

The Week

India's Best Hospital

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SANJAY AHLAWAT

Dr Naresh Trehan, chairman of Medanta, with a robotic surgical system

44 COVER STORY
INDIA'S BEST HOSPITALS

This is the age of niche clinics. They are springing up by the dozen, offering treatment options for particular medical problems. From 'quit tobacco' clinics, to backache, knee, headache and lifestyle management centres, they are taking medi-

cal care a notch higher. They also offer comprehensive scientific data to the medical fraternity

Plus
Exclusive THE WEEK-HANSA Research Survey identifies India's best hospitals across cities and specialisations

- ◆ Neurology: Experts try to unravel the mysteries of the brain
- ◆ Imaging technology: Latest developments in imaging
- ◆ Cardiology: Prevention is the key word
- ◆ Infertility: Assisted Reproductive Techniques bring hope to older couples
- ◆ Diabetes: Surgery, new hormones and new-age insulin
- ◆ Gene analysis: Analysing genomes to prescribe drugs

COVER STORY

Special treatment

Niche clinics catch on as patients benefit from the collective wisdom of experts guiding **personalised care**

By Jisha Krishnan

Doctors are men who prescribe medicines of which they know little, to cure diseases of which they know less, in human beings of whom they know nothing.

Voltaire

The French philosopher probably had a good reason for holding the white-coat professionals in such poor esteem. If he were alive today though, a visit to one of the speciality clinics at the neighbourhood hospital would have forced him to do a rethink.

A speciality clinic, as the name suggests, has a distinguishing trait: it is special. There is no mistaking it for a regular outpatient department. The team of doctors, nurses and para-medical staff here is on a dedicated mission: to win the battle against a particular medical problem.

No problem is too small or com-

May their future bloom:

Dr Mohit Bhatt (third from right) with Dr Annu Aggarwal (extreme right) and patients at the Wilson Disease Clinic at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital



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THE WEEK/HANSA Research survey

BEST multi-speciality HOSPITALS in India

1 All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi (1)



Last year's rank in brackets

GRAPHICS: N.V. JOSE

HOW WE DID IT

THE WEEK/HANSA Research survey on top 10 multi-speciality hospitals across 10 cities—Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Coimbatore and Kochi—was conducted among 200 general physicians and 320 specialists. The 10 specialisations—cardiology, neurology, paediatrics, oncology, diabetology, ophthalmology, infertility, gastroenterology, orthopaedics and nephrology—were identified based on the perceived demand for various specialised treatments and medical tourism opportunities. GPs and specialists—49 cardiologists, 34 ophthalmologists, 53 paediatricians, 48 orthopaedists, 21 oncologists, 23 gastroenterologists, 20 nephrologists, 22 neurologists, 27 diabetologists and 23 infertility specialists—evaluated the hospitals on the basis of six parameters. Each parameter had a weightage score: competency of doctors (0.3), infrastructure and facilities (0.15), innovation in treatment (0.1), availability of multiple specialisations (0.1), patient care (0.2) and hospital environment (0.15).

The best among multi-speciality hospitals were first shortlisted by GPs and specialists based on these parameters. The score, which determines the hospital's rank, is a composite of the percentage of doctors ranking the hospital among the top five and the points derived from their rating of that hospital based on these parameters. The top hospitals for the specialisations have been ranked on the basis of the scores given by specialists only, based on a weighted mean rank given to the hospital by specialists in the respective streams.

The hospitals for handling epidemics were ranked based again on the score, which is the percentage of GPs and specialists in a city who ranked the hospital among the top three in epidemic preparedness in that city.

The survey also spoke to the health care consumers—1,195 patients—across the 10 cities. The patients were asked to evaluate hospitals on these parameters: ease of admission, the hospital's willingness to talk to them about costs, quality of treatment, competence of doctors, promptness in providing care, staff behaviour, the environment, cleanliness, availability of services, facilities for patients when they need to wait, food, labs and medicines, adequate guidance through signboards, and the billing procedure.

The following pages do not have the list of hospitals based on the views of the patients. Please see www.the-week.com for the complete survey, including the patients' rankings.

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Apollo Hospitals, Chennai (3)

3



Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh (4)

4



Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore (5)

5



Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Delhi (6)

6



Bombay Hospital and Medical Research Centre, Mumbai

7



Sri Ramachandra Medical College & Research Institute, Chennai

8



Lilavati Hospital & Research Centre, Mumbai (8)

9



Manipal Hospital, Bangalore

10



Breach Candy Hospital, Mumbai



JANAK BHAT

Sweet relief: Amin Lakha (right) with Dr K. Ravishankar at the Headache Clinic at Jaslok Hospital

plex. It could be the sensitive diabetic foot, baffling listlessness, incurable headache, aggravating allergy, chronic sleep deficiency, near-fatal arrhythmia or just about anything.

