

# POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF WELLNESS TOURISM IN RUSANDA

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**ABSTRACT:** *Village Melenci is located near Zrenjanin in the region of Banat and in that village there is a spa called Rusanda, which mineral mud fell into one of the most healing mud in Serbia. The subject of this paper is spa Rusanda and the task is to determine its potential for development of wellness tourism, with the aim of improving the position of Rusanda in market of health and wellness tourism. The paper will use qualitative data analysis to identify the potential for tourism development. Results of survey research, which is conducted for the purposes of this paper, could be used for minimization or elimination of limiting factors for development. Nowadays, the spa is not only visited by people who come for treatment, to cure or improve the situation of their health, but also the people who come to spa because of preventive reasons, to rest and improve their health. Individuals concerned about their health, influenced the creation of a market that achieves high earnings. This is why the development of Rusanda should be seen outside the purely medical tourism and its development should be directed toward wellness, as appropriate addition to medical effect.*

**Keywords:** *Rusanda, tourism, medical wellness, potential*

## INTRODUCTION

Health tourism presented the border area of medicine and tourism in spas for years, with aims of prevention, rehabilitation and treatment with a professional and controlled application of natural healing factors: climate, mineral water, curative mud and sea water. However, changes and trends of tourism market, followed by the contemporary socio-economic conditions, resulted with changes in traditional health tourism and highlighted the philosophy of hospitalized service and preventative forms of medicine (wellness), which often become the most essential part of the offer (Milićević, Milovanović, 2012).

The concept of medical tourism is different from country to country. Unlike Western Europe, where the emphasis is on prevention, mental and physical health, in Central and

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Eastern Europe, the emphasis is primarily on physical health. In southern Europe are present treatments based on sea water, while northern Europe spa tourism is based on natural landscapes (fjords, lakes, forests) and treatment with cold water in lakes (Smith, 2011).

People have an increasing need for relaxation and wellness tourism offers solutions for recovery due to high exposure to stress. Wellness is an English word, composed of well-being (feel good) and fit-ness (to be fit). Wellness can be seen as a health condition which means the harmony of the body, mind and spirit, with self-responsibility, physical activity, beauty care, healthy eating, relaxation, meditation, mental activity, education and social contacts as fundamental elements (Mihajlović et al, 2012).

Today, spas are increasingly visited by people who visit those places for preventive reasons, aware of the importance that spa can cause to their health. In Rusanda, wellness tourism is still underdeveloped and this paper will provide suggestions on how to overcome this deficiency.

Staying in spas involves usage of natural medical factors and it is necessary to provide adequate space for every form of treatment. But sanatorium is not enough for tourists, so it is necessary to provide adequate programmes of animation. Animation programmes must be well designed and it is necessary to take into account the structure of users, because different animation programmes depend on whether users are completely healthy, convalescents or people who are sick and have difficulties in movement. In accordance with this, sport activities with more involvement of participants or quieter programmes where they are more observers are often organized in spas (Ivkov-Džigurski, 2012).

In addition to the cultural, historical and artistic heritage, healthy food that is produced in unpolluted environment and natural values of the environment can also be incorporated as part of tourism programmes in spas (Vulanović et al, 2001). Sport and recreation resources are also important factors of spa tourism, because visitors often want to spend their time actively (Mihajlović et al, 2012).

Though there are a lot of spas in Serbia, it could be said that Serbia is a country of spa resorts, but unfortunately spa tourism is still at a low level. Rusanda is still commonly visited by those with health problems and the medical treatment is still currently the most common function. However, it is necessary to think towards the development of wellness tourism, because the potential for its development certainly exists.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The primarily method that was used for writing of this paper is qualitative data analysis. Also, interviews were conducted with the professional staff of the Special Hospital for Rehabilitation Rusanda and the information collected in this way were of great importance for writing of this paper. One of methods that should be pointed out is the terrain research of spa Rusanda and the eponymous lake. In this way it was determined the current state of the spa. Terrain research has allowed insight into the positive aspects of the spa, as well as negative that should be removed during the development of spa tourism in Rusanda.

Two short surveys were carried out. The first survey included 80 respondents, the citizens of Zrenjanin Municipality. The second survey was conducted among the direct beneficiaries of spa services in Rusanda (also a sample of 80 respondents). This survey was carried out on several occasions during the period from February to July of 2014. The study was conducted at two locations. The first is the city of Zrenjanin, as the administrative centre of the territory where spa Rusanda is located. The survey was carried out in the city centre (on the main promenade and the promenade around the lake located in the centre of Zrenjanin). The second part of the research was carried out in the spa complex of Rusanda, among people who, in the period of the study, were direct beneficiaries of spa services. Spa guests were interviewed during the period of their vacation and break from therapies in the park that surrounds the spa complex and near the shores of Lake Rusanda.

