

Media Synthesis Report on Testing Facilities, Status of Beds in Hospitals and Good Practices

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FINDINGS

TESTING FACILITIES

A. Charge for testing

Govt Hospitals: Covid testing no more free of cost

The government has set fees, Tk 200 and Tk 500, for Covid-19 testing at the public health facilities. The decision came into force immediately, said a circular issued on 28 June by the health ministry's Health Services Division. According to the circular, one has to pay Tk 500 for Covid-19 testing if samples are collected from home. The fee will be Tk 200 if samples are given to dedicated sample collection booths or public hospitals. Private hospitals and health facilities now charge each person Tk 3,500 for Covid-19 testing. The fee goes up to Tk 4,500 if samples are collected from an individual's home.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/govt-hospitals-covid-testing-no-more-free-cost-1922629>

B. No clue about half

Whereabouts of The Infected: DGHS has no clue about half of them

The Directorate General of Health Services has no data on the whereabouts of almost half the people who tested positive for coronavirus. Health experts say the government's latest attempt at enforcing lockdowns on certain areas will be of little benefit unless the authorities know the exact location of the Covid-19 patients.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/whereabouts-the-infected-dghs-has-no-clue-about-half-them-1917913>

C. No Corona test centers in 43 districts

There are no Corona test centers in 43 of the 64 districts

Out of 64 districts in the country, 43 do not have Corona test centers. Samples collected from these districts are being sent to nearby districts for testing, in some cases to Dhaka. This is increasing the pressure in the test centers, creating sample jams. On the other hand, it takes more time to know the test results. In many cases, the collected samples are not being transported properly and are also becoming invalid or discarded. At present, tests to identify Covid-19 are being conducted in 62 centers across the country. Of these, 32 are in Dhaka and 30 are outside Dhaka. Apart from this, samples can be tested through some organizations including BRAC. The analysis shows that out of the 15 newly added centers in Dhaka in the last one and a half months, 14 are private hospitals and diagnostic centers.

<https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/article/1664505/%E0%A7%AC%E0%A7%AA-%E0%A6%9C%E0%A7%87%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B0-%E0%A7%AA%E0%A7%A9%E0%A6%9F%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%A4%E0%A7%87%E0%A6%87-%E0%A6%95%E0%A6%B0%E0%A7%8B%E0%A6%A8%E0%A6%BE->

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/containing-covid-19-testing-kit-crunch-frustrates-efforts-1920045>

D. Shortages vs Availability of kits

Containing Covid-19: Testing kit crunch frustrates efforts

The 300-bed government hospital in Narayanganj is one of the places where testing remained suspended for five days amid kit shortage. "We have the capacity to test 280 samples per day. The demand is huge, but we cannot meet it because of the crisis of kits," Goutam Roy, superintendent of the hospital, told on 24 June.

"The current number of daily tests is poor. We have to take the number to 50,000," said IEDCR consultant and epidemiologist Mushtuq Husain, but pointed out that that might not be possible with PCR machines.

"Right now, we have one lakh and two thousand kits. More kits will come. So there is no kit crisis in the country," said Abul Kalam Azad, director general of DGHS.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/containing-covid-19-testing-kit-crunch-frustrates-efforts-1920045>

E. Untold sufferings of test seekers

COVID-19 test seekers in Bangladesh in dire straits

As the demand for COVID-19 tests in the country has skyrocketed amid a high tide of coronavirus infections, the suspected patients are forced to go through untold sufferings while trying to avail the tests. Accessing COVID-19 tests for common people has become almost impossible.

‘With the present testing situation, we’ll not get the real picture and will fail to take evidence-based actions,’ said noted virologist Nazrul Islam, also a member of the Technical Advisory Committee on COVID-19.

Bangladesh Medical Association’s former president Rashid-e-Mahbub said that the DGHS was failing to manage the COVID-19 situation in all respects. ‘The tests, the isolation of patients, their treatment — all are going on in an unorganised way,’

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/109065/covid-19-test-seekers-in-bangladesh-in-dire-straits>

F. Corona situation in Chittagong

The hill of samples, the test suddenly decreased

According to the experts engaged in corona testing here, at least five thousand samples need to be tested daily as the infection is increasing day by day in Chittagong. Until 10

June, an average of one thousand samples were collected every day, but the test is about half. Two days ago, about four thousand samples from two labs in Chittagong (Chittagong Medical College and BITID) were sent to a lab in Dhaka for testing. Even after that, there are thousands more samples in those two labs. Apart from this, 400 to 500 samples are being collected every day. Mismanagement is responsible for making the situation worse. Although samples were collected from many public and private hospitals and labs in Chittagong, the tests were being conducted in three labs.

<https://www.kalerkantho.com/print-edition/news/2020/06/13/922351>

G. Mistakes and Mismanagement

'Self-serve' report pickup and time-travelling tests

Mistakes, mismanagement of Covid-19 testing at port city's BITID raise eyebrows; authorities say they are short-staffed

Prof Dr Shakil Ahmed, in-charge of BITID laboratory "There is a shortage of manpower so it hasn't been possible to keep a substitute staffer.

