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## Kaliningrad Region of Russia as Perspective Actor for Health-Tourism Development in Baltic Sea Region

**Abstract.** The article considers the Kaliningrad region from the perspective of the development of medical and health tourism in the region. The main objective and problematic of the research is to study the potential of the Kaliningrad region in the development of health tourism and definition the place of the Kaliningrad region's health tourism in the Baltic Sea region. In the course of the study, methods of reviewing the literature on topics were applied, the experience of both Russian and foreign researchers was analyzed; For visualization of the results, the cartographic method was used, and the results of the analysis are presented in the form of graphs and tables. The article considers the natural and geographical prerequisites for the development of health tourism in the Baltic region, analyzes the sanatorium-resort base of the Kaliningrad region, shows the dynamics of attendance at sanatorium-resort institutions in the region from 2012 to 2016. The potential of each municipality of the Kaliningrad region in the development of medical and sanatorium-resort tourism is shown. As a result of the study, it was found out that the Kaliningrad region has significant potential for the development of therapeutic, health and medical tourism in the Baltic region: a developed sanatorium-resort network, natural resources (mineral water, therapeutic mud, etc.), an advantageous geographical position, affordable prices for spa treatment). However, it is necessary to expand the range of sanatorium-resort services of the institutions of the Kaliningrad region in order to be able to compete with similar institutions in the Baltic countries and neighboring Poland; improvement of medical infrastructure and level of medical services in the region to expand their range.

**Keywords:** health tourism, medical tourism, Baltic Sea Region, Kaliningrad region, regional development, socio-economic development

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## 1. Introduction

The Baltic Sea Region since many years represented as the resort with wide coastline with sandy beaches, soft climate and perfect natural conditions for health improvement. Russian regions (Kaliningrad region, Leningrad oblast), Baltic States, Poland and Germany – countries with direct access to the coastline, which use the natural resources for purposes of the health-tourism development. Most popular the coastline of the Baltic Sea, a lot of spa infrastructure objects are concentrated in that part. But despite the positive and attractive resource – coastline, there is big potential in areas distanced from the coastline for 150-350 km (sanatoria, guesthouses with SPA service, etc.), for example Druskininkai and Birštonas.

Kaliningrad region in such situation has very big potential, it developing this type of tourism (medical and health), rural tourism as well, but development of this sector of tourism is very weak. The health tourism destination is one of the priority of socio-economic development Strategy of the Kaliningrad region, and could be the platform for interconnections of Baltic Sea countries. Besides the development of health tourism, or wellness tourism, Kaliningrad region opening its gates for classic medical tourism – guests coming with different parts of Russia to the new cardiology, and potential cancer mad region opening its gates for classic medical tourism – guests coming with different parts of Russia to the new cardiology, and potential cancer medical center.

## 2. Theory

The concept of “medical” and “health-improving” tourism is quite new, despite the fact that health services outside the places of permanent residence have been used for quite some time. In the scientific works of both foreign and Russian authors one can find many different interpretations of medical and health tourism. Clearer definitions and distinctions of the concepts of tourism associated with improving health can be found in foreign authors. For example, the following concepts can be found abroad: “medical tourism,” “wellness tourism,” “health tourism,” and interpretations of these concepts differ from different foreign authors, and analyzing the definitions of foreign authors, it can be concluded that the concept Health tourism is broader, including the concepts of medical tourism and wellness tourism. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines health tourism as a type of tourism, including services offered by spa centers

