Asia Pacific Science Press

Asia Pacific Economic and Management Review
ISSN(O):3005-9275
ISSN(P):3005-9267
Vol. 3 No.5 (2026)

Research on the Development of Health and Wellness Tourism under the Background of Urban-Rural Integration — A Case Study of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of rapid urbanization and profound demographic restructuring, health and wellness tourism serves as an important link to promote the flow of urban-rural factors and the integration of business formats. Taking the Xi'an Metropolitan Area as the research object and based on the perspective of urban-rural integration, this paper combs through its development foundation and integration effects of health and wellness tourism, and analyzes the practical dilemmas such as the lack of overall planning, product homogeneity, lagging infrastructure, and the singleness of investment and financing channels. Relying on the urban-rural dual endowments, the Xi'an Metropolitan Area has formed a spatial pattern of "one a core leading, multiple poles supporting, and corridors connecting", yet it is still restricted by the urban-rural dual structure. Based on this, the paper puts forward optimization paths from the aspects of improving planning and deepening industrial integration, providing references for the high-quality development of regional health and wellness tourism and similar domestic metropolitan areas.

Keywords: Urban-Rural Integration; Health and Wellness Tourism; Industrial Integration

Published: Nov 4, 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.62177/apemr.v3i5.1856

1. Introduction

Against the background of rapid urbanization and profound demographic restructuring, the integrated development of urban and rural areas is the core path to solve the major social contradictions in the new era, eliminate the urban-rural dual structure, and advance the new-type urbanization. It promotes the two-way flow of production factors between urban and rural areas, facilitates the balanced allocation of public resources, provides institutional guarantees for building a new type of urban-rural relationship featuring mutual promotion between industry and agriculture, complementarity between urban and rural areas, and common prosperity, and is a key measure to realize coordinated regional development and common prosperity.

As an emerging business format integrating health and tourism industries, health and wellness tourism plays a unique role in promoting urban-rural integration. It deeply integrates the functions of health management, ecological health preservation, cultural experience and leisure vacation, guides the flow of urban capital, technology and talents to rural areas, enhances the value realization of rural ecological, cultural and land resources, and realizes the complementarity of urban-rural factors, integration of business formats and benefit sharing, thus becoming an important link connecting urban and rural development. The Xi'an Metropolitan Area is a national-level metropolitan area and the core engine for the development of the Guanzhong

Plain Urban Agglomeration. Endowed with the Qinling Ecological Barrier, profound historical and cultural heritage, and a vast rural hinterland, the area is rich in health and wellness resources such as medical care, ecology and hot springs, which complement the advantages of medical care, science and technology and capital in Xi'an's core urban area. Coupled with the strategic opportunities of the "Belt and Road Initiative" and the construction of a national central city, it boasts distinctive advantages for the development of health and wellness tourism.

However, the development of health and wellness tourism in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area is still restricted by the urban-rural dual structure. High-quality factors are concentrated in cities, while rural areas face problems such as insufficient facilities, talent shortage and short industrial chains. The unbalanced allocation of urban-rural resources and the poor flow of factors restrict the overall development level. To promote the high-quality development of health and wellness tourism, it is necessary to transcend the notion of "city-led" or "urban-rural separation", focus on the flow of urban-rural factors, functional coupling and benefit sharing, and realize spatial complementarity, business format integration and service coordination.

Based on this, this study starts from the perspective of urban-rural integration, to explore the practical dilemmas and development paths of health and wellness tourism in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area, providing practical references for building the Qinling Ecological Health and Wellness Tourism Belt and improving the industrial layout of health and wellness tourism, as well as references for similar regions to boost urban-rural integration through the health and wellness industry.

