

India aims 1 doc per 1000 by '31

Country Is Short Of 6 Lakh Docs, 10 Lakh Nurses & 2 Lakh Dental Surgeons

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New Delhi: India has just one doctor for 1,700 people. In comparison, the doctor population ratio globally is 1.5:1,000. An internal note prepared by Medical Council of India's 'Undergraduate Education Working Group' said the target being put in place for India is 1 doctor for 1,000 population by 2031.

The note, available with TOI, also looked at the situation in other countries. Somalia has one doctor for 10,000 population, Pakistan has one doctor for 1,923 population and Egypt has one doctor per 1,484 population.

China's doctor population ratio stands at 1:1063, Korea 1:951, Brazil 1:844, Singapore 1:714, Japan 1:606, Thailand 1:500, UK 1:469, US 1:350 and Germany 1:296. The note said an in-depth analysis of the number of doctors in the country was done. The next exercise that the working group undertook was to estimate the number of doctors needed to achieve this target.

The working group looked at the existing number of medical colleges, the current intake of these colleges and the critical mass of doctors that would be needed to achieve



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this target. Currently, there are 330 medical colleges with an intake of approximately 35,000 students. With this intake, the shortfall of doctors by 2031 is estimated to be 9.54 lakh.

The note said that in view of the projected increase in population, the existing medical colleges would be unable to meet this need and the current intake of medical colleges and the critical mass of doctors needed to be at least doubled to achieve the target.

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According to the detailed break-up, subjects like anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pharmacology, pathology,

surgery, medicine and forensic medicine each need 2,000 faculty members. But almost all these departments have a current shortfall of 500-1,500 teachers. Additionally, all these departments would each need 2,100-3,500 teachers in the near future.

Community medicine at present needs 2,400 teachers and has a shortfall of 500 teachers and would additionally need 2,900 teachers.

Under short-term solutions, the committee recommended increasing the intake in existing medical colleges wherever adequate infrastructure of teachers and equipment was available. It also suggested attaching established medical colleges to district level hospitals or secondary hospitals run by government agencies. In medium-term solutions, achievable in three years, it was recommended to upgrade larger district

hospitals and augment their infrastructure to become community medical colleges through public private partnership. Under long-term solutions, achievable in five years, starting new medical colleges and hospitals was recommended, preferably in states and areas underserved by doctors and medical colleges.

According to a Planning Commission report, India is short of six lakh doctors, 10 lakh nurses and two lakh dental surgeons. Ironically, Indian doctors who have migrated to developed countries form nearly 5% of their medical workforce. Almost 60,000 Indian physicians are estimated to be working in countries like US, UK, Canada and Australia alone.

The note was prepared by a committee including Prof George Mathew, principal, Christian Medical College; Prof Nilima Kshirsagar, former vice-chancellor of Maharashtra University of Health Sciences; Prof J M Kaul, professor of anatomy, Maulana Azad Medical College; Prof Sandeep Guleria, professor, department of surgery, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, and Brig Chander Mohan, former head of radio diagnosis at Army Hospital (Research and Referral).