

INDIA HAS 20 HEALTH WORKERS FOR 10,000 PEOPLE, STUDY FINDS

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

India has 20.6 health workers per 10,000 people, a study based on National Sample Survey Organisation reveals. While it is less than the World health Organisation's minimum threshold of 22.8, the numbers have increased from 19 health workers per 10000 people in 2012.

"This is welcome news as the numbers have increased since 2012. This shows that we are moving in the right direction and the size of the health workforce is steadily improving," says Dr. Himanshu Negandhi, Additional Professor at Indian Institute of Public Health, Delhi - Public Health Foundation of India. Unfortunately, the distribution of health workers is uneven between urban and rural areas. Rural areas with nearly 71% of India's population have only 36% of health workers.

"This is not just in our country. Many countries have this divide," adds Dr. Negandhi. Delhi has the highest concentration of health workers followed by Kerala, Punjab, and Haryana.

The uneven distribution of health workers is seen in private and public health sector too — more than 80% of doctors and 70% of nurses and midwives are employed in the private sector, notes a study published in *BMJ Open*.

Dr. Anup Karan, Additional Professor at Indian Institute of Public Health – Delhi, PHFI and lead researcher of this paper is of the opinion that "the public sector can collaborate with the private sector to overcome the shortages in human resources for health. However, this will not influence the overall size of the health workforce in the country."

The paper notes that policy should focus on enhancing the quality of health workers and bringing professionally qualified persons into the health workforce.

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