or medical services related to surgery, associated with the best price compared to home region, and also to preserve anonymity. According to the definition of Steve Hayjof, health tourism is a trip to other countries, territories for medical services and other health care activities, thereby identifying this concept with the term medical tourism. Contrasting with Steve Hayjof, Greek author Ikos Aris defines health tourism as tourism associated with visiting mineral and thermal springs for medicinal purposes. Two other definitions used by foreign authors have more specific meanings. Thus, the concept of medical tourism is a trip to improve the health and treatment of existing diseases, as well as economic activities to provide services, combined treatment and tourism [Bookman & Bookman 2007]. As for the concept of wellness tourism, it was introduced in 1961 by Helbert Dunn. This term is understood to mean that tourists receive health procedures that are aimed at preserving and enhancing health related to the use of natural resources, diet, physical activity. For the Russian conceptual apparatus, this term is most correlated, in authors opinion, with the term “sanatorium-resort tourism”, which prevailed in domestic works related to the study of health-improving tourism, and the concept of “therapeutic tourism” adopted only in recent years links with the active development of medical services offered by various clinics, private medical and rehabilitation centers to foreign citizens. Among the Russian authors who give the definition of tourism in order to improve health, we can mention A.A. Fedyakin, who substantiated the concept of “health tourism”. You can also note such authors as V.A. Nabadrik, V.F. Kazakova, R.P. Sukhov, V.G. Gulyaev, R.M. Navodnichy and others, who considered theoretical approaches to the concept of medical and health tourism.

Analyzing different definitions of “health” tourism and “medical tourism” it could be concluded differences between these two definitions. Medical tourism is travelling for getting medical treatment, medical service, health tourism is much broader definition, which means travelling for health treatment, spa-services, recreation services, sport activities, etc. Among the scientists exploring the development of health tourism in Russia, we can distinguish A.S. Sokolova, V.G. Gulyaev and N.P. Manko [2017] and others. The works of such domestic authors as A.Y. Arkhipov, I.Yu. Sevryukov are devoted to the issues of sanatorium-resort tourism [2013], S.L. Mozokina, O.A. Nikitina [2012], and foreign authors: M. Smith, C. Kelly [2006], E. Erfurt-Cooper, M. Cooper [2009], C. Voigt, C. Pforr [2013], etc. The combination of developing health and sustainable tourism is considered in his works A.I. Seselkin, T.V. Rassokhina [2016] and E.G. Kropinova [2016]. Such a form of health-improving tourism as a sanatorium-resort and its development in the Kaliningrad region and in the Baltic region as a whole, E.G. Kropinova, I.I. Dragileva, V.S. Korneevets [2008], A.T. Mitrofanova [2010], O.A. Nikitina [2012], M.S. Oborin, J.A. Mingaleva [2017] and others.

### 3. Research methods

The methods which were implemented during the research preparation, are as follows: analysis of statistics data, analysis of data of municipalities and tourist agencies within Kaliningrad region and Baltic States; cartographic methods using GIS systems; analysis of works on topic of Russian and foreign scientists; During the preparation of research the poll of tourism destinations and spa and health tourism (spa-centres, sanatoria's, etc.) in Lithuania and Kaliningrad region was conducted. The results of poll are presented in the article.

### 4. Research results

Recently, medical tourism has been developing more actively and considered as a separate direction of tourism. Russia is not an exception in the development of this type of tourism. In addition to health tourism, spa and sanatorium-resort treatment, classical medical services such as dentistry, cancer treatment, cardiology, gynecology, ophthalmology, plastic surgery, and surgical cosmetology are in demand in Russia. But most of the medical tourists, which coming to Russia are patients from the CIS and neighboring countries. Among European countries, tourists who come to Russia for medical services, can be noted Sweden, Finland and Denmark (Scandinavian region mostly to S. Petersburg). However, in 2017, the number of Chinese and South Korean citizens arriving in Russia increased. They actively visit the cities of the Siberian Federal District, as well as Moscow.

In Russia, in addition to large cities with developed medical services, seaside destinations are also popular - mainly resorts on the Baltic and Black Sea coasts, as well as mountain regions. In the North-West Federal District of the Russian Federation, the Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions are most popular, but in terms of climatic conditions, the Kaliningrad region wins, sanatorium-resort tourism in the region is developing, and also services of dentistry, cardio medicine and plastic surgery are in demand.