The sample is convenience. Respondents are subjects that were interested in participating in the survey in the period of researching (in Zrenjanin and in Rusanda). Care is taken within the sample proportion of male and female gender (which is approximate) and the number of respondents in the first and the second part of the survey (which is equal). Opinion of both groups is very important and should be taken into account for making decisions about further equipping and improving the spa offer. Their opinion is valuable, because all aspects of the spa (interior, exterior, spa services) must be developed in a manner that will provide conditions for comfortable staying. The results of this research will be presented in a later section of the paper.

## SPA RUSANDA

### *The natural conditions for tourism development of Rusanda / Melenci*

Rusanda is an active resort in Banat. It is located on the northern coast of the lake in Melenci, in the centre of the Serbian part of Banat region, at the intersection of highways Belgrade - Zrenjanin - Bečej and Belgrade - Zrenjanin - Kikinda, 16,5 km northwest from Zrenjanin. Convenient location of Rusanda, in terms of proximity to major cities such as Novi Sad and Belgrade, certainly favours its development, especially because people in these large urban centres can quickly get to it and come back home in a short period of time. The coordinates are 45° 32' north latitude and 20° 15' east longitude. Height above sea level of the village Melenci amounts 77-97 m. The area around Melenci is mainly flat (Cerović, 1984).

The climate is steppe continental. The average annual temperature is 11,8°C. The average winter temperature is 1,2°C, 12,1°C is average spring temperature, average summer temperature is 22°C and autumn average temperature is 12°C (Republic Hydro meteorological Service). Average temperatures with negative values are present in February and December (Bogdanović et al, 1995). The most prominent wind in this area is the east wind that brings cold air masses. Another significant wind in this area is the wind from the northwest direction. This wind regularly brings rain and snow and it supplies

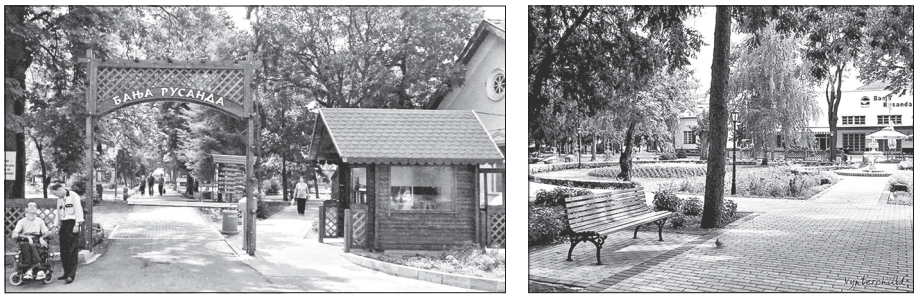


Figure 1 and 2. Rusanda  
(Source: [www.banjarusanda.rs](http://www.banjarusanda.rs))

Vojvodina Province with a sufficient amount of moisture. The third significant wind is northern. It is cold and often very strong wind ([www.zrenjanin.rs](http://www.zrenjanin.rs)). Spring and early fall offer the best weather for staying in the spa, primarily because of pleasant temperatures. During the summer, staying in the spa is also friendly, primarily because of the park, which is located around the spa complex which is the reason why high temperatures are mitigated.

Humidity depends on the condensation of water vapour and then creating a fog, clouds and all forms of precipitation. During the winter, the average humidity is the highest (83%) and the lowest is in summer (66%). The average relative humidity in the spring (67%) is somewhat lower than in the fall (76%). The average annual relative humidity in Zrenjanin is 73% (Republic Hydro meteorological Service).

There are between 2.000 and 2.200 hours of sunshine per year, minimum of sunshine hours is in December (56,3) and the maximum is in July (298,3). The biggest amount of clouds in Zrenjanin municipality, where Rusanda is located, is in December when average is 7,3 tenths of the sky and the lowest is in August when it amounts 3,6 tenths. Clouds often negatively affect the mood of spa visitors, particularly contributing to a gloomy mood, so staying during the spring and summer can be certainly enjoyable, especially for chronic patients, who come here primarily for treatment.

Annual precipitation is about 597,9 mm. Distribution of rainfall by seasons is fairly uniform. In winter, snow falls 22 days on average (Republic Hydro meteorological Service). Bio geographic motives of Rusanda are part of a large park surrounded by floral and green space of 100 hectares. About 60 hectares are covered by forests with pine, linden and acacia like the most common types. The park is crisscrossed by long paved paths for walking and recreation and there are a lot of flowers by the track, which contributes the impression of spa guests (Obradović, 2005).

