineral water springs and hot water for Escaping from the stresses of everyday life and revitalizing without Intervention Medical Monitoring and in cases

Where the tourists has no, Specific physical illness is called health Tourism.

(Ayala, 1995: 47-39). Health tourism has long existed and to travel for health or treat a variety of diseases is called (HK, 2002: 97). Health tourism today from the world tourism industry is one of the fastest growing Leading involved agencies in the interested Countries in developing tourism attend and planned Their attention to this sector From the tourism. One type of tourism is health tourism with the aim of Infertility treatment People with The goal of treatment or completes their Infertility Go to a country other than their own (Mustafa Zadeh et al,

2011: 129). Because of the current economic situation and life The main causes of The stress levels of people's lives; Health Tourism is An option for those who According to most health To their health and well-being, Going away from their everyday stressful life. (Vajira Kachorn, 2004: 112).

Water treatment from several years ago experimentally is used in the treatment of musculoskeletal disorders (McCallum<sup>5</sup>, 2007: 59). Studies have shown the beneficial effect of water treatment on the degenerative diseases and arthritis. Several Studies also expressed this method as an adjunctive therapy in chronic diseases raises (Sharafi

et al, 2013: 92). Development of health tourism can be used as a national strategy, In- addition, optimal use of internal capital In order to increase the country's income Regarded as an arm of the National Security (Carrea, 2008: 119). Considering the importance of the tourism sector Due to the fact And the introduction of appropriate is As an essential component Empowerment in different parts of the country And in particular economic sectors, Therefore, in the following table Benefits from this section of Tourism During a period of 16 years is reviewed:

**Table 1:** The number of health tourists, foreign exchange earnings, number of jobs created and the investment rate in 2021

Year	The investment rate. Per 1000 dollars	The amount of created jobs.7000 dollars one job	Health of foreign exchange earnings in thousands of dollars	Tourism amount
2005	20000	14200	100000	20000
2006	28000	20000	140000	28000
2007	40000	28570	200000	40000
2008	53000	27857	265000	53000
2009	54000	50000	350000	70000
2010	92000	65714	460000	92000
2011	123000	87857	615000	123000
2012	150000	107142	750000	150000
2013	180000	128571	900000	180000
2014	215000	153571	1075000	215000
2015	260000	185714	1300000	260000
2016	205000	217857	1525000	305000
2017	250000	250000	1750000	350000
2018	400000	285714	2000000	400000
2019	250000	321428	2350000	250000
2020	500000	357142	2500000	500000
2021	550000	392857	2750000	550000

Source: The authors

About a billion dollars annually By Iranians seeking treatment comes out Iran. According to the Office of market research and business development services to organizations in Iran, Drawing horizons in health tourism In the year 2021, The country can be One of the main centers of industry in the region And thereby, Not only the amount of foreign exchange outflow is reduced, But substantial foreign exchange earnings will come to Iran And provides the field of direct and indirect employment And investment (Table 1) (Garrod, 2003: 53-33).