The Ministry of Tourism of Kaliningrad region notes that the Federal Center for Cardiovascular Surgery, opened in the region in 2012, has revived such a promising area as medical tourism. Here, not only Russians, but also foreigners have the opportunity to receive high-quality examination and treatment at affordable prices, and then to undergo postoperative rehabilitation in one of the sanatoriums on the seashore.

It is important to note that Kaliningrad region has a convenient geographical position for the development of tourism services and their promotion not only in the Russian, but also in the European market (Fig. 1).

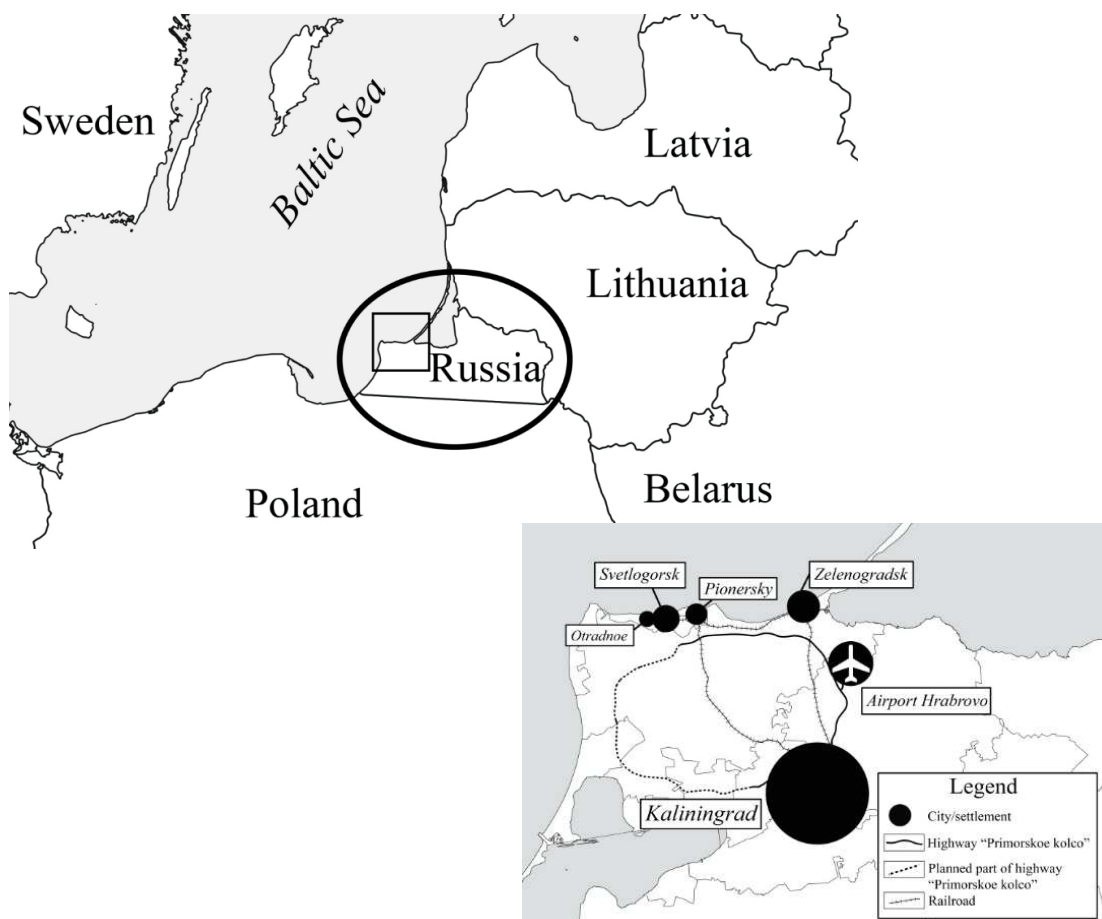


Figure 1. Kaliningrad region in the Baltic Sea Region

Source: own elaboration.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, 48% of Russian tourists consider the Kaliningrad region as a region of medical and health tourism, where it is combined with cultural and educational, which is preferred by 28% of visitors to the region. At the same time, the volume of sanatorium and health services in the region shows high growth rates: in 2013, the growth was 9.2%, in 2014 – 15.4%.

