

Price cap on hip implants awaited

After price caps on cardiac stents and knee implants, a cap is now eagerly awaited on hip implants, which too are highly priced due to excessive profiteering by manufacturers, distributors as well as healthcare providers.

“The price control on all implants has been widely discussed. The cap on hip implants is also likely in the process,” said orthopaedic surgeon Ram Prabhoo, president of Indian Orthopaedic Association.

Knee implants

Following the price cap on knee implants, the most widely used cobalt chromium implant now costs Rs. 54,720, while the ones using titanium and oxidised zirconium cost Rs. 76,600. The high-flexibility implant has been capped at Rs. 56,490 while the revision knee surgery has been capped at Rs. 1,13,950. The prices exclude GST. “Patients have benefited tremendously,” said Dr. Prabhoo, adding that capping the price of orthopaedic implants was extremely tedious as there were many components and materials involved.

At present, a hip implant costs anywhere between Rs. 40,000 (for a basic cemented implant) and Rs. 1.80 lakh (for a fourth-generation ceramic head implant). Revision implant surgery costs between Rs. 3 lakh to Rs. 4 lakh.

‘Has worked well’

“A price cap on the knee implants has worked extremely well. We feared that high-end implants would be phased out, but because of a clause put by the NPPA (National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority), the stocks could not be withdrawn. Over the past few months, more patients have opted for surgeries,” said Pradeep Bhosale, joint replacement surgeon at Nanavati Hospital, which has seen a 40% rise in the number of knee-joint replacements since the price cap was introduced.

“Joint replacements are not treated as emergencies. A large number of patients keep suffering in pain due to the high cost of treatment. These patients are now coming forward,” said Dr. Bhosale.

With increasing incidences of diabetes, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, obesity and increased awareness of the benefits of arthroplasty (joint replacement), it is estimated that India is likely to witness a 15-20% growth in this segment by 2030. According to the NPPA, an estimated 1.5 to two crore Indians require orthopaedic surgery interventions, but they either remain undiagnosed, or are diagnosed but unable to afford the high cost of implants.

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Pradeep Bhosale

Joint replacement surgeon,

Nanavati Hospital

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