

## Health is Wealth

### India's Hospitals Are Filling Up With Desperate Americans

Are deep-pocketed medical tourists the cause of, or solution to, India's health care problems?



For Americans struggling to meet health care costs, medical tourism has become a surprisingly common choice. Estimating the number of medical tourists is tricky, but according to a government survey, more than 300,000 U.S. residents may go abroad each year for health care. There are many reasons why Americans travel for treatment, but the main one is money.

India is a particularly attractive choice for American patients, since it has a number of hospitals offering quality care from English-speaking professionals at affordable rates. Vinayak Shourie, the international marketing director at Fortis Healthcare, estimated that 20 percent of his company's business comes from foreigners and that figure is growing. India introduced medical visas in June 2005 to promote the industry, and it recently began allowing citizens of nearly 150 countries to apply entirely online. The tourism ministry issued more than 170,000 medical visas in 2016, a 45 percent increase over the previous year. It's become a big business for the country, and business is booming.

But India also has one of the world's most unequal health care systems. The gap between the services available to the wealthy and the poor is yawning, and roughly 86 percent of the rural population lacks health insurance.

Medical tourism thus presents both opportunities and risks. At its best, the industry can help India grow its health care system, using the revenues generated from international patients to improve local care. At its worst, it risks shifting resources to private hospitals catering to elites at the expense of public institutions serving the poor.

Public hospitals are overburdened and deficient, frequently producing stories about patients who suffer from medical malpractice. Public hospitals are overburdened and deficient, frequently producing stories about patients who suffer from medical malpractice. Recently, a government hospital in Uttar Pradesh — India's most populous state — made international headlines after 63 people died in two days when the facility ran out of oxygen.

It's therefore no surprise that Indians prefer private health care. A 2016 government report found that the country's public facilities treated less than 30 percent of people's illnesses. The preference is particularly stark in cities, where most of India's high-quality private hospitals are located. Between 2004 and 2014, the public-to-private distribution of urban hospitalization cases shifted toward the latter by roughly 6 percent. But private health care is more expensive, and during the same period of time, the average amount spent on each urban hospital visit increased by approximately 176 percent.

This scarcity extends to doctors. The country has only one government physician for every 10,189 residents, and these practitioners work more but are paid less than their counterparts in the private sector. As a result, most doctors try to move into the lucrative private hospitals located in large cities. Some states are trying to make rural service compulsory for recent graduates of government medical schools. But the idea has received strong pushback from students, and these requirements can be poorly enforced. Physicians serving in public hospitals, for example, are known to open better-paying, time-consuming private practices on the side.

The government's support for the private hospitals that take international patients is also worrying. India's central government provides financial support to these institutions as part of its Marketing Development Assistance Scheme. Forty-three of New Delhi's private hospitals received city land at concessional rates. The government made these discounts contingent on each hospital reserving 10 percent of inpatient and 25 percent of outpatient services for low-income individuals, free of cost.

The medical tourism industry highlights these countries' flaws, and it showcases some of the shortcomings of health care worldwide. Releasing the stress on fractured systems could help ensure a fairer distribution of resources. But it's hard to see how moving patients to India's overburdened system makes global health care any more just.

## Science & Technology

### Your iPhone Has Become Slow? This May Be the 'New' Reason

Apple has just revealed a bunch of year-enders in the form of 'Best of 2017'.

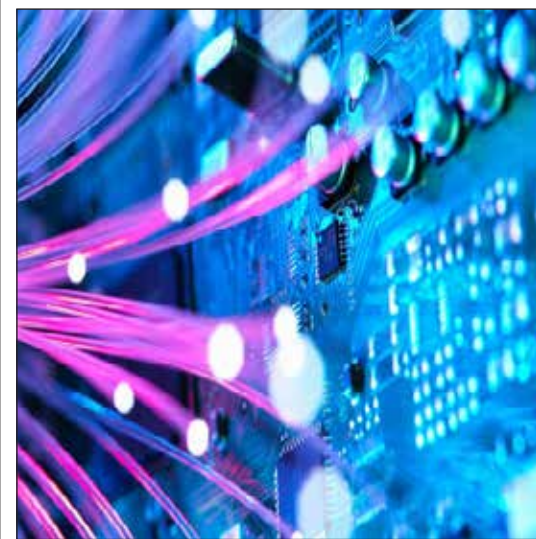
Apple was recently found to be slowing down iPhone devices with each iOS update in order to keep the battery performance optimum for users. Although the company did solve the issue by starting its battery replacement program, it is now once again in news for the same problem. The reason, however, is different.

The company's iPhone device are once again said to slow down. Citing a new benchmark, Beta News reports that the handsets are experiencing a slowdown because of Apple's Spectre patch. The patch comes as several smartphones and other devices witness vulnerabilities due to Meltdown and Spectre bugs.