There are 20 active sanatorium-resort and therapeutic facilities in the Kaliningrad region. Almost all of them are located in coastal cities, resorts of federal significance and coastal settlements of the region. As well as there are motels and hotels with a spa and wellness center (Table 1).

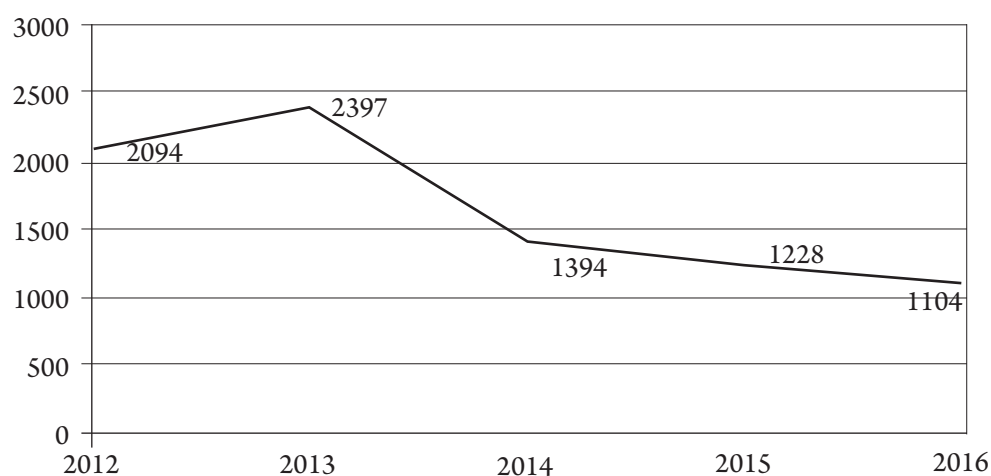
Table 1. Health-tourism facilities of the Kaliningrad region

No.	Town/ Settlement	Specialization of facilities	Number of beds (% to the total number of beds in the Kaliningrad region)
1	Zelenogradsk	Cardiovascular system, neurosystem, gynecology, musculoskeletal system, neurosensorymotors for children	525 (4%)
2	Svetlogorsk	gastrointestinal tract; respiratory system; ENT diseases; metabolic disorders; endocrine system; urology, neurosystem, gynecology, musculoskeletal system, circulatory organs, cardiovascular system	2149 (13,9%)
3	Otradnoje	cardiovascular system, neurosystem, musculoskeletal system	550 (4,22%)
4	Pionersky	musculoskeletal system (for children)	300 (2,3%)

Source: own elaboration.

Basically, Russian tourists use the spa and health-treatment services of the Kaliningrad region. A significant part of tourists at the wellness facilities consists of residents of the Kaliningrad region, partly from Moscow and the Moscow region, and from other areas of European and Central Russia. However, foreign citizens also visit sanatorium-resort accommodation facilities of the region, but their share has decreased in comparison to 2014. This was caused by the economic crisis and the abolition of the simplified visa regime (a 72-hour visa issued to tourists upon arrival in the region) and local border traffic with Poland (Graph 1).

Graph 1. Number of foreign tourists in spa and sanatoria treatment facilities of the Kaliningrad region (persons)



Source: Federal Statistics of Russian Federation, Kaliningrad region, 2017.



Despite the fact that the Kaliningrad region has a number of prerequisites and natural and climatic resources for organizing health tourism in its central and eastern part, all the existing spa facilities are located on the coast. The region has an extensive river network, lakes and forests (Fig. 2), as well as therapeutic mud, medicinal mineral waters and other resources for recreational and resort development.