2. Analysis of Development Status

2.1 Industrial Development Foundation Conditions

2.1.1 Spatial and Resource Foundation Conditions

The Xi'an Metropolitan Area is an important part of the Guanzhong Plain Urban Agglomeration in the west and a key node in China's urbanization strategic pattern. With Xi'an as the core (including Xixian New Area), it radiates to 6 surrounding counties and cities such as Qindu in Xianyang, Yaozhou in Tongchuan, Linwei in Weinan and Yangling Demonstration Zone, covering a total area of about 20,600 square kilometers. Centered on a megacity, the metropolitan area coordinates spatial factors according to the one-hour commuting circle, promotes infrastructure connection and industrial coordination, breaks down administrative barriers to build a cooperation platform, facilitates the flow of capital, technology, talents and other resources, and is equipped with an ecological co-governance system such as the Qinling ecological collaborative management and control, striving to build a demonstration benchmark for high-quality development in the west.[1]

Relying on the dual foundation of "agglomeration of high-end urban factors + enrichment of characteristic rural resources", the health and wellness tourism in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area has formed core advantages of the aggregation of historical and cultural, natural ecological and rural resources. As an ancient capital of thirteen dynasties, Xi'an's main urban area has a profound traditional Chinese medicine culture and health preservation tradition, gathering 42% of the tertiary Grade A tertiary hospitals in the province. In 2024, the reception volume of health and wellness tourism relying on medical resources reached 1.86 million person-times, 35% of which came from surrounding counties and rural areas, initially building a radiation network of urban medical resources to meet rural health and wellness needs.[2] This resource advantage of "urban medical care + culture" forms a distinct complementarity with the characteristic resources of "ecology + pastoral scenery" in rural areas. As an ecological barrier, the northern foot of the Qinling Mountains has integrated ecological resources relying on Provincial Highway S107 and National Highway G108. In 2024, the annual reception volume of ecological health and wellness scenic spots reached 8.9 million person-times, with urban residents accounting for more than 75%; hot spring resources in places such as Tangyu in Lantian have formed an industrial cluster, with related operating revenue reaching 6.87 billion yuan in 2024, driving the development of supporting industries in 3 surrounding towns and absorbing 23,000 rural laborers; rural settlements on the Guanzhong Plain rely on pastoral landscapes and folk culture, with the reception volume of pastoral health and wellness exceeding 4.6 million person-times in 2024, becoming a core destination for short-distance health and wellness of urban residents, forming a complementary pattern with urban "medical care + culture" resources.[3]

2.1.2 Policy Opportunity Conditions

The superposition of multiple strategic policies at the national and local levels has injected strong impetus into urban-rural integrated development of health and wellness tourism in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area. The national "Healthy China" strategy,

urban-rural integration development policies and the development plan of the Guanzhong Plain Urban Agglomeration are promoted in coordination, driving the interconnection of regional infrastructure and the process of market integration. In the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Culture and Tourism of Shaanxi Province, the Shaanxi Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism clearly proposed to build 6 cultural tourism belts such as the Qinling Mountains and the Yellow River, among which the ecological health and wellness tourism belts on the northern foot of the Qinling Mountains and in the Jingwei River Basin are listed as key construction contents, providing clear planning guidance for urban-rural integrated health and wellness tourism.

In terms of the construction of regional coordination mechanisms, the Xi'an Metropolitan Area has broken down administrative barriers, built an industrial cooperation platform between the main urban area and surrounding counties and districts, and ensured the smooth flow of core health and wellness factors such as capital, technology and talents. The continuous improvement of transportation infrastructure provides hardware support for the flow of factors. The greenway network on the northern foot of the Qinling Mountains is constantly upgraded, the greenways along the Ring Road and the South Horizontal Line are connected, and new facilities such as bicycle lanes and footpaths are added, opening up the urban-rural health and wellness transportation network of "fast access and slow travel". By 2024, the Xi'an Metropolitan Area has 7 national 5A-level scenic spots and 6 national nighttime cultural and tourism consumption clusters, accounting for 50% and 54.5% of the province's total respectively. The balanced regional layout of public service facilities is continuously advanced, laying a solid foundation for the urban-rural coordinated development of health and wellness tourism. At the same time, integrated development models such as "health and wellness + traditional Chinese medicine" and "health and wellness + science and technology" are vigorously promoted. Relying on the hot spring, mountain, forest and grass resources on the northern foot of the Qinling Mountains, a hot spring health and wellness cluster and mountain sports bases are built, and a full-chain product supply system is constructed.

