

Mail Today

Take that Obama! Foreigners hail Indian healthcare

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US PRESIDENT Barack Obama's recent statement juxtaposing "high quality" healthcare services in the US with "cheap healthcare" in countries such as India needs to be examined in the light of a recent survey which claims that international patients coming to India are quite satisfied with the services being provided in the hospitals.

The survey, carried out by scientists from Maulana Azad Medical College and National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, assesses responses of international patients on a range of parameters such as services provided by doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff including quality of rooms and food provided

By **Savita Verma** in New Delhi

in the hospitals.

The survey evaluates the responses using a five-point rating scale where a higher rating signifies better quality of services being offered.

"Patients did not have any problem with the expertise of doctors. Except for food quality and taste all other services were graded excellent and very good," Dr Jugal Kishore from the department of community medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College, said.

The paper has been published in the *International Medical Travel Journal*.

The sample group chosen for the survey, which was carried out in six hospitals in Delhi, consisted of 44 international patients aged between 18 and 80.

Of the 44 patients, 17 were from the SAARC countries, 12 from the African nations, five from the US and Canada, two from the Gulf countries and the remaining from countries such as Iraq, Dubai, Russia, and Myanmar.

The patients were admitted for problems related to gastroenterology, urology, cardiology, orthopaedics, gynaecology, haematology, nephrology, general surgery and ophthalmology.

The hospitals that were part of the survey included Escorts, Max, Gangaram,

Apollo, Fortis and Pushpawati Singhanian.

The patients rated consultants high in terms of treatment satisfaction and behaviour while they were rated excellent for their communication skills and visiting regularity.

Waiting time for consultation on an average was found to be 10 minutes but in few cases the patients had to wait for more than 12 hours. This was largely because of the unavailability of the consulting physician on the particular day.

"The waiting time before availing consultation with the doctor was less compare with the waiting time in Europe and America where it was two months and six weeks respectively," the paper said.