

Delhi orders extra hospital beds after dengue outbreak

September 14 2015

New Delhi's government ordered Monday 1,000 extra beds in hospitals to treat dengue patients, as the Indian capital reels from the worst outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease in five years.

The government was spurred into action following the suicide of a couple whose seven-year-old son died from the fever allegedly after being refused treatment at a number of Delhi hospitals.

As well as the extra beds, Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain ordered "fever clinics" be set up at overwhelmed hospitals to help with the numbers, telling reporters that "there is no need to panic".

"I have ordered all government hospitals that they should not refuse to admit dengue patients even if they have to treat two patients on a single bed," he said.

There have been 1,714 cases recorded in the city so far this year, mostly in recent weeks, compared to 1,695 for all of 2010, officials said.

"This is the worst outbreak in the last five years and it is going to further increase as the weather remains humid," Y K Mann, director of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, told AFP.

Dengue fever, also known as "breakbone disease" which has no known vaccination or cure, strikes fear into the citizens of Delhi when it arrives with the monsoon rains.

Eight suspected dengue deaths have been reported this year.

Hospitals across the capital are stretched to breaking, with TV footage showing patients sharing beds and scores jostling at government health facilities for free tests for the fever.

The government's moves come after a grief-stricken couple jumped from a four-storey building in Delhi last week, two days after their son's death.

The national [government](#) ordered an inquiry into the tragedy following media reports on the weekend that the boy was turned away from several stretched private hospitals, sparking a public outcry.

The virus—first detected in the 1950s in the Philippines and Thailand—affects two million people across the globe annually, with the number of cases up 30 times in the last 50 years, according to the World Health Organisation.

Transmitted to humans by the female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, it causes high fever, headaches, itching and joint pains that last about a week.

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