

Number of tests can be reduced, say doctors

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Times view

Doctors deplore unnecessary tests as they say many factors drive multiple investigations. "One could be the fear of medico-legal cases with wrong or delayed diagnosis.

It's also because of procedures laid down by insurance companies which process claims only if test reports are submitted. But patients should understand the side-effects. For a child, a CT scan is equal to 400 x-rays," explained Dr H Paramesh, director, Lakeside Medical Centre and Hospital.

At times, patients themselves ask for these tests. Dr Ramana Rao, general physi-

It's good to note that doctors in Bangalore like the idea mooted by their counterparts in Delhi with regard to dispensing with unnecessary medical tests and focusing on previous medical history and risk factors. For too long have patients been at the mercy of some doctors who send patients for all kinds of tests which are really not necessary. Defensive medicine may have its benefits but patients are paying a heavy price for it. Patients too must appreciate that a clinical examination is the best way to arrive at a diagnosis and not demand tests based on information gleaned from the internet.

cian and cardiologist says: "A patient walks in with print-outs of website information about the disease he is suffering from. The doctors order investigative tests for a quick diagnosis. But doctors should be diligent and reasonable while ordering tests." Doctors feel the num-

ber of tests can be reduced. "A good history-taking and clinical examination can reduce the number of tests by at least 50%. Check-ups should be done based on background and risk factors of a patient," said Dr CN Manjunath, director, Jayadeva Institute of Cardiology.

Patients cheer move on fewer medical exams

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Around 3am recently, B Rahul, 30, woke up with a nagging chest pain. He thought the late dinner was, perhaps, the cause. But 10 minutes later, the pain refused to die down and he was rushed to a super-specialty hospital and doctors ordered an ECG. He was put on a glucose drip and prescribed tablets for 10 days. The next evening, doctors said he could leave the hospital after paying a bill of Rs 2,000. The ailment? Gastritis.

Rahul is among many patients who rejoiced at the new initiative by doctors at AIIMS, Delhi, who believe in cutting down on excessive tests. A group of top cardiologists who started the Society for Less Investigative Medicine believe annual general check-ups are unnecessary.

It's an issue of ethics. Some hospitals are profit-driven; at times, there are medico-legal cases. Doctors are forced to play defensive medicine as it is safer. India now needs family doctors. We need multi-competence general practitioners before they are referred to specialists.

Dr Savio Pereira | ST JOHN'S MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

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Their counterparts in Bangalore endorse the idea. "The annual check-ups are promoted by diagnostic centres. They have packages of 40 tests for Rs 2,000. It's completely unnecessary. A person should probably undergo tests understanding his risk factors," said Dr Santanu Chattopadhyay, founder and CEO, NationWide Primary Healthcare Services.