

Increase The Same In The Suburbs, Say Docs

Expensive realty curbs city's healthcare growth

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Mumbai: If the healthcare sector is shining in Mumbai, can other cities be far behind? Some analysts, in fact, point out that Delhi's healthcare pie is growing faster than Mumbai's. Bangalore too has grown rapidly in recent years, they add.

Consider Delhi and Bangalore, which have sprawling campuses in Dr Naresh Trehan's Medanta Health City and Dr Devi Shetty's Narayanan Hrudalaya, respectively. Space-wise, Mumbai doesn't have a healthcare campus that can compare to these institutions.

Hospital administrators blame the city's expensive real estate for the inability to grow. Hinduja Hospital's CEO Pramod Lele says, "Mumbai has seen entry of many private healthcare providers, but the infrastructure has remained skewed, being poorer in suburban and extended Mumbai." Niket Vijay Mehta, one of permanent trustees of the 300-bed Lilavati Hospital, Bandra, says that structural constraints and lack of space have prevented his hospital from increasing the number of beds. "Without availability of space, increasing the number of beds is not a good idea as it could impact pa-

PATIENT SPACE

City	Hospital beds	Beds per 1,000 people
Kolkata	26,000	5.79
Hyd	16,000	3.9
B'lore	34,000	3.5
Chennai	15,000	3.2
Mumbai	38,000	2.9
Delhi	40,000	2.39

Source: Hinduja Hospital CEO Pramod Lele



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It is difficult for new entrants to come into south Mumbai, due to high real-estate costs, says Lele. The Fortis group of hospitals' regional director Varun Khanana says, "Mumbai is no longer the leader in healthcare in India." He blames this on the relatively small-

er presence of corporate hospitals here. "Corporate houses have funding and can afford newer technology and thereby attract talent. But land prices in Mumbai make it extremely difficult for new groups to come here," he says. He pegs Mumbai's super-specialty care segment at roughly Rs 3,200 crore. "Delhi stands at Rs 4,000 crore," he adds.

However, Dr Vivek Desai of Hosmac, a healthcare consultancy firm, feels that Mumbai is still the leader. If there is rapid growth of hospitals in other cities such as Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kolkata, he says it is because these cities had a poor bed-to-people ratio earlier. "The growth in south Mumbai occurred decades back. Other cities are just catching up and hence look like more dynamic markets at the moment," he added.