The intimate doctor-patient relationship you witness at a speciality clinic is rare. Patients are at liberty to call up the doc at 2 a.m. to discuss a problem or share a development; the doctor feels free to pick up the phone every once in a while to ensure the

patient is on the right track.

As Sandeep Singh, 35, who visited Max Healthcare's Quit Tobacco clinic, says, "There were times when I almost gave up. But a call from the clinic would remind me of my goal." Sandeep took his parting puff in June last year and there has been "no question of a relapse". A decade ago, few hospitals in India would have invested in niche clinics. But, their effectiveness and popularity among patients

and medical practitioners are paving way for an emerging trend.

"It had to happen!" says Dr Lloyd Nazareth, COO of Fortis Hospitals. "At a speciality clinic, the patient gets attention from a pool of medical talent in a single sitting at a dedicated time slot. The treatment works out to be convenient and efficient."

A backache clinic, for instance, would bring together doctors who specialise in the condition, as well as physiotherapists, rehabilitation experts and nurses with experience in the area. Sometimes, more medical minds are better than one.

"There are disorders that border on another clinical symptom or involve multiple symptoms. It is unfair to expect the patient to walk around the hospital in search of all these specialists and then, having obtained the requisite information, return to the treating doctor," says Dr Sujit Chatterjee, CEO of Dr L H Hiranandani Hospital in Mumbai.

These initiatives, hospital authorities insist, are not intended to aug-

THE WEEK / HANSA Research survey

Best multi-speciality hospitals- DELHI

- 1 All India Institute of Medical Sciences
- 2 Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals
- 3 Sir Ganga Ram Hospital
- 4 Max Super Specialty Hospital, Saket
- 5 Medanta - The Medicity, Gurgaon
- 6 Safdarjung Hospital

ment bottomlines. The cost to the patient works out to be much the same as for a regular OPD consultation, considering the saved hospital visits. "It may add to the business if a satisfied patient recommends the hospital by word of mouth and volumes grow," says Chatterjee.

Interestingly, conversations with patients who have been treated at speciality clinics across cities reveal it is not only about the number of professionals who attend to them, but also the personalised attention and treatment that make it a different experience.

Amin Lakha, 44, says his life can be divided into two eras—before and after he met Dr K. Ravishankar. Amin had visited many allopathic, ayurvedic and homoeopathic practitioners in Mumbai before someone suggested the Headache Clinic at Jaslok Hospital. "Ravishankar was the first to diagnose my condition as cluster headache, a neurological condition that manifests by way of severe pain. For three years, doctors had been treating me for migraine," says the entrepreneur, still in disbelief.

Once the right diagnosis was made, all Amin had to do was follow the doctor's instructions to the T and never miss an appointment or skip medication, and, within months, he was completely off tablets. "Two years ago, I used to have 30 pills a day. Even then, exposure to extreme cold, heat or stress would trigger an attack," he says.

For Amin, it has been nothing short of a miracle to enjoy simple pleasures like an ice-cream on a hot afternoon without the fear of "hell-like headaches". His doctor though has seen quite a few rare headaches over the two decades of his medical practice to know that treatment is possible.

"The American Headache Society is more than 50 years old. In India, it is only over the last one and a half decades that we have started clinics that cover the entire spectrum of headaches, go beyond painkillers and tranquillisers to understand the ailment pattern of this invisible

miser," says Ravishankar, who also runs the headache clinic at Lilavati Hospital & Research Centre.

The USP of a speciality clinic, experts agree, is the tubular vision of specialists that ensures prompt diagnosis and effective treatment. These are professionals who choose

The intimate doctor-patient relationship you witness at a speciality clinic is rare. Patients are at liberty to call up the doctor at 2 a.m. to discuss a problem.

to devote their medical skills, time and energy exclusively to the management of a particular ailment, keep up-to-date with the latest research and go that extra mile to bring relief to their patients.

"I used to come across dozens of young patients with arthritis, ligament injury and knee-cap pain. They needed a one-stop solution for early intervention," says Dr Chandramouli B., who started a Knee Clinic at Apollo Hospitals in Bangalore last year.