### ***History, development and equipping of Rusanda***

There is a number of testimonies of residents about the healing factors of water and mud from the lake Rusanda, so the water of this lake was sent on examination to Vienna in 1866. Due to the favourable results of tests, the joint stock company, which built a wooden bath on the eastern shore of Lake Rusanda, was founded during the same year.



**Map 1.** Location of spa in relation to the lake Rusanda

*(Source: Google Earth)*

A little later, in 1878, spa complex was opened on the north coast and it is a place where it remains today. Until today, Rusanda continually builds and develops its capacities and now it is a special hospital for physical medicine and rehabilitation and it is one of the leading and most important institutions of its kind in Serbia (Romelić, 2008). Map 1 present position of Rusanda in relation to the namesake lake.

During the seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, accommodation capacity was around 200 beds in VII pavilions. In the eighties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, VIII and IX pavilion were built so the accommodation capacity was almost doubled, about 380 beds. In the nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, III pavilion was torn down, IV pavilion was converted into a restaurant and accounting sector was located in V pavilion. The current capacity is about 356 beds. Today, I, II and VII pavilion are hotel part of the spa complex in Rusanda. Capacity of those pavilions is 152 beds located in 62 rooms. Pavilions VIII and IX are hospital part of this spa complex. Capacity of those pavilions is 204 beds located in 54 rooms.

Number of visitors in eighties was higher than during the seventies. The reason for this is construction of the new pavilion. Also, the number of guests during the first decade of XXI century is smaller compared to the eighties and the reason is the demolition of one pavilion, as well as changes in functions of two pavilions (the restaurant and space for accounting sector). In nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, athletes came to this spa for sport trainings (mainly football players). However, the administration of Rusanda did not continue with the organization of sport trainings in the spa, because of the mini-

mum wage. The occupancy rate was between 60 and 70% (Data obtained from professional services of Rusanda).

The occupancy rate is quite high, but primarily because of the large number of guests who come here through the Health Insurance Fund. The number of real tourists in Rusanda is currently not too big. During the 2013, about 3.230 persons visited Rusanda and total number of days of their detention in the spa amounts about 73.754 days. Most guests visited Rusanda by the Health Insurance Fund (1.631 persons), on personal cost (1.351 persons). During the same year, the spa was visited by 236 retirees (through PIO), as well as 12 persons with military insurance. However, leaders of the Special Hospital for Rehabilitation realized that the development of wellness tourism can be of great importance for Rusanda and that is a reason why management in recent years begun to take measures necessary for the development of this form of tourism (renovation of pavilion for this purpose), but it is necessary to undertake a number of other measures for meeting of requirements of tourists. Survey results could indicate which aspects should be improved.

Part of the spa complex was recently renovated, so today there is a part in this spa resort for users who come for relaxation and recreation and guests can use a large variety of massages (relaxing massage, anti-stress massage, reflexology foot massage, foot massage dedicated oil, shiatsu massage, hot stone massage, full body massage, segment massage). There are no precise statistics on how many people have visited this spa exclusively for wellness. Table 1 presents the percentage of those who come on the personal cost to the spa. However, the people who come on personal cost mainly come for treatment or rehabilitation (more than because of wellness).

Rusanda has all amenities that are necessary for longer staying: shops, hospital, laboratory, pharmacy, therapy pool, fitness room, conference room. Near the sanatorium, the motel “Lipov cvet” was built in 1974. It is the motel with 25 beds in 10 rooms, with a restaurant and outdoor terrace (Obradović, 1997).

**Table 1.** Number of guests and number of nights

Year	Number of guests	Number of nights	Percent of guests over the funds	Percent of guest with payment on personal costs
2006	3.872	88.995	61,00%	39,00%
2007	4.339	88.772	81,10%	18,90%
2008	3.039	77.357	70,45%	29,55%
2009	2.675	88.252	80,60%	19,40%
2010	2.475	85.920	78,47%	21,53%
2011	2.860	81.392	74,33%	25,67%
2012	2.531	63.086	57,61%	42,39%
2013	3.230	73.754	57,61%	42,39%

*(Source: Data provided by professional services from Rusanda)*

Numerous events are often organized in Rusanda in order to make staying more pleasant, but also more meaningful. Some of these events are performances by tambour

orchestras, theatre shows and performances of cultural and artistic associations. New Year's Eve and a Ball for day of Saint Sava are also organized every year. Several sport fields are located near the spa resort, while a conference hall is a part of the spa complex.

