

Docs seek more PG seats to meet dearth of specialists

healthcare
PART-1

HT Correspondent
● letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Donning their signature white coats and stethoscopes, doctors thronged Bangalore's Cubbon Road on Monday as part of the "Save the Doctor" campaign, which is lobbying for equalisation of under-graduate (UG) and post graduate (PG) seats in medical colleges.

Apart from highlighting the issue of the shortage of specialist doctors, the campaign will also ask for mandatory rural posting be included in internship and post-graduate training.

"Sending doctors to villages to run primary health centres is a waste of talent. There are 30,000 Ayush trained in alternative medicine who can undergo a six-month bridge course to prescribe basic allopathic medicines," said Dr Devi Shetty, former governing body member, Medical Council of India (MCI) and founder of Bangalore's Narayana Hrudalayaya.

There is an acute shortage of doctors in India, especially in villages. India has 0.9 beds for 1,000 people, which is below the global average of 2.9 beds.

To meet the shortage, the MCI had recently increased the number of UG seats to 45,600, which are likely to reach 50,000. There are 12,000 PG seats, for which 1.1 lakh doctors vie for each year. In

WHY INDIA NEEDS MORE

As many as 56,000 women, one every 8 minutes, die in a childbirth-related complication every year. If they had been referred to a specialist, 70% of these complications could have been prevented or treated



TOP 10 CAUSES OF DEATH

IN US

- 1 Heart disease
- 2 Cancer
- 3 Chronic lower respiratory diseases
- 4 Stroke
- 5 Accidents
- 6 Alzheimer's disease
- 7 Diabetes
- 8 Influenza and pneumonia
- 9 Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis
- 10 Suicide

IN INDIA

- 1 Heart disease
- 2 Diarrhoeal diseases
- 3 Chronic lower respiratory diseases
- 4 Stroke
- 5 Influenza and pneumonia
- 6 Tuberculosis
- 7 Low birth weight
- 8 Suicide
- 9 Liver disease
- 10 Road accidents

comparison, a developed country such as the US has 19,000 UG seats and 32,000 PG seats.

The less number of seats coupled with mandatory rural posting is stretching medical education for up to 13 years for some doctors. In the last PG entrance exam under the National Eligibility Entrance Test, over 1.1 lakh doctors took the exam to claim one of the 12,000 seats.

"If things continue to remain the way they are and senior specialist doctors/surgeons continue to retire, there will be dearth of

specialist doctors and surgeons in India," said a senior resident at New Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

"IMA supports rural posting but making it compulsory is not feasible because there is no structured posting in rural areas. Every PG student must do six months of rural posting as part of a course, or internship" Dr Narendra Saini, secretary general, IMA.

TOMORROW

Dr Devi Shetty on the way ahead