



“Addressing Medical Lab Malpractices in Delhi”

Collective inputs from over 25,000 Delhi Citizens in circle

“Citizen Oriented Healthcare in Delhi”

(Current state, Issues, Root Causes and Proposed Solutions)

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Medical Lab Malpractices in Delhi

Executive Summary

The cancer of corruption eating into India's medical sector is no secret. Reports of patients being prescribed unnecessary tests by unscrupulous doctors in league with labs abound. Alongside there are frequent reports of needless procedures — from caesarean births to the insertion of stents into healthy hearts and replacement of workable knees — thrust upon patients by doctors keen to make a killing off someone's unease.

The 25,000 strong "Citizen Oriented Healthcare In Delhi" online community has come together to collectively identify the key issues, root causes and solutions for addressing the medical labs malpractices in Delhi and the community expects that the Government will work towards implementing the identified solutions.

Issues Identified:

1. Labs increase charges very often
2. Government labs don't have the latest equipment
3. They take too much time to deliver the reports
4. Many times mistakes are found in the reports
5. Labs pay hefty commission to doctors for referring them
6. Some tests in packages are not even done and a face reading is generated
7. Some labs are run like luxury hotels and charge exorbitantly
8. Some labs charge more than the Government prescribed rates for specific tests
9. In many labs tests are done by technicians and only Doctors sign the papers

Root Causes Identified:

1. Lack of a Government regulation on pricing of the tests
2. There are no quality parameters set for the labs to adhere to
3. There is a nexus between doctors and the labs
4. Lack of a law to prevent the doctors from getting a cut back from the labs
5. Labs try to fool the people by claiming to do many tests in a small price and customers fall for it
6. Most of the labs are run as a business for pure profit
7. Some labs take advantage of the patient by charging them exorbitantly
8. Many labs try to make extra money by doing ultrasound for sex determination

9. A lenient approach is taken by the doctor's lobby against malpractices done by labs
10. We do not have enough centres to increase our skill development in field of pathology and radiology
11. Lack of initiative from the Government to convert their labs into modern ones
12. Lack of a Government agency to rate these labs

Solutions Identified:

1. A Government agency should be constituted to keep a check on the private medical labs and diagnostic centres
2. This agency should also be given the task of rating these labs on a set parameter
3. Citizens should be able to rate such labs on LocalCircles or Dept of Health website
4. Government labs should be upgraded and brought up to the standards of private labs
5. The Government. and NGO's should collaborate to open community diagnostic centres
6. Reports should be generated within 24 hours of doing the test and should be available online
7. It must be made illegal for the doctors to accept money from the labs for referrals
8. Mistakes in the reports should be severely penalised
9. If a lab is found indulging in 'sink tests' it should be tried for cancellation of license
10. Labs should not be allowed to charge more than the prescribed Government rate
11. Cost and standard can be put on Department of Health website
12. Labs found indulging in sex determination should be criminally prosecuted
13. Concession should be provided to senior citizens

Medical Labs Malpractices in Delhi – A few citizen posts and comments:

1. Creation of a Government agency to regulate these will most likely not solve the problem and may end up breeding corruption. Instead Government can lay down parameters for these labs and independent agencies (similar to audit firms) should audit the labs on these parameters, and their reports should be made public (put up on appropriate websites). The Government regulator may however be empowered to initiate action based on these reports. The same data can also be used to rate & rank these labs and top few should be honoured – **R Tayal**
2. This really a grey area where Private doctors, Nursing Homes and Hospitals making huge money in white and black both. Patients and relatives are helpless to control

such practice of recommendation of Doctors for costly Test as it is not possible to know whether it is actually required or not, as most the cases, doctor blackmails patients and relatives. In many cases, it is found that particulars test prescribed by Doctor was avoidable. I have many proofs. I do not have solution but I am sure, above ten points, even applied, will not be able to address this issue.

Another area of malpractice I want to highlight, cased covered under Medical Insurance. Most hospitals charges double the rate if patient is under cashless Medical insurance. If you can pay cash from your pocket your expenses will be half. Hospitals manipulates in medicines, number of Doctor visits, avoidable Pathological Tests. Most surprisingly, insurance companies, even having expert in their team, release payments to them against all such bills – **Sunil Chatterjee**

3. By creating a Govt. Agency, the things will improve is doubtful, because the credibility of Government agencies is very low. In fact it should be an NGO consisting of highly credible people paid by Govt. to conduct frequent trials in presence of media – **Ram Upadhyay**
4. There is no doubt whatsoever that Doctors/Hospitals/Nursing Homes exploit hapless patients left right and centre. And what is worse that it's getting worse every time we consult them. Even old and familiar Doctors who have been better earlier, and are still good as doctors are turning exponentially greedier and greedier. I think there is not only unholy nexus among doctors, pathologists/labs, and chemists, there is also unholy competition among them as to who can milk the helpless patients more – **Amarnath Chatterjee**
5. Prescribing costly tests not relevant to symptoms and/or disease of patients should be liability on doctors to recover double the cost of test by govt. agencies – **Umesh Kumar**
6. I agree that some regulation should be there on fee structure and lab tests etc. but it all depends on the doctor's skill and experience. Now days even a TV mechanic will charge more than 200-300 for a visit. Why the doctors should be paid so low after so much of hard work and time.
Government should improve the public hospitals and increase their no so that more people can be benefitted. But our Governments are only promoting the private sector – **Rita Gupta**
7. In many labs tests are done by technicians and only Doctors sign the papers. This should be prevented at all costs by making surprised checks – **Ram Upadhyay**
8. Government appointed medical regulators and health ministry officials of centre and state should do these jobs on their own initiative. When so much of secretaries and undersecretaries and also medical regulators are drawing their salaries for this purpose we cannot look at the ministers only for everything – **Padmanabhan SK**