The fact that knee surgery per se is not yet considered an area of specialisation in medical education did not deter the doctor. "Time is critical. The patient shouldn't have to run from one department to another. Here, all equipment is ready, along with the physiologist, occupational therapist and dietician every eve-

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Best multi-speciality hospitals- MUMBAI

- 1 P.D. Hinduja National Hospital & Medical Research Centre
- 2 Bombay Hospital & Medical Research Centre
- 3 Lilavati Hospital & Research Centre
- 4 Jaslok Hospital
- 5 Breach Candy Hospital
- 6 Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital & Medical Research Institute

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Best multi-speciality hospitals- CHENNAI

- 1 Apollo Hospitals
- 2 Sri Ramachandra Medical College & Research Institute
- 3 Billroth Hospitals
- 4 Government General Hospital
- 5 MIOT Hospitals
- 6 Vijaya Hospital

ning," he says. Chandramouli's idea of a speciality clinic is one where there is no need for a second opinion.

There are no two ways about certain things. For instance, if you snore or experience daytime sleepiness or constant fatigue, a visit to a sleep clinic is strongly recommended. According to Dr Sanjeev Mehta, head of the Sleep Clinic at Lilavati Hospital, most sleep-related problems are easily treatable.

"If left untreated they increase the risk of diabetes, blood pressure, heart attack, hypertension and stroke," he says. Just for the record, men are more prone to snoring, at least until menopause catches up with women.

The concept of sleep clinics is well-established internationally. Basically, the patient spends a night at the sleep laboratory so that his breathing, oxygen value, position in bed, choking tendency during snoring and stage of sleep, among other parameters, can be studied.

"We may not have huge-capacity sleep centres yet, but most metros have moderate clinics that can deal with oft-neglected issues, such as sleep apnoea," says Mehta. The golden rule is seven to eight hours of sound sleep every night. Anything less can be detrimental to health.

Ask James Ferrao, 37, who was tired of waking up feeling worn-out every morning. He was in a state of perpetual stress; smoking and alcohol did not improve matters. "I could



JANAK BHAT

Such clinics play an important role in prevention, especially in the case of young professionals.

DR GUSTAD DAVER

Medical director and consultant surgeon, Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai (in pic, left, with James Ferrao, who quit smoking after treatment at the hospital's Lifestyle Management Clinic)

feel something was wrong, though I couldn't pinpoint the exact problem," says the electronics engineer.

A two-day workshop at the Lifestyle Management Clinic at Hinduja Hospital offered his moment

of epiphany. "My wife, Neisha, and my general physician have been asking me to quit smoking and lead a healthier lifestyle. But, sometimes you need a stronger push," he says.

And, the clinic, with the combined efforts of a psychologist, lifestyle expert and emotional analyst, offered just that. "We analyse every individual in totality and do a stress audit as well as attitude profile in order to give a clear picture of where he stands," says Dr S. Sivaramakrishnan, lifestyle management consultant at Hinduja Hospital.

The procedure is time-consuming. The team spends about an hour with each patient. "Stress, beyond a point, leads to burnout. We help identify that unique threshold for each patient," says the doctor, who was instrumental in setting up the clinic

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Best multi-speciality hospitals- KOLKATA

- 1 Seth Sukhlal Karnani Memorial Hospital
- 2 Apollo Gleneagles Hospitals
- 3 The Calcutta Medical Research Institute (CMRI)
- 4 Advanced Medicare and Research Institute (AMRI)
- 5 Peerless Hospital and B.K. Roy Research Centre
- 6 Nilratan Sarkar (NRS) Medical College and Hospital



six months ago.

As the world capital in diabetes, struggling with increasing cases of coronary artery disease and hypertension, along with obesity, osteoporosis, ulcers and myriad fevers, India is in urgent need of such clinics.

But no matter how good the doctor is, it is the patient who has to take the final plunge. And James did—he gave up smoking and junk food and started exercising. “And became a role model for my three-year-old son, Abraham,” says the proud father, who now has more time for his family.

Speaking of healthy lifestyle changes, one of the biggest challenges is to quit smoking. Most smokers like to believe that if and when they decide to kick the butt, they can do so successfully. However, the cold turkey approach, where one quits abruptly, works in less than 5 per cent of the cases, says Dr Sandeep Budhiraja, director of internal medicine at Max Healthcare.

The emphasis is always on prevention. “And such clinics play an important role in that respect, especially in the case of young profes-

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Best hospitals for management of epidemics

