



HAVEN GREEN CLINIC

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## THE RISKS OF DENTAL TOURISM

Many people head abroad to receive dental care, having been lured by the cheap offers of treatments especially in cosmetic dentistry. They appear attractive options for people who believe that treatment at home is too expensive.

However, the current trend is giving patients more problems than it is solving. There are more and more high profile cases of treatments going wrong overseas. Some patients have had calamitous results which have been very difficult and expensive to rectify. Medical defence societies, Dental Protection, and Doctors' and Dentists' Defence Union, report an increase in foreign initiated problems.

The initial price may be seductive but how good are communications and guarantees? If work fails the prospect of extra travel and accommodation and a lack of willingness to sort out problems, can leave patients stranded. Patients should ensure that foreign Dentists have a good command of English, unless they themselves speak the language of the country they are visiting, and should have confirmed by certificates that operators are properly indemnified against claims of negligence.

Health tourists may find they get a frosty reception from their regular provider when they turn to them for correction at home. At our practice we take a sympathetic view of these patients but we cannot rectify them at no cost as that is the obligation of the original Dentist. We have recent experiences of low quality work based on wrong diagnosis, causing early breakdown and poor prognosis. In one exceptional case a patient had the nerves unnecessarily removed from multiple teeth to have them crowned for cosmetic reasons. These devitalised teeth, with unsatisfactory root fillings, are now weakened and prone to infection [lack of seal of the root fillings] and fracture. The legacy of this folly will be years of extra dentistry and premature loss of these previously sound teeth.

Our practice is not only regulated by the **General Dental Council** which ensures proper training and continuing post-graduate education of all dentist and nurses, but we are also inspected and regulated by our local **Primary Care Trusts**.

In addition to the protective screening of these two bodies, the **Care Quality Commission** is also now intervening in all health provision to raise and maintain standards of care and service.

They have recently imposed new criteria for many aspects of dental treatment facilities. For example all practices must move towards "best practice" in cross-infection control.

In our practice we have established two new dedicated rooms to ensure disinfection between patients is of the highest quality. You are welcome to inspect our new Decontamination Rooms.

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