



LETTER TO EDITOR

Scary Truth of Medical Personnel in India

Amit Sharma*, Ian Osoro and Ruby Gangwar

Department of Pharmacy Practice, ISF College of Pharmacy, Moga, Punjab-142001, India

*admin@isfcp.org (Correspondence Author)

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ABSTRACT

India is having a lack of adequate medical personnel in a country with a second largest population stands at an alarming level. According to National Health Profile report by the Ministry of Health, Government of India, the situation in India related to the ratio of doctors available and actually practicing is really critical in 2018. The doctor density is far worse in the country's poorer states. India requires over 7.47 lakh more allopathic doctors to meet World Health Organization (WHO) prescribed norms for the doctor-population ratio.

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As per the data Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, it is estimated that by 2050, India will overtake China to become the most populous country on earth with about 17.2 percent population living here (Government of India, 2008). As per the annual report of Medical Council of India (MCI), the total number of allopathic doctors possessing recognized medical qualifications are 9,78,735 between the year 2001 to 2016 (<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>). The availability of the doctors which are active in service currently is 7.90 lakh. In India, the current population is around 1.32 billion. This means the ratio of 1:14100 as per the total doctors registered till 2016 in MCI. But as per total doctor's active in service, it's 1:17470 whereas the WHO prescribes a doctor-population ratio of 1:1000. The country is needing at least 7.47 lakh more doctors to bridge the disparity. As per the recent data available, a total of 1,022,859 doctors are registered in MCI as of 31 March 2017 which represents the ratio of 1:13500. In India, the total number of colleges providing undergraduate course (MBBS) is 497 with total seats 60480. In the last three years, 12,870 MBBS seats have been added which represent 4.69 percent growth in seats in contrast to the government data (<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>). The data of doctors who left the profession, retired, emigrated or died between the years

1979-2014 (35-year period) is assumed to be zero and not available. Therefore, the actual figures will be less than that of 1:17470. As per data released by the Health Ministry, under the National Health Profile, on June 19, there is one government allopathic doctor per 11,082 populations, one government hospital bed per 1,844 populations and one state-run hospital for every 55,591 populations. This works out to a doctor to population ratio of 1:11,082 (Abhyankar, 2014). The data of hospital infrastructure revealed that a total of 23,000 hospitals in India having a bed capacity for in-patients will cater for around 7 lakhs patients. Out of the total hospitals, most of them around 20,000 are located in rural areas of the country with a capacity of three lakh beds (Abhyankar, 2014). The numbers of hospitals located in urban areas are fewer around 3,700, but having 4.3 lakh bed capacities for in-patients. The infant mortality rate in India is 34:1000 live births as of 2016, but differentials of rural 38:1000 & urban 23:1000 is very high. The age-specific death rate for rural 10.7 and urban 6.0 per 1000 lives differentials are still high. The data shows that mortality rates by sex in India, 2016 is 34 per 1000 live births, for females it's 36:1000 and for male 33:1000. The death rate ratio in 2016 is 6.9 per 1000 for the population residing in the rural area and 5.4 per 1000 for population residing in an urban area which shows the deficiency of the

doctors and medical infrastructure and facilities in the rural area (Abhyankar, 2014). The main difference between rural and urban medical facilities is another important point to be noted. The maternal mortality ratio is highest in Assam & lowest in Kerala. As per data available in 2011, India is having 640 districts, 5,988 sub-districts, 7,933 towns and 640,932 villages (<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>). There is a shortage of around 3.80 lakh doctors in India and if one doctor has to manage one village, the average doctor population ratio will be 1:1250. India needs around 7.47 lakhs more doctors to meet the world standards. The same situation is seen related to dentistry profession also. As per the report, the number of dental doctors working in the government sector has increased by five times from 50000 to 2.5 lakhs, in 2017 (Choudhury & Mohanty, 2020). At present, the ratio of dental doctors in India is 1:1,76,004 populations as against the WHO norms of 1: 7500. According to the WHO's health financing profile, 67.78 percent of total expenditure on health in India was paid out-of-pocket in 2017 against the global average of 18.2 percent (Choudhury & Mohanty, 2020), (Karan *et al.*, 2019). The per capita expenditure on health in India is Rs. 1,112 but the average expenditure during one-time hospitalization in India stands at Rs 26,455 making medical treatment unaffordable for most Indians (Karan *et al.*, 2019).

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This article does not contain any studies involving animals or human participants performed by any of the authors.

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Conflict of Interest

All the authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' Contributions

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Chitkara University, Saraswati Kendra, SCO 160-161, Sector 9-C,
Chandigarh, 160009, India

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