



Women's Health

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When reports first surfaced several years ago about China's unmarried women going on egg freezing trips to escape restrictions preventing them from undergoing the procedure, it illustrated the extraordinary lengths some women are taking today to address health issues. It also pointed to a well-known fact that women's health has long been underserved and underfunded.

But the tide is slowly turning and the wellness industry is in the right position to gain from this trend.



Menopause Moment

Recently menopause retreats have been heralded as “the next big thing in wellness” and podcasts, books, products, conferences and the new documentary “The M Factor: Shredding the Silence on Menopause” are catalysing this movement even more. With a growing number of women approaching the age of hormonal changes — by 2025, approximately 1.1 billion women worldwide will have experienced menopause — women’s health issues will continue to be a mainstay of wellness programs.

The Pleasure Principle

In recent years, sexual wellbeing has also drawn attention, which, according to research from the World Health Organization, is key to improving overall mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health. Resorts like Miraval in Arizona and Six Senses Ibiza hold workshops and retreats and more recently, SHA Wellness in Alicante, Spain, launched a Sexual Health Unit staffed with gynecologists and hormonal experts, and will be bringing this program to their new SHA Wellness in Mexico next year.

On Fertile Ground

Another reason why women's health could be bringing disparate forces to the collective table? Declining birth rates and aging populations are raising concerns about future economic stability, workforce shortages and the sustainability of social welfare systems. In response, many governments, particularly in Asia, are exploring innovative strategies to reverse this trend. Those include more generous parental leave policies, support for childcare and financial incentives for those seeking in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments.

While the concept of subsidizing the costs of fertility tourism by governments and insurance companies has yet to take root, it isn't farfetched to imagine seismic measures at a public policy level being deployed in the future to avert a looming crisis. Wellness centers are stepping in the gap by developing holistic programs for women hoping to conceive through IVF or natural means. The Farm at San Benito has been offering such fertility programs for more than 15 years, taking a holistic approach combining nature and traditional fertility practices with modern science. Ananda in the Himalayas offers a similar program combining the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda, yoga, oriental medicine and transpersonal psychology.





Postpartum Hotels

Addressing women's special needs postpartum, could South Korea's sanhujoriwon be a sign of things to come? Sanhujoriwon are postpartum care centers, providing around-the-clock care for women as they recuperate after childbirth. Those services include help with breastfeeding, baby care lessons, yoga, massages and counseling for those experiencing mental health issues. It's customary for new mothers in Korea to take advantage of these services. This practice is beginning to take root elsewhere. Boram in New York City's Thompson Central Park Hotel and Sanu in The Watermark Hotel in the suburbs of Washington, DC are postpartum retreat centers perhaps not coincidentally operated by owners of Korean descent. Such facilities combined with the luxurious amenities of hotels are likely to pop up in more urban centers worldwide.