2.1.3 Consumer Market Conditions

The scale of health and wellness tourism in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area has been expanding continuously, becoming an important pillar of regional economic growth. In 2024, the region received 535 million tourist person-times and achieved a total tourism revenue of 521.872 billion yuan, accounting for 65.5% and 68.0% of the provincial total respectively. As a core growth pole of the tourism industry, health and wellness tourism contributed 28.6% to the total regional tourism revenue, with all sub-formats maintaining a steady growth trend. The core development data of major health and wellness tourism formats are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 Development Scale of Major Health and Wellness Tourism Formats in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area (2024)

Health and Wellness Format Type	Core Layout Area	Key Development Indicator	Specific Data	Data Source
Medical wellness	Main urban area of Xi'an, surrounding counties and districts	Annual reception volume	1.86 million person-times	Xi'an Municipal Health Commission, 2024
Medical wellness	Cooperation between Xi'an main urban area and counties	Number of rural expert on-site diagnosis sessions	126 sessions	Xi'an Municipal Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2024
Ecological wellness	Northern foot of the Qinling Mountains	Annual reception volume	8.9 million person-times	Shaanxi Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, 2025
Ecological wellness	Scenic spots at the northern foot of the Qinling Mountains	Proportion of urban tourists	75%	Shaanxi Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, 2025
Cultural wellness	Lintong, Qujiang New Area	Repurchase rate of Tang-style products	41%	Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, 2024

Health and Wellness Format Type	Core Layout Area	Key Development Indicator	Specific Data	Data Source
Cultural wellness	Urban-rural linkage zones	Number of "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Wellness" projects	32 projects	Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, 2024
Hot spring wellness	Lantian Tangyu, Lintong	Core area operating revenue	6.87 billion yuan	Lantian County Bureau of Culture and Tourism, 2024
Hot spring wellness	Lantian Tangyu Resort	Year-on-year growth rate of operating revenue	11.3%	Lantian County Bureau of Culture and Tourism, 2024
Pastoral wellness	Xianyang Liquan, Xi'an Chang'an District	Annual reception volume	4.6 million person-times	Xianyang Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, 2024
Pastoral wellness	Whole metropolitan area	Total number of rural health and wellness homestays	896 homestays	Shaanxi Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, 2025