#### Approach Methods:

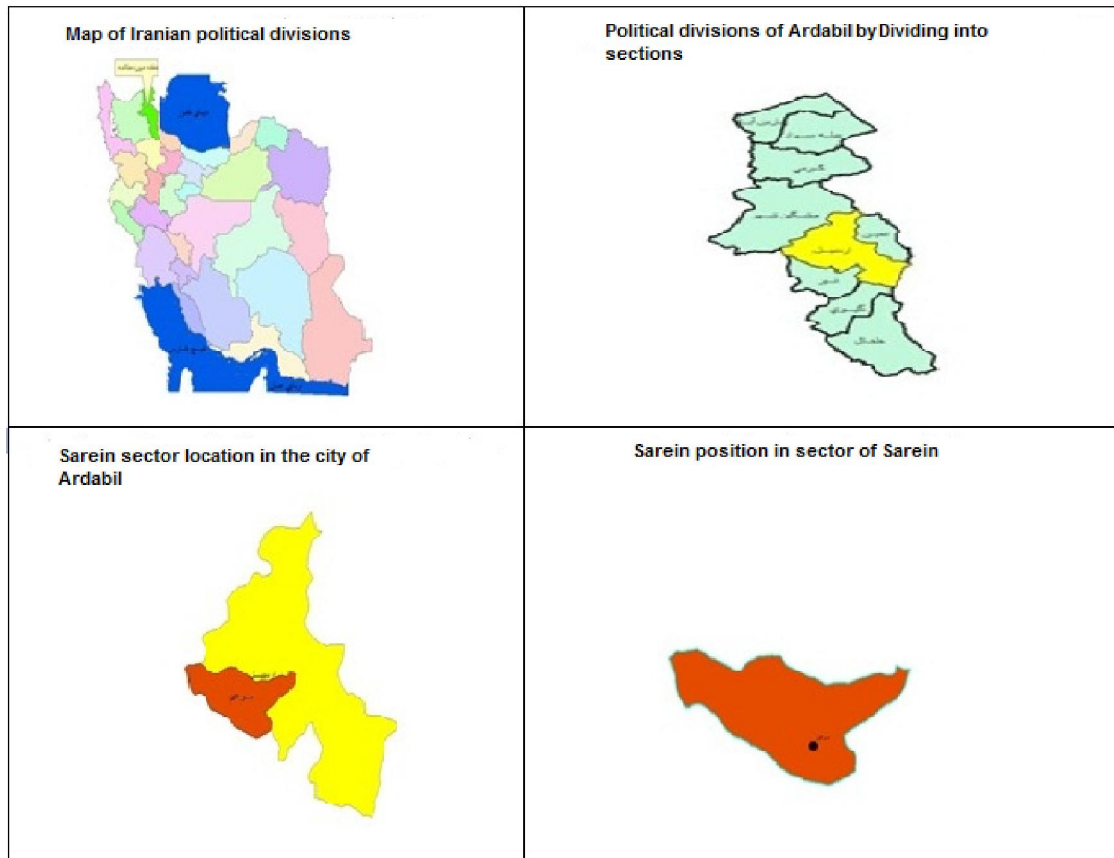
The research method in this study is descriptive research method, The importance of such research that Leading to an overall understanding of the situation is Also check the current status And descriptions of regular and correct Comprehensive

understanding of the phenomenon being studied in the space business. This study is a descriptive survey method And questionnaires has been used. The statistical community is the population of tourists that use hot Springs and The number of samples were selected randomly and Finally, analyzing the data using Single-sample T-test and Cluster analysis was performed in spss software However, given that the main tool in this study, was A preliminary questionnaire that After reviewing relevant research, were developed And appearance and content validity and reliability And revisions, the final questionnaire was prepared to The reliability of the questionnaire that was confirmed by experts and professors And to determine the reliability of the questionnaire Total of 20 respondents completed the questionnaire. And Cronbach's alpha was set. The Cronbach's alpha to determine the possible role of health tourism was

Equal to 0.89 that was expressed in attracting tourists which is appropriate coefficient to the current study. To measuring the varies Advertise role in attracting tourists to the region Of 35 items was used with special arrangements According to Likert expressed in a range from 1 to 5 And finally taking a great extent, these variables were expressed. Also 18 items In order to familiarize them with the expression level was stated such as advertising Variables was set in a Likert And finally by spss software were analyzed.

#### The study area:

Tourist town Sarein In Ardabil province With an area of approximately 400 hectares5 min at 48 degrees east longitude And 38 degrees 15 minutes north latitude is located. The average height of its sea level is about 1650 m. The mean maximum of air temperature is 25 C and the average minimum temperature is 7/8- ° C, Annual rainfall is about 520 mm. Sarein population of the city is in 5250 in 1993.



Location map of the study area

#### Analysis of findings

Analysis of findings Given that health tourism is considered one of the most important branches of Tourism efficient and effective Planning in order to attract maximum tourists Specially developed health tourism and economic, social,

cultural, and... are its effects. In the meantime hot springs in the area Each with different properties and temperature Was expressed that Tourists at this centers To use the curative properties of the springs have been referred to These centers that each feature described in detail below:

**Table 1:** hot springs in the area and Features

Name of Springs	Water types	Health benefits	Average temperature
Gav mish goli	Bicarbonate	Chronic pain in rheumatic disease, women and heart disease and strengthen the body	46 degree
Sabalan	Bicarbonate	General and neurological diseases and joint pains treatment	46
Ghahve Soue	Bicarbonate	New diseases treatment (neurological)	43
Sari Su	Bicarbonate	Sedative treatment of liver unsuitable for drinking	48
Ghare soue	Bicarbonate	Rheumatic pain and mental calming	42.5
Guz Soue	Bicarbonate and calcium	Some eye diseases	42
Pahn Luo	Bicarbonate	General and neurological diseases treatment and joint pain relief	43.5
Yale Soue	Bicarbonate	Inappropriate liver treatment	40
General	Bicarbonate	More to relieve muscle pain	44
Hamam shafa	Bicarbonate	Joint pain relief, neurological diseases treatment	40
Bash Bajylar	Bicarbonate	Treatment of cardiovascular diseases	41
Arjstan	Bicarbonate	Rheumatic pain relief	12

Source: author's findings

The findings also showed that Health Tourism is facing Challenges in the study area Like, poor coordination between agencies responsible for health tourism, Lack of specialized working committees of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Sports And cultural heritage of crafts and tourism,

Inefficiencies in the health tourism information system, Lack of necessary infrastructure And a legal vacuum for the development of this industry. Between the 5 variables that are shown in Table (2) from total response of the studied samples was concluded.

