

COVER STORY

Ill? Indulge!

Get well soon in a five-star environment. Hospitals are changing and fast

THE WEEK-IMRB SURVEY

top 10 hospitals in India

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi	1
Apollo Hospitals, Delhi	2
Apollo Hospitals, Chennai	3
NIMHANS, Bangalore	4
Christian Medical College, Vellore	5
Postgraduate Institute, Chandigarh	6
Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai	7
Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai	8
Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai	9
Bombay Hospital, Mumbai	9

Base: All GPs & specialists-1497

Methodology: THE WEEK-IMRB International survey was conducted in 15 cities. A total of 936 specialists, 614 general practitioners (GPs), 605 MBBS aspirants, 319 Ayurvedic doctors, 17 travel agents and 10 patient coordinators took part in the survey.

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By Gunjan Sharma

Valet parking, Wi-Fi rooms with plush beds, complimentary laptops and plasma TVs, multi-cuisine menu, food courts and coffee shops, designer clothing outlets, toy shops, ATMs and attendants. Sounds like one of those swanky new hotels, doesn't it? But it's just the listing of facilities at a new hospital in New Delhi. In fact, many other private hospitals around the country, too, are getting as luxurious and they provide world-class treatment in an ambience on par with the best in the hospitality industry.

Enter Artemis Health Institute and Research Centre in Gurgaon, and it is difficult to believe you are in a hospital. Shaped like a wedge to ensure easy reach, it has a glassed-in reception area facing a garden with trees and fountains. Suites for patients have tastefully designed living and dining areas, a posh bedroom and a kitchen with microwave oven and refrigerator. Major fast food chains have opened outlets in the centre and patients are lapping up these facilities. Gurgaon-based businessman Subhash Chand Jain, who is recovering after an appendectomy, is full of praise for the centre. "These hospitals give you value for money," he says. "They pamper you so much that you forget all your woes, and that helps quick recovery."

Siddhant Nanda, 12, who was admitted to Apollo Hospitals, Delhi, for jaundice, says his 10-day stay was fun. After all, Nanda was served everything from masala dosas to noodles and potato wedges—food which no mom would serve to a convalescing child! He also loved the times when his favourite 'doctor uncle' read out stories to him. Besides, the hospital also allowed him to host his sister's birthday in his room. "I was like a prince here, everybody followed my requests and I was even allowed to play videogames," says an excited



Prince patient: Siddhant is all smiles while receiving a gift from Dr Nishant of Apollo Hospitals

longer to recover. Recently, we got a Japanese patient who did not like our cuisine; our cook got a Japanese recipe book and cooked for him." Agrees Dr Atamjot K. Grewal, head of operations, Artemis Hospital: "Food is of utmost importance for a patient as it helps in speedy recovery. We provide multi-cuisine and even prepare new dishes and present them with lots of frills for adults and toys for kids."

John Miller, 21, a US national who works in India, has been hospitalised at Max Hospital for the past two months. He underwent two major surgeries following an accident, but his spirits are high. "I get food that suits my palate," says Miller. "They are also innovative with food. They tried to replicate the Hyderabad biryani for me. The hospital staff are very friendly and take care of everything from laundry to the internet connection in my room."

To engage their patients and keep their minds off the illness, these hospitals offer books, videogames and DVDs. The speciality-trained hospi-

children, a room for nannies and a prayer area. We have hung a bell at the exit for people to ring when they leave satisfied. I am happy that the bell rings quite often."

Customised service is another focus area for hospitals. Says Harpreet Brar, head, patient service, Max Super Specialty Hospital, Delhi: "An irritable person will take

Nanda.

Says Dr Manoj Mehta, medical director, Fortis Hospital, Noida: "Any visitor to the hospital—patients and relatives—is in some kind of distress. So a cheerful environment helps them recover faster. We have planted trees and flowering plants all around the hospital to give a feeling of freshness. We have valet parking, a play area for



Cushy care: The VIP suite at Artemis Health Institute, Gurgaon

top 10 hospitals on cost

- 1 All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi
- 2 Apollo Hospitals, Delhi
- 3 Apollo Hospitals, Chennai
- 4 NIMHANS, Bangalore
- 5 Christian Medical College, Vellore
- 6 Postgraduate Institute, Chandigarh
- 7 Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai
- 8 Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai
- 9 Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai
- 9 Bombay Hospital, Mumbai

Base: All patients/people accompanying patients—100 per hospital

tal staff does not mind chatting with the patient for long hours.

Says Dr Anupam Sibal, director and senior consultant gastroenterologist, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Delhi: "If we can divert the patient's attention, we can manage the pain, both emotional and physical, and reduce discomfort. All our staff members—administrative to nursing—are trained to be chatty and cheerful to the patients. A physiotherapist will

give a soothing massage to a patient in great pain. If needed, a nurse will sit and chat with the patient and a doctor will read out books. We even arrange an outing if the patient's health allows. We do everything to pamper our patients."

Some hospitals are taking specialisation to a whole new level to ensure that patients get cutting edge treatment for specific conditions. For example, BEAMS, Mumbai, prides

itself as a speciality hospital for laparoscopic removal of fibroids.

Says Dr Rakesh Sinha, managing director, BEAMS: "Indian hospitals now have to compete not only in terms of the latest technology and expertise but also in terms of hospitality as the patients are now well-informed and demand the best. Working on laparoscopic removal of fibroids for the last 17 years, we have devised steps to decrease blood loss during their removal—this has been published in the *American Journal of Minimally Invasive Gynecology*. We are also installing a High Intensity Focused Ultrasound Machine that can shrink fibroids up to 30 per cent—this will be especially useful in young, unmarried women who do not wish to have any scars." BEAMS holds the Guinness World Record for the heaviest fibroid removed laparoscopically—34kg.

Apart from taking care of their patients, these hospitals take care of the needs of those accompanying them. Most have luxurious waiting areas and lounges where relatives can sleep. Then there are the coffee shops, restaurants and gift shops to