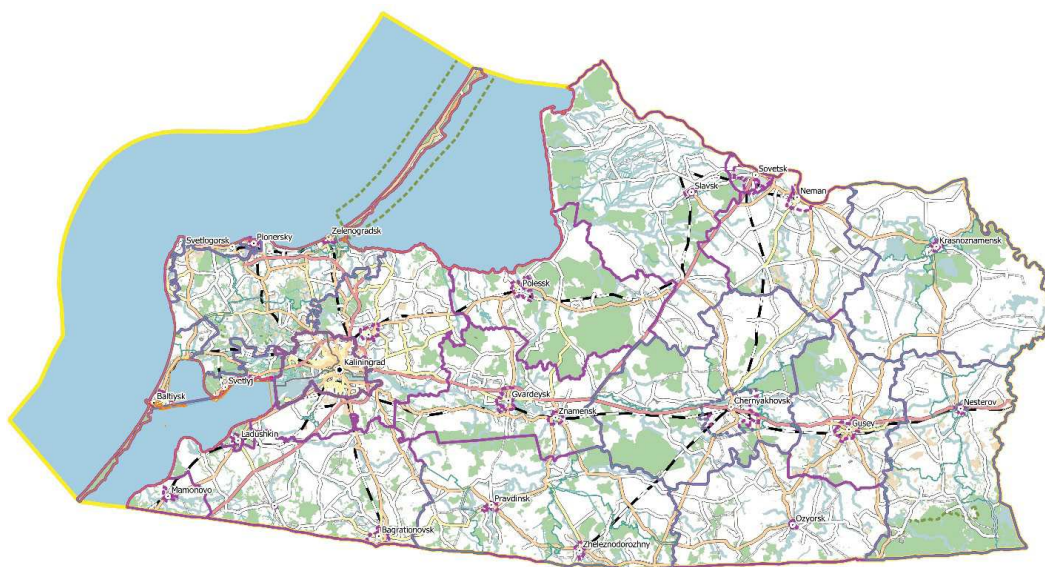


Figure 2. Natural resources and transport net of Kaliningrad region for health-tourism development

Source: own elaboration.

It can be seen from the map that, in addition to the presence of water bodies and woodlands, the region, due to its compact features, has a wide and extensive transport road network. The most common roads, railway inland transport is also there, but to a lesser extent. Thus, each municipality of the region has the prerequisites and resources for the development of health tourism. Table 2 presents all the municipalities of the Kaliningrad region (except for coastal ones) and shows their resources for the development of types of health and recreational tourism.

Kaliningrad region ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in Russia for its tourist attraction. And thanks to this, it is advisable to develop not only classic types of tourism (beach, educational, etc.), but also sanatorium-resort and health tourism.

At the end of 2017, we conducted a sociological survey of tourists on the criteria by which the Kaliningrad region is attractive for them. 500 respondents were interviewed. The results are shown in Graph 2.

Kaliningrad region acting as the one of most attractive area of Russian Federation for health tourism. Graph 2 shows that spa and sanatoria treatment is on

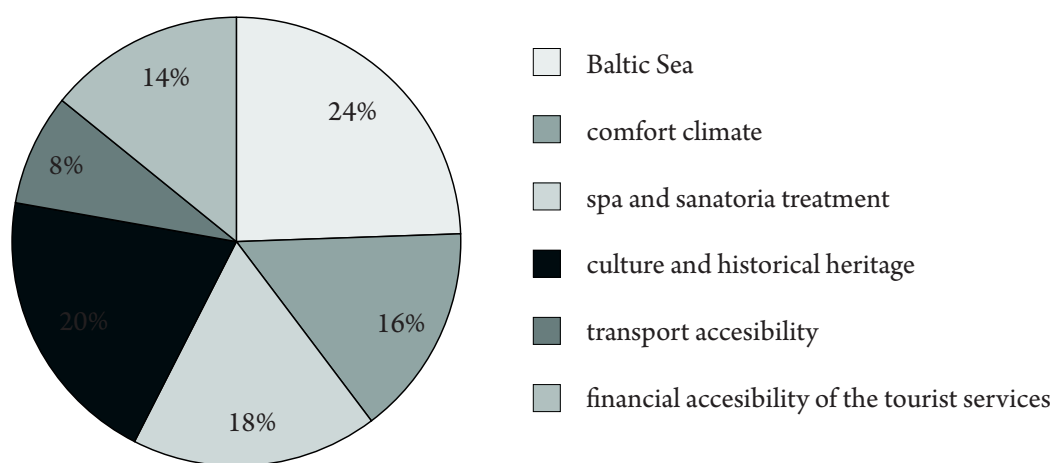
Table 2. Natural and socio-economic resources for development health-tourism in municipalities of Kaliningrad region

