

Doctors' orders: improve your handwriting

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Doctors' handwriting has never been renowned for its elegance, but an Indian medical group is so concerned about sloppy scrawls that it has started an awareness drive to prevent fatal errors.

More than 100 doctors across Maharashtra state met last week and found [handwriting](#) legibility to be one of the most alarming issues they faced, according to the non-profit umbrella body Medscape India.

"Due to lack of clarity in doctors' written prescriptions, the number of deaths caused in India and internationally are on a shocking rise," a statement from the group's president Dr Sunita Dube said, without providing details.

She now has government backing for the drive after writing to the state [health minister](#), explaining that many [chemists](#), especially in smaller Indian towns and villages, are unable to understand drug prescriptions.

Owing to [misinterpretation](#), "an incorrect drug is administered to the patient which a lot of times proves fatal or nearly fatal", Dube wrote.

Medscape India plans to produce a handbook to serve as a quick guide for doctors, and will be offering small workshops on simple techniques for writing quickly and clearly, Dube told AFP.

"We have to reach the right drugs so we can save lives," she said, encouraging doctors to write in capital letters and check spellings in drug reference books.

She said improvements could also prevent litigation against [doctors](#), who have long been associated with illegible scribbles.

"I keep on getting so many jokes," Dube said. "Jokes apart, it's a serious note we're putting out."

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