### *Lake Rusanda and medical factor of lake water and mud*

Lake Rusanda is abandoned meander of Tisa, the approximately length of the lake is 5,5 km (north-east), the width amounts 200-600 m (north-south) and the area of the lake is about 4 km<sup>2</sup>. The water of the lake is in the level of surrounding area. The shallower part of the lake is the south-western part which is separated with embankment from the main part of the lake basin. Depth, depending on the year, can range from 0,5 to 1,5 m. The shallowest western and southern edges of the lake usually dries up during the summer and early fall, while the central part is usually permanently under water. The slope of the bottom is very small, but very rarely completely dries up. The salinity of the water is very high (about 60%), making it saltier than seawater. Salinity (40-60%) is the result of mud springs at the bottom of the lake that locals call "žmiravci". Studies showed that, in those places, the salinity of the water increased almost six times (northern part), in opposite to the parts where these sources do not exist (western part). Salinity changes during the year, usually depend on rainfall and evaporation. That is due to reduced rainfall in late summer and early autumn, when it is the largest, and the smallest is in spring (Stanković, 1984).

Mud from the lake is used in the treatment for several centuries. There is a lot of familiar legends about healings of skin and rheumatic changes. The composition of the total weight of peloid from Rusanda is presented in Table 2. Peloid presents a mud, which implies a certain chemical and physical properties and biological effects, which make it suitable for the treatment. Mud from the lake Rusanda is of high quality due to its unique physical and chemical composition. Its physical properties (extremely small particles, high heat capacity, viscosity, high alkalinity) lead to good absorption of chemicals through the skin and that is the basis for therapeutic effect. The mechanism of therapeutic action of peloid consists can be presented through simultaneous mechanical, thermal and chemical effects on the organism. In Rusanda, peloidotherapy is usually applied in the form of packaging and mud baths. The mud treatment is used primarily because of the excellent thermal properties. Peloid is retaining the heat and it is slowly transferred to the skin. The healing effect occurs due to the reaction of the organism to the application of the curative mud, which is the essence of the receptors in the skin. Then there is a different reflex reaction of the organism. The recent findings of science better explains the well known healing effects, because it was determined that the mud from the lake Rusanda is effective against inflammatory processes in tissues. Analyses of mud were made in authorized laboratories abroad and in institutions of Serbia. After laboratory analysis, an important confirmation conducted numerous clinical trials. All analyzes have confirmed the excellent properties of mud and those properties are not changed after many years of usage and today, peloid is not only used for balneotherapeutics, but also for cosmetics application (Data obtained from professional services Rusanda).

Diseases that can be healed by staying in this resort are: inflammatory rheumatism in laboratory and clinical quiet stage, degenerative rheumatism, soft tissue and metabolic rheumatism, traumas, neurological disease, peripheral vascular disease. Treatments that are not organized in Rusanda are treatments for gynecological and skin diseases, although the beneficial effects of natural factors are based on these diseases. From skin diseases, occur sporadically patients diagnosed with psoriasis. Experiences are modest, but positive. The best results in the form of reduced suggestive symptoms and objective improvement can be achieved in degenerate and all other forms of rheumatism. Spa is not recommended for malignant disease, all serious diseases (heart diseases, pulmonary diseases, infectious diseases, psychiatric diseases) (Data obtained from professional services Rusanda).

**Table 2.** The chemical composition of the total weight of peloid from lake Rusanda

Oxides	mg/kg	%
SiO <sub>2</sub>	408,00	40,80
TiO <sub>2</sub>	3,20	0,32
Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	110,00	11,00
MnO <sub>3</sub>	0,80	0,08
FeO	26,00	2,6
Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	23,40	2,34
CaO	48,00	4,80
MgO	54,00	5,40
NaO <sub>2</sub>	24,30	2,43
K <sub>2</sub> O	36,00	3,60
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	4,50	0,45
SO <sub>4</sub>	9,00	0,90
S	2,50	0,25
Cl	22,00	2,22
CO <sub>2</sub>	78,00	7,80
H <sub>2</sub> O	41,00	4,10
NO <sub>3</sub>	3,50	0,35
NO <sub>2</sub>	-	-
NH <sub>4</sub>	0,80	0,08

(Source: Data provided by professional services from Rusanda)

It should be noted that, by the decision of the Provincial Government, on 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2014, the lake Rusanda was declared park of nature, due to its rich flora and fauna. In particular, it emphasizes the diversity of birds. Until now there are about 200 species (Data obtained from professional services of Rusanda).



## POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SPA TOURISM

The geographical position of Vojvodina Province, its natural resources, geothermal resources, healing peloid and water, as well as relatively favourable climatic conditions are good for the development of spa tourism, at least-developed activity in the Vojvodina Province so far, but also activity with great potential. In Vojvodina Province is recognized the importance of considering all possibilities for usage of spas, as well as the gap between large natural resources and its underutilization. That is why during the recent years are taken root projects for supporting the development of spas and spa tourism in Vojvodina Province. Numerous meetings and conferences were organized about this topic and Vojvodina Assembly published the monograph about spas in this Province, with emphasis on spas in this area, including the Rusanda. According to this monograph, strategic development of Rusanda should be orientated to the development of this place as a health and rehabilitation place, which will rely on social programs, the construction of a modern wellness centre and construction of lake shores. But, for now, renovated part of the pavilion is used for this purpose.

Sport and recreation resources are also important factors for spa tourism, because visitors are eager to actively spend their time, especially guests who come for preventive reasons. Sport and recreational activities are poorly represented at the lakeshore of Rusanda, although it has a great potential for that. The greatest attention for decorating of the lake should be directed towards the north-eastern coast, where the spa complex is located. The largest number of older people or those who have difficulties in movement, due to their health condition, are usually visitors of this spa and because of that the coast should be regulated for walking of these people and the paths and benches for relaxation are necessary. Also, the large grassy area could be regulated for light exercise, which often represents a part of the therapeutics for patients. One part of the grassy area could be used for training with professional help of employees. The outdoor exercises might be implemented from the beginning of spring to early autumn, or as long as time permits that. The second part of the grassy area could serve for setting the equipment for usage of more active and younger guests and a number of these guests could increase if conditions for promotion and wellness facilities are adequate. Along the shore of the lake a recreational park in open could be formed. In addition to the trails for biking and hiking, the exercise equipment could also be set at the lake shore, as well as the barriers for different levels of requirements, which means that it would be necessary to install equipment and barriers for younger and more active, but also for the elderly and less mobile population (Mijatov, 2012). This can be very important, given that the activity in nature is increasingly popular. Increased interest for outdoor sport activities is a consequence of the growing awareness of the importance of health, the growing need for returning to nature, as well as the trend of individualization (Plavša, 2010).

It is necessary to base the offer of Rusanda on natural healing factors, specialized facilities, quality staff trained to provide specific medical treatment and other services, but also on the existence of efficient system, which includes a complete range of services related to the hospitality, accommodation and entertainment, which can make stay-

ing experience in Rusanda more pleasant and it is a way that Rusanda should be developed (Milićević, Milovanović, 2012).

Rusanda recognized the importance of the market that wants to visit spa for health improvement and therefore, as already mentioned, one part of spa complex is renovated for them. However, the promotion of this type of the holiday is not as much developed as it should be. The rooms are cosy and comfortable. Provided food is based on full and half board with a special diet for different types of tourists who visit the spa, from the dietary meals intended for those with health problems to the delicious local dishes of the area for others with better health. However, Special Rehabilitation Hospital is still the main association to Rusanda for the most of the people and many do not even think that they could visit it as tourists.

The formation of the product, which would attract tourists, is primarily a weekend in this resort. The weekend is a good choice because of the trend in the world that is represented through frequent and shorter travels and because busy people are often unable to take time off, so weekend is the best suited for business obligations. The target market, for beginning, should be from Vojvodina, because it is a short distance away and citizens from all parts of this province can reach Rusanda in a few hours. The product of this type is designed for all age groups, as there are more and more people who care about their health (younger or older population). Package for detoxification spa and wellness weekend already exists and it can be a good basis for further improvement of wellness tourism supply. In addition to weekend packages, there are also daily offers that usually involve the usage of sauna, swimming pool, certain types of massages and fruit or green tea.

## MEDICAL WELLNESS

Medical wellness tourism is a form of tourism that is reflected through a combination of special wellness offer with certain health services. Wellness and spa components of healthy lifestyle, habits and medical procedures that use natural factors for recovery are basis for the development of medical wellness (DAKMV, 2011). Because of this, medical wellness is an aspect of wellness tourism which would be most suitable for the development of Rusanda.

There are several definitions of medical wellness and according to one of them, “medical wellness tourism associate traditional medical services with normal wellness” (Skupnost, 2012). According to this definition, Rusanda has a great potential for development of the same, primarily because of the medicinal curative mud, which is used for rehabilitation, as well as because of good conditions for the development of wellness. In Austria, medical wellness tourism is defined as “medical spa that supports professional health measures for continuously improving the quality of life and personal commitment to prevention, health promotion and motivation for leading a healthy lifestyle” (BMVFj, 2011).

