

Practo focuses on prompt medical attention towards AQI severity

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Announces free online consultation with qualified doctors



Post Diwali, the air quality index (AQI) in Delhi breached the “severe plus” mark according to the Centre-run System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research (SAFAR). At a time when the city is crippled with the catastrophic levels of pollution, residents across the city are facing various health concerns ranging from mild fever, cough and cold to severe discomfort, infections.

According to a new survey by LocalCircles with over 17,000 respondents from Delhi, 44% Delhi residents said *they were having health problems related to pollution, but have not visited a doctor or hospital*. Practo insights reveal a 19% increase in online doctor consultations since last week. Most of the patient queries revolved around chest pain, dry cough, hair loss, body aches and fever, skin rashes, to name a few. A large number of queries came in from people in the 21-30 age group bracket. Our insights indicate that there's an increased need for medical assistance in the capital, but, travel or other barriers with respect to getting in touch with doctors seamlessly, may deter the patients from consulting a qualified doctor. It has also been observed that patients tend to delay their first medical interaction until the condition becomes critical.

Practo's initiative is aimed at making Delhiites more proactive about their health and ensuring that no symptom goes undiagnosed. Operating on the principal of early diagnosis that can lead to better health outcomes, Delhiites can use this service 24/7 to get in touch with a qualified doctor instantly, anytime of the day, rather than self-medicating or ignoring it all together. The service will be available for free till 15th November 2019 on Practo app and website.

Dr Alexander Kuruvilla, Chief Healthcare Strategy Officer, Practo, said, *“The hazardous air quality across the capital has led to a surge in pulmonary, respiratory and dermat diseases. We have made quality doctors available for patients in Delhi over the last week to help people get timely medical assistance.*

Our team of doctors have indicated that symptoms of these health issues caused by pollution can vary from mild sickness, to severe discomfort, and that it may get difficult for patients to understand whether some of these diseases' early signs even qualify a doctor visit. Keeping this in mind, we've made online consultations with quality doctors available for free for all Delhiites; this would help ensure that patients get a qualified medical opinion and correct line of treatment, without any travel or extra cost. It appears to be one of the worst ever spells of air pollution in Delhi this year, and we are committed to helping Delhiites get in touch with qualified physicians, in a convenient manner."

Dr Prashant Saxena, HOD, Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine, Max Smart Super Speciality Hospital, Saket, said, *"There is no doubt that poor air quality poses a great threat to survival. We have seen a rise in the cases both in OPD and emergency due to respiratory ailments. Compromised air quality, both indoors and outdoors, has a direct impact on the health of children, expecting mothers, and senior citizens. There is also an increase in cardiac problems like heart attacks and chest pain etc. Associated allergic problems like nasal discharge/sneezing, headache, eye burning, sore throat etc. have also been observed, especially in children. Moreover, maternal exposure can cause fatal growth retardation, fatal deaths and retarded growth of child post-delivery. Keeping a mask handy, washing eyes frequently with clean water and avoiding outdoor travel during peak hours within the city can help limit exposure to toxic air."*

Practo's vision is to make quality healthcare accessible and affordable for a billion Indians, and this initiative is a step in that direction. Over 20 crore patients, or approx. 1 in 7 Indians have received high quality care through the Practo platform in 2019 alone. Working with a team of 1 lakh + doctors, Practo is committed to increasing access to quality healthcare in the country.