No.	Municipality	Resources for sanatorium development	Proposals for development
1	Slavsk	– mineral water	– water-wellness treatment
2	Sovetsk	– Neman rive – cross-border point with Lithuania in the city-centre	– rehabilitation center for children with disables; establishment center for adults
3	Cherniakhovsk	– three rivers (Angrapa, Prgolia, Instruch – transport accessibility	– spa-and recreation center, rehabilitation center for people with problems of musculoskeletal system
4	Mamonovo	– border town (Poland) – Vistula lagoon	– spa and sanatoria complex on the Vistula lagoon
5	Neman	– mineral water	– sanatoria complex for children in former children’s camp “Sputnik”
6	Nesterov	– Rominten forest – p. Vishnynets lake	– spa-center, health-recreation complex
7	Ozersk	– natural resources (mineral water)	– winter sport resort – establishment of rehabilitation center
8	Polessk	– Curonian lagoon, health treatment substances	– mud resort
9	Pravdinsk	– cross-border settlement (Poland) – natural resources of the lake – Lava river (Iyna in Poland)	– SPA Center with a specialization in heart disease
10	Svetly	– Vistula lagoon	– rehabilitation center for children
11	Bagrationovsk	– natural resources (lake) – close to the borer – transport accessibility	– establishment the center for the prevention of respiratory diseases
12	Gvardejsk	– natural resources (Deima river) – transport accessibility	– rehabilitation sanatoria for children with respiratory diseases
13	Gurjevsk	– Pregel river – transport accessibility	– posttraumatic rehabilitation center for the elderly.
14	Gusev	– underground mineral waters – close to the polish border	– water-treatment resort
15	Krasnoznamensk	– clear environmental with forests – Sheshupe and Neman rivers – State nature monument “Dobrovolski”	– rehabilitation sanatoria for people with respiratory diseases
16	Kadushkin	– Vistula lagoon – transport accessibility	– health resort based on former children’s camp “Chaika”

Source: own elaboration.



Graph 2. Reasons to visit Kaliningrad region



Source: own elaboration.

the third place (18%) of the respondents' choice. It is important to mention that the poll was conducted among 85% of Russian citizens coming to Kaliningrad for tourism, and 15% of foreign tourists. Foreign tourists were mostly from neighbouring countries (Poland, Lithuania, Germany).

It is important to mention that health tourism and medical tourism in Kaliningrad region is oriented mostly on Russian-speaking tourists. The level of foreign languages of personnel in spa, sanatoria, and medical facilities are not sufficient. Also, some sanatoria of the region are still working without additional services, and the recreational programmes limited only in 21 days. Lack of flexibility in services makes retard the development of health-tourism in the region. Despite financial possibilities of common projects with EU (CBC Cooperation Programmes, etc.), there is still lack of investments and it is the negative factor for development of health-tourism facilities and infrastructure in municipalities without sea access. But, as it was mentioned in the article, the potential (natural, transport) is high, and there is still demand for several medical and health-treatment services in the region.

## 5. Conclusions

As we can conclude, the Kaliningrad region has significant potential for the development of health tourism. Basically, it is a type of health tourism based on the use of climatic and balneological resources (Baltic Sea, mineral waters, curative

mud). In the region, sanatorium-resort tourism has been developing for a long time, and it is a historically established destination for sanatorium-resort services from both Russian tourists (initially) and foreign ones (since 2000).