**Table 2:** Evaluation of variables affecting the health tourism sector

Variables	the Value of importance	percent of variance	Cumulative Frequency percent of the variance
Advertising	8.61	21.82	21.82
Accommodation	8.15	21.46	43.28
Security and safety	7.30	20.89	64.17
Sanitation	4.53	10.34	74.51
Services and facilities	3.51	9.87	84.38

Source: survey findings

Among the mentioned factors the advertising agent with the value of 8.61 and 21.82% of the variance allocated to itself the maximum amount. However, this factor with The highest rates Meet the Press And also have his previous appearances In this area. The second factor is Favorable climatic conditions, that with 21.46% of the variance is explained, The third factor which has been pointed out that the Peace security and security in the region has been well expressed, The fourth factor mentioned is the health factor With 10.34% of the variance And the last item mentioned services and facilities 9.87 compared with other affecting agents in The area attracting tourists Has a lower priority.

In the meantime First we deal with, investigating the role of various aspects of advertising that tourists familiar with this element

expressed their presence in the region And using its power of therapy - health Through the local media Or by introducing others that Using spss software check this indicator by single-sample t test In this way that: In this exam with regard to this relationship that If 80 percent of health tourism referred in the study area to the role of advertising as their presence in the region We used single-sample T-test So that following table Due to the upper limit values (upper) and lower (lower) It can be said since they are both positive, the Value of test was above average that implies to being Significant of a significant relationship And also with regard to the significance level (sig = 000) Stated that As more ads And, as appropriate express, The region ability The amount of tourists in the area Faced increasing.

**Table 3:** The role of advertising to increase tourism of region

	The amount of test standards = 80					
	t	Standard deviation	(Sig) Significant level	Differences in Average	95%	
					The lower limit	The upper limit
Advertisement element	23.357	149	0.000	3.16667	2.8988	3.4346

Source: survey findings

Of course In the meantime According to obtained data from the questionnaires In 5 items (likert spectrum) tourists expressed the extent of their Knowing and presence in the study area As follows: 5.3% very high, 34.9 percent high, 45.4% moderate, 9.9 percent low and 3.3 percent were very low, this problem itself, is as one of the important points in The advertising talk of the town is considered To attract tourists with The purpose of this spa town

Would not be ineffective. Next, we have to examine that is health tourism in the region Able on other types of tourism to be superior in terms of the number of tourists in the area. Of the 350 completed questionnaires 211 tourists have expressed the purpose of their using of the potential of health tourism, which reflects the fact that Health tourism in the region is important and major of tourist arrivals to the region have attended To use this type of tourism.

**Table 4:** Prioritizing the types of tourism in the region

Types of tourism	Frequency	Percentage	Rating percent
Scientific	35	10	10
Ecotourism	87	24.85	24.85
Therapy - Health	211	60.28	60.3
Commercial	17	4.85	4.85
Total score	350	99.98	100

Source: survey findings

In fact, considering various aspects that were examined Respondents to the questionnaire classified their goal of regional tourism with these priorities that n fact the table illustrates the fact that60.28% of tourists expressed the purpose of their tourism its health-therapy dimensional - on the region. Another issue That was examined, was

Facilities in the region So that with respect to items on the questionnaire That considered 5 part of major tourism problems, Health tourists That have used the hot springs From the five sectors respectively, tourism problems in this area Has been ranking as following diagram.



**Chart 1:** Classification of tourism problems according to tourist's views

Findings show that Tourists stated The purpose of his trip to the region Using the capabilities of medical tourism - Health that The number 211 was expressed That review average age of tourists to this

part of survey indicates that This fact that The average age of tourists of this part is high compared to other types of tourism that are shown In Table 5.

