
D G Khan da Huspatal (DAWN Report)

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DERA GHAZI KHAN, Jan 10: "Find me a glass of clean water in this medical facility and I will leave my job," bets a doctor of the Dera Ghazi Khan District Headquarters Hospital.

A gloomy coldness rules the hospital that was built to facilitate the people of DG Khan, Rajanpur and adjoining areas of Balochistan. The hospital houses a host of problems and lacks all necessary facilities that are considered a must for a modern-day hospital.

It is a 250-bed hospital and 250 more beds were approved for it years ago. Since the bed occupancy rate is 90 per cent, extra paramedic staff is needed. There are 40 male and 12 female doctors in the hospital while, according to the World Health Organisation, a 250-bed hospital should have 80 doctors.

Dr Javed Nadeem Bukhari, the DG Khan Pakistan Medical Association president, said there was only one cardiologist in the hospital while the number of patients demanded six such specialists.

A senior doctor requesting anonymity complained that some vital life-saving medicines were not supplied to the emergency ward, while those supplied were highly insufficient.

Most of the patients say they have to buy medicines from private pharmacies and if some lucky ones are given medicines from the hospital's pharmacy, they will be substandard and unpacked.

"There is only one table for stitching and anti-septic dressing and it also remains without any maintenance for months. The emergency ward looks dirty, which is also due to the unavailability of cleaning material," said another doctor busy at the emergency. He added that the hospital was spreading hepatitis and other contagious diseases due to insufficient facilities and lack of sterilisation. "One third of the beds are occupied by hepatitis patients."

Ironically, it is not the shortage of funds that contributes to the lacking facilities but negligence of the officials at the helm. Sources said Rs1 million meant for medicines were lying unused. One official, however, said the allocated but unspent amount for medicines was Rs30 million.

Sources said that a health official and his uncle owned a pharmaceutical company and supplied all the drugs to the DHQ and public health facilities in the district. Dr Yousaf, District Quality Control Board member, said that next time medicines would be bought through open tenders.

A doctor works at the DHQ's maternity home complained of the shortage of staff and an ultrasound machine, life-saving drugs, a CT scan machine and natural and fluorine gases. She said the absence of such necessary equipment in the public health facility had helped mushroomed private laboratories and hospitals in the city.

There is a sanatorium in the hospital which should better be called Phantom House. The sanatorium is locked in the evening and the TB patients have to spend the night at God's mercy. On Sundays, it literally remains without any staff. There is no female doctor for the house and TB patients are pinned here like animals. One TB patient said that he never saw the medical superintendent of the hospital visiting the sanatorium. There is also no sanctuary for mentally-challenged people in the hospital.

Regarding complaints, Dr Pervaiz Haider Altaf, the medical superintendent of the hospital and executive health officer, said that he was trying to improve the condition of the emergency ward and a nursing school was being launched soon. He said natural gas supply would be provided to the hospital soon.

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