



# The Intersection of Star Culture in America and International Medical Tourism: Celebrity Treatment

By Kathy Merlock Jackson, Lisa Lyon Payne, Kathy Shepherd Stolley

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Celebrity culture, health care, and travel attract attention in America's media-saturated society. These worlds curiously intersect in the study of medical tourism. Although the US touts some of the finest and best-known medical facilities in the world, many jet-setting A-list celebrities, who can well afford the finest of health care, seek treatment far away from home, popularizing international sites, physicians, and procedures. These travelers, whose every move is chronicled by the media, both reflect and influence health care concerns in America. An analysis of these high-profile cases of celebrities with both life-threatening and non life-threatening conditions sheds light on the link between medical tourism and celebrity, showing how health care and entertainment intersect, and the American public responds.

*The Intersection of Star Culture in America and International Medical Tourism: Celebrity Treatment* argues that celebrity cases and media content drive awareness of medical tourism among Americans at a time when the medical system is under intense scrutiny. By popularizing international sites for treatment, procedures not available in the US, and different approaches to patient care, media narratives present options for health care, triggering dialogue on one of America's most important human welfare issues.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

In *The Intersection of Star Culture in America and International Medical Tourism*, Jackson, Payne, and Stolley illustrate how our fascination with celebrity engages the popular imagination in personal fantasies of wealth and health. Their analysis of media A-listers who have participated in medical tourism—from Steve McQueen, Rock Hudson, and Farrah Fawcett to Christine Jorgensen, Peyton Manning, and Angelina Jolie—provides sharp insights into our fear of illness (and aging) and our hope for personal rejuvenation. (William E. Lenz, Chatham University)

### About the Author

**Kathy Merlock Jackson** is professor of communication at Virginia Wesleyan College.

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**Kathy Shepherd Stolley** is professor of sociology at Virginia Wesleyan College.

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