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Dimensions Member: How could the quality medical care be made affordable and accessible to most of the classes of the Indian society?

KV: The decision has to be made vis-à-vis the configuration of establishment, as in, there are many types of wards, viz., general, private, semi-private, deluxe and what not. Among these, 60-70% of the bed configuration would belong to general wards, which means, the people that aren't affluent would have the access to the services that we provide.

Another factor we consider is the competitive benchmarking. We charge about 20% less than the market price for general wards, but we don't mind to be on par when it comes to private, semi-private and deluxe wards.

The third aspect is to let the patients know what to expect from us pertaining to pricing. 90% of the patients that visit hospitals complain that they are charged more than what they had estimated. Thus, we fix a package and let patients know about it. We don't charge a rupee more or less than what is mentioned by giving reasons like nursing charges or any other service. Everything would be included in the package.

KV: A few of the Doctors and hospitals have the habit of carrying a price-tag and it has been in practise for a long period of time. How would your group go about it?

A: This is person or hospital specific, not everyone does that. We, as a group, follow the rule that no patient that comes in should go out of the hospital without being treated just because they had no sufficient money for the same. There would be cases where the patients fall short of money. I'm referring to private services, wherein, the patients don't have BPL card, it isn't a case that falls under any of the Government schemes. We address such genuine scenarios in different ways. We have tie-ups with many NGO's, they sponsor the treatment for patients that cannot afford treatment. Of course, the NGO's too have certain policies and rules on the maximum limit to offer. If the amount would still be due, we also offer discount.

Dimensions Member: What is the future of health-care with the advent of technology, especially with robotics being extensively used for treatment?

KV: We have two equipment employing robotics at our hospital. Robotics minimises the efforts, there are many other uses too. All the traditional equipment that we use are static in nature. But, the robotics have the arm that is 360 degrees rotatable, which can completely visualise the place it is operating at. Thus, it can actually detect the other problematic areas, in addition to performing the specific task it is assigned.

For instance, when hernia operation is done in conventional way, a Doctor would advise the patient not to lift weight, walk, jog or exercise for a number of days. But, undergoing the robotic surgery for the same would need much lesser time to heal. But, the technology comes with price. Not everyone can afford robotic surgeries. A robotic equipment costs 12-13 crore rupees. Thus, we charge more for surgeries employing robotics. Only the people that are affluent and to whom quicker recovery is the need could go for advanced technology.

Also, the applications that are being developed vis-à-vis health care are playing a vital role. A patient doesn't have to visit a Doctor every single time for regular health check-up. We are working on saving people's time and minimising their efforts by enlightening people about the technology available and how effectively it could be used.