

How to Overcome Language Barrier for Medical Treatment in Shanghai

In December 1998, Shanghai adopted the policy of “Native Treatment” and cancelled the discriminative charge for foreign patients. By June 2004, there had been 25 international hospitals in Shanghai and 86 foreign doctors with medical license to provide special medical treatment as well as comprehensive medical treatment to meet the basic need for medical treatment of resident expats and foreign travelers in Shanghai. Foreign patients may choose the normal medical treatment or special medical treatment with higher price.

Although the implementation of the policy of “Native Treatment” has improved the environment of medical treatment for expats in Shanghai, many foreign patients complain that they cannot enjoy humanized service with sound quality in most of the hospitals in Shanghai. Because the oral English of the doctors as well as nurses needs improving, there is still language barrier in the communication between expats and medical staff. Sometimes the foreign patients have to rush from one department to another without knowing what is the next procedure. Therefore, most of the expats are forced to choose the expensive private clinics run by those doctors come back from overseas.

How do expats overcome language barrier and enjoy better medical service in Shanghai?

Choice No.1: Go to those hospitals with international medical treatment department. Most of the Class 3 Level First hospitals in Shanghai have international medical treatment department to meet the need of expats. The medical staff of those hospitals may be capable of communicating with patients in English. Some of them even cooperate with big oversea insurance companies to provide medical treatment for expats who has bought medical insurance abroad,

Choice No.2: Go to hospital with the company of a Chinese friend as long as he or she can speak your language. With the company of a Chinese friend, you can handle all the communication problems as well as enjoy the comfort and encouragement from him or her.

Choice No.3: Hire a professional personal assistant for medical treatment. Personal assistants providing medical treatment companion service know the professional terms about disease, medicine and medical treatment, thus can promote the communication in the process and enhance the quality of the medical service.

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