2.2 Industrial Integration Effects

2.2.1 Urban-Rural Linkage of Health and Wellness Formats

The Xi'an Metropolitan Area has formed a product system covering five categories: medical health and wellness, ecological health and wellness, cultural health and wellness, hot spring health and wellness, and pastoral health and wellness, with all types of formats showing distinct urban-rural linkage characteristics. In the field of medical health and wellness, Grade A tertiary hospitals in the core urban area extend services to surrounding counties and districts through remote diagnosis and treatment, expert on-site consultations and other methods. Xi'an Municipal Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine has established a health and wellness cooperation mechanism with medical institutions in Zhouzhi, Lantian and other counties, carrying out 126 expert on-site consultation sessions in rural areas in 2024 and serving 48,000 rural residents. This model of "urban diagnosis and treatment + rural rehabilitation" realizes the optimal allocation of medical resources between urban and rural areas, echoing the concept of "gradient layout of health and wellness service network in metropolitan areas" proposed by scholars such as Li Chuangxin.[4] In the field of cultural health and wellness, Tang-style health and wellness products are built relying on carriers such as Huaqing Palace, with a repurchase rate of 41% in 2024. At the same time, "culture going to the countryside" activities are carried out, and 32 experience projects of "intangible cultural heritage + health and wellness" are developed. Chang'an District connects the resources of mountain valleys along the Qinling Mountains, launching four-season high-quality routes of "Tang poetry health and wellness + pastoral picking", connecting 24 picking points and 112 homestays, realizing the organic integration of urban cultural IP and rural experience scenarios. Hot spring and ecological health and wellness formats show the characteristics of "resource localization + urban-rural sharing". Huaqing Pool Hot Spring Resort in Lintong cooperates with surrounding villages to develop a "hot spring homestay cluster", driving 5 administrative villages to develop 138 homestays with an average annual household income increase of 126,000 yuan. In the field of pastoral health and wellness, the innovative model of "government + enterprise + collective + farmer" is adopted to cultivate high-quality homestay clusters in areas such as Wutai in Chang'an and Yanxia in Liquan of Xianyang. By the end of 2024, the total number of rural health and wellness homestays in the metropolitan area reached 896, including 46 four-star and above homestays, forming a large-scale reception capacity. This practice of business format innovation confirms the viewpoint proposed by scholars such as Wang Yanping that "the rural health and wellness industry needs to realize value enhancement relying on the two-way flow of urban-rural factors".[5]

2.2.2 Construction of Characteristic Spatial Pattern

Under the guidance of integrated urban-rural development, the health and wellness tourism in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area has formed a hierarchical spatial development pattern. "A core leading" means taking Xi'an's main urban area (including Xixian New Area) as the core health and wellness hub, gathering the highest-quality high-end factors such as medical care,

capital and talents in the region, and undertaking core functions such as the research and development of health and wellness products, the supply of high-end services, and the distribution of market tourists. In 2024, the health and wellness tourists sent from the core to surrounding rural areas accounted for 68% of the total rural health and wellness reception volume, showing a significant core radiation effect. This spatial layout characteristic is highly consistent with the "core-periphery spatial structure theory of health and wellness tourism in metropolitan areas" proposed by scholars such as Zhang Hui.[6]

"Multiple poles supporting" means that surrounding counties and districts form distinctive health and wellness growth poles: Lantian County builds Tangyu Hot Spring Health and Wellness Resort; Chang'an District develops rural homestays and ecological health and wellness; Liquan in Xianyang builds a farming experience base; Lintong District integrates cultural and hot spring resources to build a cultural health and wellness cluster. These growth poles complement and share resources with the core urban area in terms of functions, effectively undertaking the overflow of health and wellness demand from the core urban area.

"Corridors connecting" means relying on transportation and ecological corridors such as the tourism scenic road on the northern foot of the Qinling Mountains and the Shaanxi section of the Yellow River Coastal Highway to connect urban, scenic and rural resources, equipped with facilities such as stations, realizing the urban-rural continuity of health and wellness landscapes and functions. After the opening of Metro Lines 6 and 9, the commuting time from the main urban area to growth poles such as Lintong and Chang'an has been shortened to less than 30 minutes, greatly promoting the rapid flow of urban-rural health and wellness factors.