To be able to develop a medical wellness, Rusanda must provide:

- organization of additional training in the field of wellness,
- greater involvement of health care institution in the preparatory process of curricula of medical wellness,

- transition from classical specialist examinations and providing traditional medical treatment to more personalized service provision in spas,
- additional staff training in the area of quality assurance services,
- conversion from pure disease treatment to achieve positive health goal,
- greater openness for integrated multidisciplinary wellness programs,
- modern look of therapeutic area, supporting medical expertise, with overcome of the hospital look,
- increasing of employee motivation for wellness and creating conditions for the same in proper working environment (Rumbak, 2012).

When it comes to medical wellness, Rusanda also need to provide as follows:

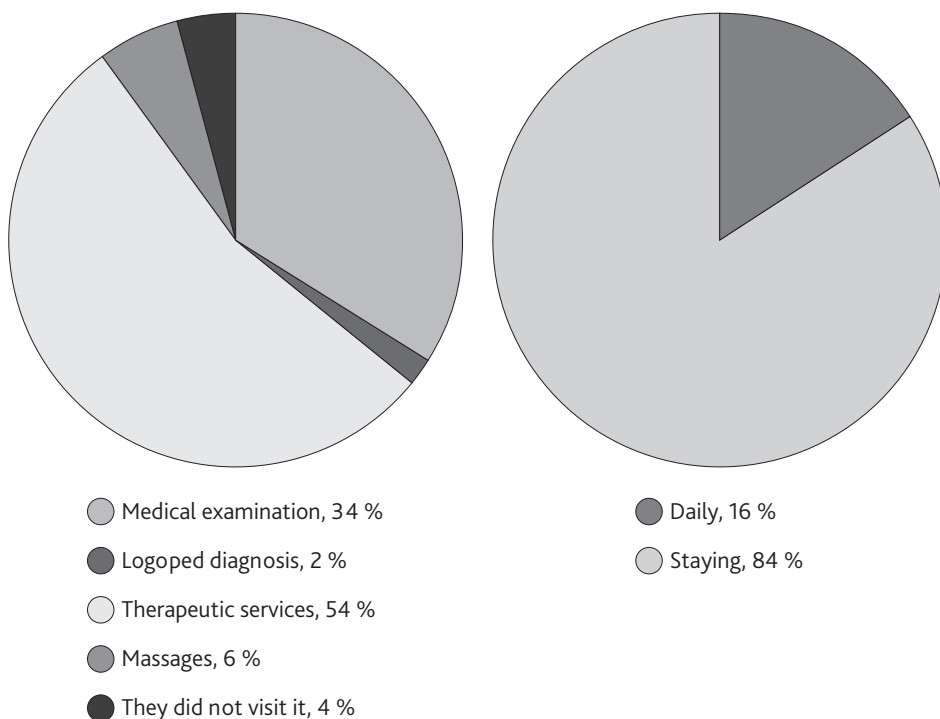
- a specialist,
- a doctor who is available to guests as a partner for talks ,
- at least one regular therapist with full work time (physiotherapist for example)
- holistic medical wellness tourism, based on the concept of medical treatment,
- carefully documenting of objectives, outcomes, long-term orientation and allowing independent control of the business,
- accommodation, food and medical wellness facilities in the respective standards (with no impression of staying in a hospital) (Rumbak, 2012).

Given that Rusanda already operates with adequate professional staff, medical wellness adjustment should not be difficult in terms of the search for labour, but it is certainly necessary to improve interior of spa complex in Rusanda, as well as providing funds for the provision of wellness and their adjustment to European standards for wellness and spa centres.

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

For the purposes of this study, a survey was carried out with the residents of Zrenjanin Municipality, where spa Rusanda is located. Respondents from the territory of this city are the best acquainted with the spa and their opinion is of great importance for future development. The first part of the survey consists of four questions and concerns the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This survey included 80 respondents and their gender structure is approximately equal (46,5% are men and 53,5% are women). When it comes to educational structure, most of respondents have a high school education (62%) and they are followed by respondents with a university degree (about 28%). Most respondents were aged 50-59 (46%) and the percentage of respondents aged between 40-49 amounts 21%, a percentage of respondents over 50 is 28%. Opinion of respondents aged over 40 years is very important, given that they frequently visit the spa in opposite to the younger population. Respondents were mostly from the city (from Zrenjanin, 68%) and 32% live in rural areas, mostly in Melenci, Lukićevo and Aradac.

