

## “ In the near future, we think it will be necessary to increase the bed strength ”

...says **Dr Suhas Gangurde**, Chief Executive Officer, Godrej Memorial Hospital. In a succinct conversation, he gets candid about the recent improvements witnessed by the healthcare sector in India and the contribution of hospitals towards this growth trend. While cost-effective services and quality treatment pose challenges to excellence in healthcare, integration of advanced technology helps deal with the situations better.

 **Anubhav Sharma**

### **What prompted you to set up the advanced cardiac healthcare system at Godrej Memorial hospital?**

Godrej Memorial Hospital started its operations eight years ago. Over the years, the hospital has introduced several services like smile train project, anti retroviral therapy centre and also consolidated its existing departments by acquiring latest equipment and appointing medical consultants with special skills. After the consolidation, the next phase was developing advanced departments. One such advanced service is Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Centre, or HBOT centre. This is a multi place chamber that can accommodate 6 patients at a time and is the first private setup in Maharashtra, amongst the very few in the country. The HBOT centre has gained popularity and is used extensively by people not only from the city and the state, but also from other states in India.

The next logical step was to start an advanced cardiac care centre. This decision was also strengthened by the statistics of patients getting admitted to the hospital with acute cardiac ailments. Many of these were referred to other centres for further operative management. We also observed that over the last two years, the awareness regarding personal health checkups has increased. Many corporates and smaller organisations are offering personal health



checkups for their staff but generally the awareness about preventive aspect of healthcare has been on the rise. Thus, increased checkups and rising awareness has led to the 'unearthing' of silent or dormant cardiac cases. Apart from the above, we realised that affordability is the main issue in India faced even by the charitable hospitals with reasonable rates. We offer competitive rates in comparison to other hospitals and after careful consideration of all factors, we decided to offer advanced cardiac care at reasonable rates.

### **What are the latest technological advancements housed and provided at the hospital?**

The hospital is equipped with many advanced equipment such as latest endoscopy unit. We perform bariatric surgery which very few hospitals in Mumbai offer, Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery (SILS) and others.

### **How do you plan to address the rising number of cardiac cases in the near future?**

Currently, our cardiac ambulance attends calls and provides services for free within the radius of five kilometres. We may increase the area covered, to cater to as many patients as possible from the nearby localities. Also, we have selected cardiac medical experts who live in and around the hospital, to reach for immediate aid and urgent intervention, if necessary.

There is a new treatment modality called primary angioplasty in case of myocardial infarction (PAMI). This has to be performed within one hour of the cardiac attack. It is only possible if we have an in-house technician and a cardiologist living close to the hospital. This does help increase the chances of patient's survival while facilitating reduction in costs to patient owing to shortened stay and avoidance of costly medication.

### **Could you elaborate on the reasons initiating collaborations with several NGOs?**

The entire credit for the collaborations should be denoted to the Godrej family's philosophy towards life. The

Godrej Memorial Trust set up by the family ensures that the poor and needy have access to quality medical care. Be it at the health centre at Okhla or the Godrej Memorial Hospital at Vikhroli. Besides these, the Godrej Memorial Hospital with active encouragement from the trust have collaborated with national and international agencies such as CII-NACO initiative of anti retroviral therapy for the HIV/AIDS patients and the 'Smile Train' project run by an international agency from New York, US. These collaborations have received only partial funding from the agency, while rest of the diagnostic investigations and treatment is provided free by the hospital.

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### **How are doctors at the hospital compensated for their undeterred commitment?**

While it stands true that the hospital offers services at economical pricing, as in comparison to similar other hospitals in the eastern suburbs, the doctors working here are glad to be a part of the charity initiative. We have been able to internalise the philosophy of Godrej Memorial Hospital and have made every effort to give fair share to consultants.

### **How do you plan to expand reach to other cities of India?**

Currently, we are focussing on strengthening presence in the eastern suburb. Once this is achieved, we may explore areas in and around the city. We don't intend to replicate the facilities but

create awareness among patients, outside our primary and secondary catchment area such that our services are optimally utilised. Towards the end, we plan to use print and electronic media, and also conduct camps with help of communities.

### **What are your future plans for the hospital?**

Continuing approaches of the past, we start with a service and wait for it to consolidate, before rushing into expansion or commencement of new services. In the near future, we think it will be necessary to increase the bed strength, not because we expect the occupancy to increase but for the need to retain good Resident Medical Officers (RMOs). We may also need to start post-graduation courses such as those from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Parel, Mumbai or Diplomate of National Board (DNB). In fact, we have already applied for kick-starting a diploma course in critical care medicine. Depending on the techno-commercial feasibility we may opt for a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). As a long term objective, a nursing college is also envisaged.

### **How do you foresee Indian healthcare sector five years from now?**

There are three major factors that adversely affect the delivery of healthcare in India. The first being, most of the secondary and tertiary-level hospitals are located in urban areas and very few are based at the countryside. This uneven distribution of healthcare centres deprives the rural people from accessing quality treatment. There is a serious issue owing to lack of technical and professional manpower in the healthcare industry in India. A solution to this problem will be if the government accords infrastructure status to healthcare industry. There is a scope for a properly crafted Public Private Partnership (PPP) models to overcome the difficulties faced. The accreditation process of healthcare facilities has to be speed up such that there is guarantee of uniform medical services across India. **MM**

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