2.2.3 Practical Practice of Factor Flow and Project Landing

The two-way flow of capital, talents and technology has injected vitality into health and wellness tourism, and a number of integrated projects have been landed and achieved results. Two-way capital flow: In 2024, the urban capital invested in the rural health and wellness industry in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area reached 4.86 billion yuan, focusing on homestay construction, facility upgrading and product research and development. Areas such as Baolong Village in Chang'an District and Tangyu Town in Lantian have attracted 3.2 billion yuan of social capital through the model of "enterprise investment + collective shareholding + farmer participation", developing 16 rural health and wellness projects. In the same year, rural health and wellness brands such as Yuanjia Village in Liquan of Xianyang achieved sales of 980 million yuan; 35% of the provincial special fund for the development of the health and wellness industry was used to support the construction of rural health and wellness facilities, with a total investment of 620 million yuan in 2024 for the construction of public facilities such as health and wellness stations. Talent and technology sinking: Tertiary class A hospitals in Xi'an have established technical cooperation relations with 23 county-level health and wellness institutions, and cumulatively trained 12,000 rural health and wellness practitioners in 2024. This technology sinking model has effectively improved the professional level of rural health and wellness services, echoing the concept of "coordinated development of urban-rural health and wellness technology" proposed by Wang Yanping and other scholars. In 2024, 8,600 local talents such as rural homestay housekeepers and health and wellness service personnel were trained, 35% of whom obtained local employment. At the same time, the trend of urban professional talents flowing to rural areas is obvious. In 2024, more than 1,200 professional talents participated in the construction of rural health and wellness projects, driving the professional development of the rural health and wellness industry. Landing of integrated projects: The leisure belt of the Bahe River Ecological Slow City in Lantian received 1.28 million tourists in 2024, with urban residents accounting for 72%; the homestay cluster in Baolong Village of Chang'an District achieved an annual operating income of 18.6 million yuan, driving a per capita income increase of 32,000 yuan for villagers; the pastoral complex of Yuanjia Village in Liquan of Xianyang received 1.35 million tourists annually, realizing urban-rural benefit sharing.

3. Existing Problems

3.1 Insufficient Overall Management and Control and Industrial Integration

3.1.1 Lack of Overall Planning

By 2026, Xi'an has not yet formulated a unified special plan for health and wellness tourism. Among the existing relevant documents, the Layout Plan for Elderly Care Service Facilities in Xi'an (2018-2030) clearly proposes to develop the health

and wellness industry relying on medical, cultural and ecological resources, but focuses on elderly care facilities rather than tourism integration; the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Culture and Tourism of Xi'an proposes to build an ecological leisure belt along the Ring Road and a hot spring health and wellness agglomeration area, yet health and wellness is only a sub-direction under the cultural and tourism sector. At the district and county levels, there are scattered plans (such as the Development Plan for Leisure and Health Wellness Homestays in Chang'an District), but they act on their own without municipal-level overall planning and linkage mechanisms. Resources such as those along the Qinling Mountains and the hot spring belt have not formed differentiated division of labor and linkage; the barriers to interdepartmental cooperation are obvious, the policy connection between culture and tourism, civil affairs, health, medical insurance and other departments is not smooth, and the progress of cross-regional medical insurance settlement and the formulation of health and wellness service standards is slow.

3.1.2 Superficial Industrial Integration

Most industrial integration stays at the superficial combination of "scenic spot + elderly care apartment" and "hot spring + accommodation", failing to truly deeply integrate medical rehabilitation, health management, cultural experience and ecological health preservation; products lack cultural core and fail to effectively create characteristic IP by combining Xi'an's historical culture, Silk Road culture and Qinling ecological culture. This is also a common problem existing in China's health and wellness tourism at present: many rural health and wellness tourism destinations copy the successful models of other health and wellness tourism when developing health and wellness products, lacking the idea of adapting to local conditions and highlighting rural characteristics. Most health and wellness tourism products focus on sightseeing and recreational sports, lacking creative projects that highlight the connotation of rural culture. For example, many villages rush to build hot spring health and wellness and forest health and wellness projects, but insufficiently develop local characteristic resources such as farming culture and folk customs. The characteristic elements of rural areas such as unique pastoral scenery, farming experience and folk customs are not fully reflected in health and wellness tourism products.[7]

3.2 Shortcomings in Product Supply and Quality

3.2.1 Severe Homogeneity

Projects such as forest health and wellness, hot spring health and wellness, and residential elderly care have similar models, mostly focusing on sightseeing, accommodation and basic health preservation, lacking personalized, customized and experiential products; although some villages are rich in resource types, their product forms are relatively single. For example, some villages focus on ecological sightseeing, with a single type of health and wellness tourism products and a lack of highly participatory and experiential health and wellness projects, making it difficult to meet the diversified and personalized health and wellness needs of the elderly group. The health and wellness tourism products are uninteresting, lack innovation and distinct characteristics, fail to highlight the unique rural charm, making it difficult to form a competitive advantage and also not conducive to the sustainable development of health and wellness tourism. For instance, most health and wellness bases along the Qinling Mountains only offer "forest trails + farm food + homestays", without professional services such as forest therapy and natural therapy.