The second part of the study is about spa complex in Rusanda. About 76,5% of respondents believe that Rusanda is adequate place for practicing wellness activities,



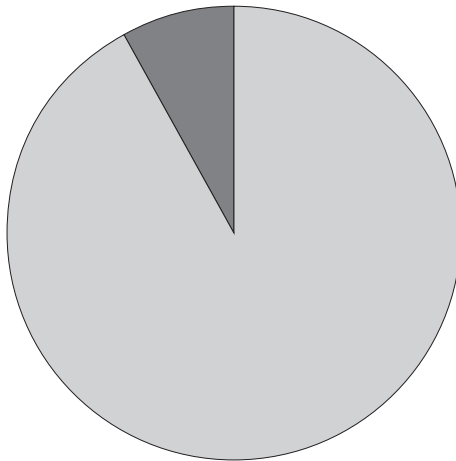
**Charts 1 and 2.** Reasons of visiting Rusanda and duration of staying in Rusanda  
(Source: Maja Mijatov)

which can be an incentive for development. Respondents visit Rusanda mainly for medical reasons: 34% for medical examination, 54% for therapeutic services and the least (2%) for diagnosis of speech and language (Figure 1).

A small number of people visit the spa complex in Rusanda for a massage, only 6%, while only 4% of the respondents from territory of Zrenjanin Municipality did not visit this spa. It is understandable that such a large number of respondents visited Rusanda, primarily because it is a short distance from all places from territory of Zrenjanin Municipality to Rusanda.

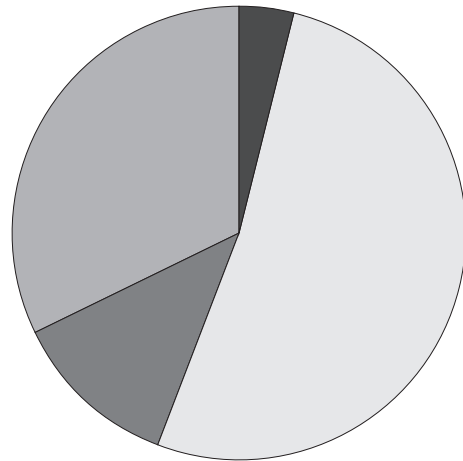
Visits of Rusanda usually include staying in spa complex (even 84%), while 16% of visits are on a daily basis (which is presented in a Figure 2) and it is very important that the interior makes staying in that complex pleasant for people, since they often spend a lot of time there. Most of the respondents think that the interior should be regulated to less impression that it is a hospital, due to a more comfortable stay (92%), as is presented in Figure 3.

The tourist offer of spa complex in Rusanda can enhance sport facilities (4%), walking around the lake (52%), special events (12%) and visiting cultural and historical monuments in the vicinity (32%), as is presented in Figure 4. Some suggestions of interesting places for visit are the city centre of Zrenjanin, Kaštel Ečka and Carska Bara. Greater attention should be paid to the organization of the lake shore of Rusanda and its adapta-



- Improve interior, 8 %
- Interior is appropriate, 92 %

**Figure 3.** Interior of Rusanda  
(Source: Maja Mijatov)



- Sport fields, 4 %
- Walking around the lake, 52 %
- Special events, 12 %
- Cultural and natural heritage in surrounding, 32 %

**Figure 4.** Facilities that can enrich the tourist offer of Rusanda  
(Source: Maja Mijatov)

tion for recreation for people with health problems, as well as those who participate in sport and recreation for better health.

The second survey concerns the direct users of spa services. The sample included 80 respondents, their gender structure is equal (50% are men and 50% are women). Respondents were mostly retirees, their age is greater than 60 years and they are mostly from Middle and South Banat District, as well as from the vicinity of Novi Sad. About 36% of these respondents are for the first time in Rusanda and 64% have visited Rusanda for several times. Most respondents (96%) visited Rusanda for treatment and improving the health situation, while only 4% of respondents were there for prevention and maintenance of good health, which suggests that it takes a lot more work in the field of marketing related to medical wellness tourism, which is presented in the previous section in more detail. No matter that the part of spa complex is renovated for commercial purposes, spa guests are still mainly patients who come there through the Health Insurance Fund. More than half of respondents (72%) said that they love to stay in the spa, because of the positive effect on their health, 12% said that it is a great chance for relaxation, while 16% of respondents said that their staying in Rusanda is a good opportunity to interact with people of similar age and interests. Respondents believe that management of spa complex in Rusanda can improve the quality of accommodation (86%),

food (10%), skills of workers (4%). Their free time is mostly present in the form of walking through the park and around the lake Rusanda (68%), spending the time with other guests (22%), watching TV (8%) and reading books (2%).