Intel, the company that is at the epicentre of these widespread bugs, has already mentioned that the patch on PCs will slow them down. But a new benchmark suggests iPhones may slow down as well because of the fix.

### Cybersecurity to Fuel Culture Shift In Association With Samsung Knox Logo

Dial-up call: businesses and consumers must put cybersecurity top of the agenda in the coming year



Cybercrime made more headlines than ever this year — and while IT security remains a moving target, many businesses and individuals will be bolstering their defences over the year ahead.

If 2017's string of headline-hitting cyberattacks has made one thing clear, it's that cybercrime is now something that affects us all. Take the WannaCry ransomware attack in May, for example, which infected 400,000 machines worldwide in 150 countries, with 47 NHS organisations affected in the UK, and operations delayed up and down the country. And mere weeks later, credit-reference agency Equifax announced that private details for more than 100 million people had leaked — just one of the several large-scale data breaches this year.

"The past year has shown what happens when systems are not kept up to date," says Dr Cathy Mulligan, research fellow at Imperial College Business School. "Security will be a key focus for every company, government and not-for-profit during 2018."

While it's good that security is now topping many business agendas across the country, we are not out of the woods yet. Accenture Security's managing director Rick Hemsley says cyberattacks are no longer a matter of if but when, as cyberthreats become increasingly sophisticated. "We're seeing complex, purpose-built attacks from people who know exactly what they want to achieve," he says.

Martin Courtney of British analyst firm TechMarketView adds: "Almost everybody in the security industry expects to see more ransomware attacks in 2018, but these may well morph into more personalised attacks that target high-profile executives or senior managers."

### Uber Introduces Cap on Drivers' Working Hours

Uber has been under fire over drivers' working hours



Uber has introduced a cap on how many hours its drivers in the UK can work after criticism that long shifts are putting passengers at risk.

Drivers who work for 10 hours will be locked out of the app for a six-hour break, the ride-hailing app said. However the limit still allows drivers to work for far more than 60 hours a week.

Uber's self-employed model means drivers are not placed on shifts and can work as much or as little as they want, are paid by the job and must cover their own expenses including a fee to Uber.

### Getting More Sleep May Help You Eat Less Sugar



Sleeping at least seven hours a night may help people eat less sugar, according to a new study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. The research also found that getting more shuteye was an attainable goal for healthy adults who typically got less than the recommended amount, and that simple strategies like reducing

### Jet Stream Changes Since 1960s Linked to More Extreme Weather

Increased fluctuations in the path of the North Atlantic jet stream since the 1960s coincide with more extreme weather events in Europe such as heat waves, wildfires and flooding. The new research is the first reconstruction of historical changes in the North Atlantic jet stream prior to the 20th century. By using tree rings, the researchers developed a historical look at the position of the North Atlantic.

The research is the first reconstruction of historical changes in the North Atlantic jet stream prior to the 20th century. By studying tree rings from trees in the British Isles and the northeastern Mediterranean, the team teased out those regions' late summer weather going back almost 300 years -- to 1725.

"We find that the position of the North Atlantic Jet in summer has been a strong driver of climate extremes in Europe for the last 300 years," Trouet said.

Having a 290-year record of the position of the jet stream let Trouet and her colleagues determine that swings between northern and southern positions of the jet became more frequent in the second half of the 20th century, she said.

When the jet is in the extreme southern position, the situation flips: Western Europe has heavy rains and flooding while southeastern Europe has extreme high temperatures,

drought and wildfires.

"Heat waves, droughts and floods affect people," Trouet said. "The heat waves and drought that are related to such jet stream extremes happen on top of already increasing temperatures and global warming -- it's a double whammy."

Extreme summer weather events in the American Midwest are also associated with extreme northward or southward movements of the jet stream, the authors write.

This winter's extreme cold and snow in the North American Northeast and extreme warmth and dryness in California and the American Southwest are related to the winter position of the North Pacific Jet, she said.

The paper, "Recent enhanced high-summer North Atlantic Jet variability emerges from three-century context," by Trouet and her co-authors Flurin Babst of the Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL in Birmensdorf and Matthew Meko of the UA is scheduled for publication in Nature Communications on Jan. 12. The U.S. National Science Foundation and the Swiss National Science Founda-



tion funded the research.

Other investigators had measured the annual latewood density for trees from the British Isles and the northeastern Mediterranean for rings formed from 1978 back to 1725. Because August temperatures in those two regions reflect the summer position of the North Atlantic jet stream, Trouet and her colleagues used those tree-ring readings to determine the historical position of the jet stream from 1725 to 1978. For the position of the jet stream from 1979 to 2015, the researchers relied on data from meteorological observations.

To Advertise: email us  
info@An-NourNews.com

or call us :  
770-608-3343