3.2.2 Imperfect Age-Friendly Facilities and Emergency Measures

Some projects lack medical qualifications and professional teams, and health and wellness services remain at the level of "concept hype"; age-friendly transformation is mostly superficial, failing to cover the whole scenario such as barrier-free transportation, emergency call and intelligent health monitoring; supporting facilities such as elderly meals and cultural entertainment are insufficient. Health and wellness bases generally lack professional medical rescue personnel, emergency response plans and safety risk prompts, and the medical rescue response is slow in mountainous and remote areas, posing potential safety hazards.

3.3 Lagging Infrastructure and Shortage of Professional Talents

3.3.1 Lagging Infrastructure

Some health and wellness projects are located in suburban or rural areas with poor traffic accessibility, insufficient public transportation and shortage of parking facilities; the coverage of water, electricity, communication and network is unstable,

making it difficult to meet the needs of intelligent health and wellness; the coverage rate of barrier-free facilities is low. Taking Baoji City as an example, field surveys show that the facilities of some scenic spots in Baoji City are outdated, some equipment, graphics and signs are damaged or out of service, and the tourist rest facilities are seriously aging. At the same time, the supporting facilities around health and wellness tourism projects are incomplete, with few accommodations, shops and restaurants, leaving tourists with few choices. In addition, the development level of cultural industries related to health and wellness tourism is low, resulting in short tourist stay time and low consumption.[8]

3.3.2 Shortage of Compound Talents

There is a shortage of forest therapists, health and wellness specialists, elderly caregivers, emergency medical technicians and other professionals; universities have not set up relevant majors, and the vocational training system is imperfect. There is a shortage of management and service talents for health and wellness tourism, and professionals such as silver-haired housekeepers and project operation managers who understand health and wellness operation, elderly psychology, emergency response and cultural experience design are scarce; the existing service personnel are mostly traditional tourism or elderly care practitioners, lacking cross-field professional capabilities.

3.4 Single Investment and Financing Channels and Insufficient Capital Investment

Health and wellness tourism projects require large upfront investment and have a long payback period, resulting in low willingness of social capital to invest, and most projects rely on government finance and state-owned enterprise investment; inclusive health and wellness projects have limited profit space, making it difficult to attract market-oriented capital. The financial funds of local governments are mainly invested in public supporting facilities such as transportation, water and electricity, and health and wellness base infrastructure in health and wellness tourism destinations, and very few are directly invested in project operation and business format innovation; in addition, financial funds are restricted by local economic strength and the amount of special budget for cultural, tourism and health and wellness. In the central and western regions with rich health and wellness resources but weak economies, the financial support capacity is particularly insufficient, making it difficult to form a sustained capital supply.

4. Development Countermeasures and Suggestions

4.1 Improve the Overall Planning System and Deepen Cross-Border Industrial Integration

4.1.1 Build an Overall Planning System

Formulate the Special Plan for the Development of Xi'an Health and Wellness Tourism Industry (2026-2030), clarify the differentiated positioning of the areas along the Qinling Mountains, the hot spring belt and the historical and cultural areas: the Qinling Mountains focus on "forest therapy + ecological residence", the hot spring belt focuses on "rehabilitation conditioning + hot spring health preservation", and the urban area links "historical culture + health management", establish an inter-district and inter-county project linkage mechanism to avoid homogeneous competition. At the same time, set up an inter-departmental coordination group led by the municipal government, consisting of culture and tourism, civil affairs, health, medical insurance, natural resources and other departments, break down the policy connection barriers, and complete key matters such as the pilot of cross-regional medical insurance settlement and the formulation of health and wellness service standards.