Mumbai	Bangalore
1 Sir J.J. Group of Hospitals	1 St. John's Medical College
2 King Edward Memorial Hospital	2 Bowring & Lady Curzon Hospitals
3 Breach Candy Hospital	3 Victoria Hospital
4 Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital, Sion	4 KIMS Hospital
5 Jaslok Hospital	5 Manipal Hospital
Delhi	Hyderabad
1 All India Institute of Medical Sciences	1 Sir Ronald Ross Institute of Tropical and Communicable Diseases
2 Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals	2 Osmania General Hospital
3 Sir Ganga Ram Hospital	3 Gandhi Hospital
4 Safdarjung Hospital	4 Yashoda Hospital
5 Max Super Speciality Hospital, Saket	5 Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences
Chennai	Ahmedabad
1 Government General Hospital	1 B. J. Medical College and Civil Hospital
2 Stanley Hospital	2 V.S. Hospital
3 Kilpauk Medical College	3 Sterling Hospital
4 Sri Ramachandra Medical College & Research Institute	4 Apollo Hospitals
5 Tondiarpet Cholera Hospital	5 L.G. Hospital
Kolkata	Pune
1 Infectious Diseases and Beliaghata General Hospital	1 Sassoon Hospital
2 School of Tropical Medicine	2 KEM Hospital
3 Nilratan Sarkar Medical College and Hospital	3 Dr. Naidu Infectious Disease Hospital
4 RG Kar Medical College & Hospital	4 Ruby Hall Clinic
5 Advanced Medicare and Research Institute (AMRI)	5 Kamala Nehru Hospital

sionals,” says Dr Gustad Daver, medical director and consultant surgeon at Hinduja Hospital.

Speciality clinics are poised to get bigger and better. “We have recently started the Food Intolerance Clinic because of the increasing number of

patients suffering from the problem. The idea is to offer integrated care, with a multi-disciplinary approach, that ensures better management of the condition and benefits the patient,” says Daver.

“A structured approach, with

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Best multi-speciality hospitals- BANGALORE

- ① Manipal Hospital
- ② St. John's Medical College
- ③ Apollo Hospitals
- ④ Narayana Hrudayalaya
- ⑤ Fortis Hospital, Cunningham Road
- ⑥ Columbia Asia Hospital, Hebbal

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Best multi-speciality hospitals- HYDERABAD

- ① Apollo Hospitals
- ② Yashoda Hospital
- ③ Kamineni Hospital, King Koti
- ④ Care Hospital, Banjara Hills
- ⑤ Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS)
- ⑥ Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences

medication to deal with withdrawal symptoms, augments the success rate to over 60 per cent," says Budhiraja. Max started its Quit Tobacco clinic three years ago with an aim to streamline treatment protocols.

"We begin with a three-month dedicated approach, where the patient meets the physician six times and psychiatrist 11 times. Then, there are regular follow-ups for nine months to assess the progress," he says.

The interdisciplinary approach, says Dr Samir Parikh, head of psychiatry at the hospital, works out to be more feasible, effective and convenient for the patient. "The experience is immensely fulfilling for the doctors, too, as we work on a common mission," he says.

Dr Mohit Bhatt couldn't agree more. He has been fascinated by Wilson Disease since college and he has started the country's first speciality

clinic for patients suffering from the rare disorder at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital & Medical Research Institute, Mumbai.

"The incidence is just one in 30,000 patients. But in less than four months, the clinic has brought 45 families to us," says Bhatt. Those suffering from this inherited disorder that causes

The bonding is not just between the doctors and patient, but also among the patients. It is natural for them to form a support group of sorts, share their pain, exchange notes on coping.

the body to retain copper, instead of releasing it into bile, face a high risk of damage to their kidneys, liver, brain and eyes.

"These are children: naughty, difficult to manage, hypersexual, restless, with a tendency to run away from home. They require lifelong treatment and gentle handling," says the neurologist. Early diagnosis holds the key. But on an average most patients, he says, visit 11 doctors before the correct diagnosis is made.

Bhatt and his team, liver specialist Dr Geeta Billa and cognitive expert Dr Annu Aggarwal, know that their clinic can change the dismal scenario. It is not always about the numbers; a smile on the face of a patient is the biggest reward, they say.

The bonding is not just between the doctors and patient, but also among the patients. It is natural for them to form a support group of sorts, share their pain, exchange notes on coping. "More so in the case of patients who have got a pacemaker, defibrillator or other device," says Dr Ajay Naik, electrophysiologist at Care Institute of Medical Sciences, Ahmedabad.

Naik runs a syncope clinic that deals with cases of transient loss of consciousness. "In 80 per cent of the cases, the cause is cardiac, sometimes there are neurological issues, too," he says. For many patients, a device implantation is inevitable. Discussions with other patients who have been down that road help one make a quick decision.

There is, indeed, a very strong case for more speciality clinics: personalised care for patients, comprehensive scientific data for the medical fraternity, effective follow-ups and ultimately, better treatment results.

And the hospitals are realising this. Fortis Escorts Heart Institute in Delhi is all set to launch India's first heart failure clinic, while systems are in place for a backache clinic at Mumbai's Hinduja Hospital. The revolution has begun. If only the Frenchman was around to witness the change. ■