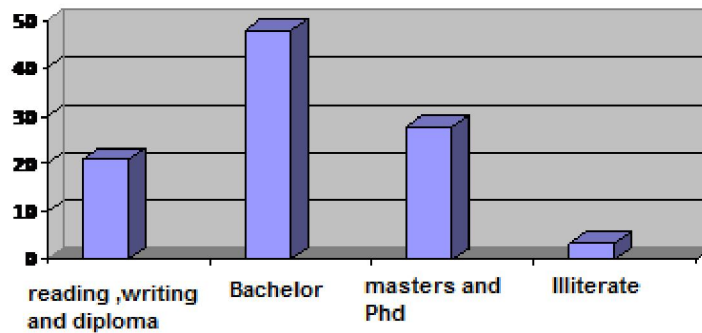
**Table 5:** The age group of tourists in the study area

The age group of tourists	Frequency	Percent	Coefficient percent
Persons under 15 years	21	9.95	19.9
Persons 16 to 25 years	34	16.11	32.2
Persons 26 to 45 years	72	34.14	68.28
People over 46 years	84	39.81	79.62
Total score	211	100	200

Source: survey findings

In terms of education level Tourists at reading, writing to diploma level, 21.1 percent undergraduate Tourists 47.7 MA and Ph.D.,

explained 27.9% of the tourists that The lowest levels of education, is related to The uneducated class (not literate) with 3.3 percent.



**Conclusions:**

Sarein area Due to the special geographical conditions could be considered as important hub health tourism among the world's nations. Since having Natural donations Such as hot springs and mineral can be the best way to treat many diseases and also attract tourists and also Health tourism is growing. In this city, the number, quality and distribution of hot springs are such that could introduce Nature therapy using the natural water as one of the country's most important tourism resource. Surveys conducted in the study area through field studies and providing a questionnaire among tourists who were randomly selected, shows that current Tourist knows The study area As a regional Tourism with particular characteristics especially as health tourism, that has The great tourism potential which among Health Tourism Due to the potential in the region has Allocated to itself Higher percentage than other types of tourism In the tourist area that Many tourists With regard to the question of local Residents In the first half of year When the climate is better, must go to This area That Including health tourism centers in the region, are The hot springs that According to the presented classification Each have specific characteristics, which Tourists can participate in those centers However, this tourism sector Could lead some Effects in the study area In

the field of economic, social. According to the results, the reasons and motivations of tourists to this part of the following were stated:

- Improving the health of mind and body.
- Modernizations of the soul and relaxation
- Use of medical services
- Use of weather and natural features an area for relaxation of body and spirit

Since the Quality of services in the area is one of the factors affecting Decision making of Treatment seekers for selecting their health destination But attending to this part in the region Attract more tourists In the region And besides this, would be a factor that attract new tourists This will be achieved through the promotion of tourists, However, in this context, And according to the survey results District officials and managers Can with some measures Including learning those providing services to tourists in tourist treatment areas, Also considering the accommodations Including comfortable accommodation, transport, recreation and views To increase the satisfaction level of tourists. Regarding variables affecting in this section According to the respondents' priority the following was stated: Promotions, accommodation, security and safety, sanitation, service and facilities which In fact providing each of these aspects In the region under

study Can be effective in order to attract more tourists However, in relation to the problems in the region To improve the health tourism The following was expressed, Parking, sanitary items, restaurant, chapel and lighting that Was expressed that In fact Given the infrastructure is considering that With the development of foregoing will lead to tourism Increasing Particularly in the health sector Ultimately following recommendations and guidelines In order to strengthen this part was stated:

- expansion of infrastructure facilities at the appropriate level next to mineral springs and spa
- Developing parking, accommodation and catering facilities such as dining, restaurants, hotels, Plazh... with the sustainable principles of tourism
- creating beautiful artificial landscapes and relaxing environment along with hot springs and mineral water springs
- creating space and complement the development of tourism activities (eg swimming competitions in the pool water of springs
- Introducing mineral, hot springs and their especial therapeutic potential through the mass media, brochures, CD and promotional programs to learn more about the proper use of it by the people.
- Time planning for the observance of the region's capacity to attract tourism in different seasons Through agencies, organizations, public and private companies To prevent accumulation and population density That only in a particular season, will travel to the region And this causes enormous environmental damage.
- Health Tourism Master Plan providing of Sarein
- Tours therapy holding of Sarein
- Side Festival in Sarein (eg honey bee festival, etc)
- Providing therapeutic massage services and an additional unit in the vicinity of the hot springs
- attract foreign investors
- Conducting medical tourism marketing
- Review of existing structures of spa services and utilization patterns of modern architecture
- Increasing the number of service units
- Providing special services to patients
- granting loans and discounts to patients and their companions
- using of Effective methods for information access and spa properties in Ardabil province input, as well Sarein
- Management measures adopting to avoid the crowds and traffic of vehicles and the surrounding areas of hot prings to reduce the negative psychological impact for tourists
- creating centers of traditional medicine and herbal pharmacies in the area of hot springs

- Utilization of physicians specializing in water treatment.

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