4.1.2 Deepen Cross-Border Industrial Integration

Promote the deep integration of "health and wellness + medical care + culture + ecology", and focus on building three types of integrated products: first, "historical and cultural health and wellness", combining cultural IP such as the ancient city wall and the Big Wild Goose Pagoda with traditional Chinese medicine physiotherapy and meditation to develop the "Silk Road Health and Wellness Research Tour"; second, "medical rehabilitation residence", linking Grade A tertiary hospitals to set up health and wellness branch hospitals, providing professional services such as chronic disease management and post-operative rehabilitation, and realizing the integration of "treatment - rehabilitation - residence"; third, "in-depth ecological health preservation", exploring the traditional Chinese medicine resources of the Qinling Mountains, developing characteristic projects such as forest bathing, herbal physiotherapy and natural therapy, and getting rid of the superficial model of "sightseeing + accommodation".

4.2 Develop Characteristic Products and Improve Service Level

4.2.1 Break the Dilemma of Product Homogeneity

Establish an innovation database for Xi'an health and wellness tourism products, requiring the differentiation rate of district and county projects to be no less than 70%: the areas along the Qinling Mountains focus on developing ecological products such as forest therapy and traditional Chinese medicine health preservation; the hot spring belt focuses on characteristic projects such as hot spring rehabilitation and mineral physiotherapy; the urban area focuses on experiential products such as cultural health and wellness and urban slow life. Encourage enterprises to introduce cutting-edge technologies to develop intelligent health and wellness projects such as VR meditation, intelligent health monitoring and AI physiotherapy schemes, enhancing the technological sense and uniqueness of products. Hold product innovation competitions regularly and provide policy support and publicity promotion for high-quality projects. For example, based on the advantages of cultural and tourism resources and the traditional Chinese medicine industry, Tongchuan City has built four major bases such as Yaowang Mountain Traditional Chinese Medicine Health and Wellness and Zhaojin Sports Health and Wellness, and also launched a characteristic catering system and a series of health and wellness products.

4.2.2 Improve the Professional Level of Services

Formulate the Xi'an Health and Wellness Tourism Service Quality Standard, clarifying the hard requirements for medical qualifications, service processes and facility configuration: all health and wellness bases must be equipped with certified medical and nursing staff and establish a 24-hour health emergency response mechanism; compulsorily promote age-friendly transformation, covering the whole scenario such as barrier-free passages, emergency call systems, intelligent monitoring equipment and anti-slip floors; improve supporting services, requiring health and wellness institutions to provide diversified contents such as customized nutritious meals, cultural courses and interest activities, and put an end to "concept hype". Health and wellness bases in mountainous and remote areas sign emergency rescue agreements with nearby hospitals, establish a 30-minute rapid response mechanism, and equip with rescue vehicles and professional equipment.

Strengthen high-end service experience. In terms of services, provide private health guidance for high-end customers, as well as post-travel health tracking services. Allocate exclusive health consultants to provide full accompaniment from pre-travel health assessment and itinerary planning to in-travel services. In terms of accommodation, build luxury health and wellness villas and suites equipped with high-end smart home facilities to boost the high-quality development of tourism.[9]

4.3 Improve Infrastructure and Reserve Professional Talents

4.3.1 Improve Infrastructure Supporting

Implement the infrastructure upgrading project for health and wellness tourism: in terms of transportation, open special bus lines and tourist coaches from the urban area to major health and wellness bases, optimize the traffic conditions of rural highways, and add parking lots and charging piles; in terms of supporting facilities, ensure full coverage of water, electricity, communication and network, promote the construction of 5G smart health and wellness, and realize real-time sharing of health data and remote medical consultation; in terms of barrier-free facilities, require all health and wellness scenic spots, hotels and public areas to meet the standards in an all-round way, and equip with convenient equipment such as wheelchairs and walkers to improve travel convenience.