The coastal territories of the region are most developed in terms of infrastructure, there are resorts of federal significance and almost all the health resorts in the Kaliningrad region (sanatoriums, hotels with spa services). In the total volume of accommodation (beds), spa facilities occupy 24.42% to the total number of beds in the region. This indicator, in our opinion, is sufficient for the region, covering the needs of tourists in sanatorium-resort services. However, a significant part of the infrastructure needs a complete renovation, some accommodation facilities need to be refitted to meet the needs of people with disabilities. In addition, one of the important measures to improve the attractiveness of the sanatorium-resort complex of the region is the change in the concepts of institutions. For example, in accommodation facilities in resort cities, such as motels, recreation centers, there are not enough tools for loyalty and attracting tourists, there are not enough ready-made packages of services targeted at various categories of tourists. A good example of such attraction of tourists can serve as spa resorts and spa complexes in neighboring Lithuania (in Palanga, Druskininkai and other cities).

In addition, since the Kaliningrad region not only has coastal resources, but also a number of natural resources that can be used for recovery, it is advisable to develop health and recreation and sport centers and spas in the central and eastern part of the region, to attract investments to create a healing infrastructure based on natural resources. Taking into account the small area of the region and the developed transport accessibility, treatment and rehabilitation in potential centers in the east of the region can be combined with tourist excursions to the coast. Thus, today, in the Kaliningrad region, sanatorium-resort tourism on the Baltic Sea coast is one of the most developed, as a type of health-improving tourism. Other medical tourism is less developed due to visas targeting for foreign citizens, despite favorable geographical position of the region. And in order to improve the image of the region as an attractive center of sanatorium-resort medical and health tourism, first of all, it is necessary to bring the sanatorium-resort infrastructure and services to a high level comparable to the level of similar institutions in neighboring Lithuania.

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## **Rosyjski Obwód Kaliningradzki jako przyszły obszar rozwoju turystyki zdrowotnej w regionie Morza Bałtyckiego**

**Streszczenie.** Artykuł dotyczy perspektyw rozwoju turystyki medycznej i zdrowotnej w regionie Kaliningradu. Głównym celem badań jest potencjał regionu kaliningradzkiego w rozwoju turystyki zdrowotnej i określenie miejsca turystyki zdrowotnej tego regionu w obszarze Morza Bałtyckiego. W ramach badań dokonano przeglądu literatury i przeanalizowano doświadczenia

rosyjskich i zagranicznych badaczy. Do zilustrowania wyników wykorzystano metodę kartograficzną, a wyniki analizy przedstawiono w postaci wykresów i tabel. W artykule rozważono naturalne i geograficzne przesłanki rozwoju turystyki zdrowotnej w regionie bałtyckim, przeanalizowano bazę sanatoryjno-uzdrowiskową w Obwodzie Kaliningradzkim i przedstawiono dynamikę frekwencji w ośrodkach sanatoryjno-uzdrowiskowych w regionie od 2012 do 2016 r. Pokazano potencjał każdej gminy w rozwoju turystyki medycznej i sanatoryjno-uzdrowiskowej. Ustalono, że Obwód Kaliningradzki ma znaczny potencjał dla rozwoju turystyki terapeutycznej, zdrowotnej i medycznej w regionie bałtyckim: rozwinięta sieć sanatoryjno-uzdrowiskowa, zasoby naturalne (woda mineralna, błoto lecznicze itp.), korzystne położenie geograficzne, przystępne ceny leczenia uzdrowiskowego). Konieczne jest jednak rozszerzenie zakresu usług sanatoryjno-uzdrowiskowych, aby móc konkurować z podobnymi instytucjami w krajach bałtyckich i sąsiedniej Polsce oraz poprawa infrastruktury medycznej i usług medycznych w regionie w celu rozszerzenia ich zakresu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** turystyka zdrowotna, turystyka medyczna, region Morza Bałtyckiego, Obwód Kaliningradzki, rozwój regionalny, rozwój społeczno-gospodarczy