## CONCLUSION

It is necessary to make Rusanda able to be competitive and able to reach a greater demand for spa treatments for converting this Institution into a modern destination for health tourism. The offer should be enriched with contents that can provide a variety of spa and wellness services in order to promote, stabilize and restore physical, mental and social well-being with the help of natural herbs and other environmental factors, as well as sport and recreational, cultural and entertainment facilities. Modern medical tourism destination is based on natural healing factors, necessary specialized facilities, quality staff trained to provide specific medical treatment and other services, but also on the existence of an efficient system, which includes a complete range of services related to the hospitality, accommodation and entertainment and make travel and staying experience in Rusanda more pleasant (Milićević, Milovanović, 2012). Foreign spas in the immediate environment can serve as an excellent example of the development of wellness tourism in Rusanda, beside exclusive medical function, so their development should be taken into account.

When it comes to the medical wellness, it is necessary to ensure:

- appropriate structure of employees, that Rusanda already owns and that is a fact which is supported by a long-standing health tradition, the spa employs 17 physician specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation, 61 physical therapists, 65 nurses, a psychologist, a speech therapist, a nutritionist-dietician, 1 pharmaceuticals, 2 laboratory technicians. Also, spa engaged 8 consultants, doctors from other specialties (two internists, a neurologist, infectious disease, orthopedics, transfusion-hematologist, ENT specialist and biochemist) for successful implementation of therapeutic treatment (Data obtained from professional services of Rusanda).
- verification of natural healing factors, as was done in the 19th century, when construction of the spa complex began,
- the necessary tools and equipment; Rusanda already have medical equipment necessary for the rehabilitation and treatment of diseases, that are previously mentioned, which cannot be said for wellness equipment, which is currently at a low level and requires an investment of money,
- requirements for hotel accommodation and meals, in addition to the renovated part of the pavilion, it is necessary to improve conditions for staying in other parts of the spa complex, that even those who only come for treatment, do not have the impression that they are in the hospital, in order to achieve a more comfortable atmosphere,
- accessibility for disabled persons and premises for the implementation of the rehabilitation, the part that is already fairly well secured,
- therapeutic pool there, but has not been renovated for years and is currently in poor condition (Rumbak, 2012).

Personnel, as well as their continuing education are very important for the further development of spa complex in Rusanda. In spas, the competency of all employees is combined with a high level of health and other services while maintaining contact with the development of the rehabilitation profession, together with a parallel emphasis on the use of natural healthy factors (Filipović, 2003). In developing of spa complex in Rusanda is very important cooperation managers of different professions, as well as collaborators from different fields of knowledge (Mihajlović et al, 2012). In order to facilitate the treatment or prevention when it comes to health, it is necessary to employ a number of experts of various profiles, whose work is coordinated (Zeković, Mikhajlova-Zeković, 2004).

In addition to the cultural, historical and artistic heritage, healthy food that is produced in the unpolluted environment and natural values of the environment can also be included as integrated part of tourism programmes in Rusanda (Vulanović, Stanivuković et al, 2001).

Employees in Rusanda emphasize that guests would like to see touristic tables near the entrance in the spa and at certain locations in the park. Those tables should consist information about what can be seen in the spa and locations of those places. Also, guests find that tables should contain as many photos and maps, which would facilitate movement through the spa. At the entrance to the spa itself, there is one panel, but guests find that it is not enough. Also, guests find that the major drawback is that Rusanda do not have a place where you could buy souvenirs, so this shortcoming in the future should be considered in more detail and it can be of great benefit for promotion of the spa. Rusanda is now promoted through the Internet, newspapers, television (mostly at the local level), social networks and through regular participation in tourism fairs in Belgrade and Novi Sad. Social networks are a form of promotion that does not cost much and can make a positive impact. Also, creative skill of people, who maintain social networks, is of great importance. Daily publication of news about the spa, as well as photos from the spa complex, the park or the lake shore, may contribute to the fact that a large number of people will read about the offer of Rusanda.

Guests are mainly from Middle and South Banat District and from the vicinity of Novi Sad. Residents of Bačka and North Banat rarely come to Rusanda because they often go the spa Kanjiža. Also, there is not a lot of guests from Belgrade, so promotion the spa on the territory of the capital should be intensified. The proximity of Rusanda could encourage citizens of the capital to visit it. However, first it is necessary to develop awareness of Belgrade citizens about Rusanda, which could be achieved through intensive promotion of Rusanda at the territory of Belgrade city (Data obtained from professional services of Rusanda).

Investing in wellness programmes can be of great importance. Justification of investment in these programmes is reflected in the fact that in this way offer of spa focuses on new market segments that are younger than the usual spa visitors, ambitious and successful business people, demanding guests who insist on high quality services and market segments with larger purchasing power. Investing in wellness programmes, Rusanda as well as other spas in Serbia, can significantly improve the current image of Serbia in tourism market of Europe, which would brought greater revenues (Jovičić, 2008).

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