4.3.2 Build a Talent Training and Introduction System

Train professional talents through school-enterprise cooperation: support local universities in Xi'an to set up relevant majors such as health and wellness tourism, health management and elderly care, build practical training bases with health and wellness enterprises, and deliver compound talents on a directional basis; establish a vocational training and certification mechanism, carry out skill training such as traditional Chinese medicine physiotherapy, elderly psychology and emergency response for existing practitioners, and issue employment certificates after passing the assessment; introduce talent introduction policies, recruit senior health and wellness operation managers, professional medical personnel, silver-haired housekeepers and other high-end talents from all over the country, and provide preferential treatments such as housing subsidies and salary support.

4.4 Broaden Investment and Financing Channels

Establish a diversified investment and financing mechanism: the government sets up a special development fund for the health and wellness tourism industry, focusing on supporting inclusive projects and innovative enterprises; introduce policies such as tax incentives, land transfer reductions and exemptions, and financing interest subsidies to attract social capital and private enterprises to participate in the construction of health and wellness projects; encourage financial institutions to develop exclusive credit products and provide medium and long-term low-interest loans for health and wellness enterprises; explore the "PPP model" and "crowdfunding model" to revitalize stock assets and alleviate the capital pressure of enterprises. Provide operating subsidies for inclusive health and wellness projects to ensure their sustainable development. In general, it is necessary to increase policy support, relax the access threshold for health and wellness tourism projects in accordance with national relevant regulations, and attract private capital to enter the field of health and wellness tourism.[10]

5. Conclusion

Based on the background of urban-rural integration, this study takes the Xi'an Metropolitan Area as a sample, combs through the development foundation, integration effects and practical dilemmas of health and wellness tourism, and explores the path of high-quality industrial development, forming the following core conclusions.

Relying on the dual endowments of "agglomeration of high-end urban factors + enrichment of characteristic rural resources" and coupled with the support of national and local policies, the Xi'an Metropolitan Area has built an industrial system for the coordinated development of diverse health and wellness business formats, forming a spatial pattern of "a core leading, multiple poles supporting, and corridors connecting". The two-way flow of urban-rural factors in the region has achieved initial results, urban capital and talents continue to sink to rural areas, the value of rural ecological and cultural resources is accelerating to manifest, and health and wellness tourism has become an important link to promote urban-rural integration and rural revitalization.

At the same time, the development of health and wellness tourism in this region is still restricted by multiple factors. The top-level design lacks a unified special plan, and the decentralized operation of districts and counties and inter-departmental policy barriers lead to the unbalanced allocation of resources; the product homogeneity is prominent, most of which are superficial combinations of "health and wellness + sightseeing", with insufficient cultural core and professional services, and imperfect age-friendly transformation and emergency systems; the rural infrastructure is lagging, the shortage of compound talents and the singleness of investment and financing channels make it difficult to match the needs of high-quality development. The core crux lies in the poor flow of factors and insufficient functional coupling under the urban-rural dual structure.

The key to solving the dilemma lies in deepening the practice of urban-rural integration, promoting the differentiated layout of resources by building a municipal-level overall planning and inter-departmental coordination mechanism; deepening the cross-border integration of "health and wellness + medical care + culture + ecology" to build a characteristic product system; improving rural infrastructure and building a diversified talent training mechanism; broadening investment and financing channels to stimulate the vitality of social capital, thus forming a new industrial development pattern led by the government and dominated by the market. The practice of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area can provide replicable reference experience for similar domestic metropolitan areas.

Funding

2025 College Students' Innovation Training Program of Xi'an Polytechnic University - "Research on the Dynamic Mechanism and Path of Health and Wellness Tourism Boosting Urban-Rural Integration in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area under the Background of Digital Inclusive Finance" (Project No.: S202510709134)

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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