

温泉療養 (8)

# Medicinal Waters and the German Spa Resorts

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Since ancient times mineralized waters in Europe serve health purposes and are the economical basis for more than 1000 communities in Europe (320 in Germany): spa-resorts resp. stations thermales.

The definition of a medicinal water in Germany is a matter of the Federal Health Authority and a mineralized water that intends to become a medicinal water has to go through a registration and legalization process the same as any other medicine... and finally gets a registration number as any other medicine.

Those waters are intensively applied under the controll and perscription of medical doctors, nurses and physiotherapists in so-called "Kurorts", which is spa-resorts.

Spa-resorts and the application of medicinal waters therein are an integrated part of the german-privately organized-health care system.

Last year over 8, 5 Mio patients and clients attended and visited the german spa-resorts giving about \$US 7 billion into the spa-resorts economy. 20 % of those are patients sent to the spa-resorts automatically as a mattor of rehabilitation after a serious illness... and fully payed for by the health insurance companies (one company spending more than \$US 200 Mio on spa-resort rehabilitation).

The rest comes as health-tourists and takes preventiv actions or simply as tourists into a pleasant environment.

It may be discussed wether a health effect comes from the application of mineralized waters alone or from a psychological effect or a combination of both but it cannot be discussed if there is any effect at all: there is a positiv health effect.

Without digging into the medical sciences of efficiency-proof there is another point that is convincing:

Privately organized health-insurance-companies have to look for profit and the best profit is the health of their customers... healthy customers cost less.