SM Nazer Hossain, central vice president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), said BITID officials have "failed to show responsibility and professionalism in their work." "We heard there is a shortage of manpower in BITID since March, but why has that problem not been solved in three months?. "This is just an excuse for irresponsibility now. The main issue is of sincerity and cordiality.

BITID Director Prof Dr MA Hasan said "There is only one PCR machine in Cox's Bazar, but with this, the district tests over 600 samples on average a day. On the other hand, there are six PCR machines in Chattogram, but we can hardly test 500-600 samples each day. We are all here to serve the patients. We are trying our best to deliver reports in the shortest possible time with our limited resources. Our staffs and officials work at the lab for 12-16 hours a day. They also have to type out reports. There is no additional staff for that. Several hundred samples pile up for testing and so it takes time to test and deliver the reports."

<https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/self-serve-report-pickup-and-time-travelling-tests-1922133>

H. Seeks quick disposal of test results

Covid-19: Petition seeks quick disposal of test results

A Supreme Court lawyer 28 June filed a writ petition with the High Court seeking its directive on the health secretary and director general of the Directorate of Health Services to take necessary steps so that reports of Covid-19 tests are handed to patients quickly.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/covid-19-petition-seeks-quick-disposal-test-results-1922125>

I. ICDDR,B joined as Test Centre

ICDDR,B online booking for COVID-19 tests begins

ICDDR,B earlier only tested samples supplied by the government free of charge. From now on, they will collect samples from people by themselves and test those commercially. 'Initially the patient has to book an appointment through online registration by visiting <http://covid19test.icddr.org> and make a payment via debit or credit card or online/mobile banking system"

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/109317/icddr-online-booking-for-covid-19-tests-begins>

J. Rapid test kit is not effective

Gonoshasthaya Rapid Test Kit: BSMMU speaks at last, spurns it

The Gonoshasthaya Kendra-developed rapid test kit is not effective in detecting Covid-19, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University has concluded. BSMMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Kanak Kanti Barua told, The kit can trace novel coronavirus only in 11 percent cases in the first week of infection and in 40 percent cases in the second week,

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/gonoshasthaya-rapid-test-kit-bsmmu-speaks-last-spurns-it-1916337>

K. Inauguration of BGMEA's Covid-19 test at Chandra

BGMEA's state-of-the-art Covid-19 test lab for garment workers was inaugurated at Chandra in Gazipur. Apart from Chandra, BGMEA in collaboration with Badas (Diabetic Association of Bangladesh) has taken initiative to set up state-of-the-art labs in Tongi and Narayanganj. These state-of-the-art labs are capable of accurately detecting coronavirus samples.

<https://www.banglatribune.com/business/news/626570/%E0%A6%9A%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%A6%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%B0%E0%A6%BE%E0%A7%9F-%E0%A6%89%E0%A6%A6%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%AC%E0%A7%8B%E0%A6%A7%E0%A6%A8-%E0%A6%B9%E0%A6%B2%E0%A7%8B-%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%9C%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%8F%E0%A6%AE%E0%A6%87%E0%A6%8F-%E0%A6%8F%E0%A6%B0-%E0%A6%B8%E0%A6%B0%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%A7%E0%A7%81%E0%A6%A8%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%95>

L. Fake COVID-19 certificates

a) A gang

Fake COVID-19 certificates sold at Tk 4-7 thousand

A ring was operating within and outside of the capital's Mugda General Hospital to collect COVID-19 certificates and later forged those for selling to people. The Rapid Action Battalion has recently busted a ring, recovered nearly one hundred fake certificates and held four members of the ring in this connection. Police has been investigating the case and found that the ring was using long queues of COVID-19 test

seekers as an opportunity to lure some of them to buy counterfeit COVID-19 certificates. RAB personnel detained the four people on June 15 from a photocopying shop in Mugda on charge of printing fake COVID-19 negative and positive certificates. <https://www.newagebd.net/article/108973/fake-covid-19-certificates-sold-at-tk-4-7-thousand>

Fake Covid Reports: Cops track down dozen syndicates

Some hospital staffers involved in it; each report sold for Tk 5,000-9,000

While the coronavirus itself is a cause for grave concern in the country, some people are out there making business by putting others at further risk of infection by selling fake Covid-19 certificates. Law enforcers claimed to have detected around a dozen syndicates, who are selling fake certificates during the pandemic. They provide a printed "Covid-19 negative/positive" certificate or an E-mail as per desire, for Tk 5,000 to Tk 9,000. In cooperation with some hospital staffers, these syndicates mainly target those in need of a Covid-19 negative certificate to go abroad, said officials of police and Rab. They have medical staffers, graphic designers and IT experts involved in their gangs. For the certificates, they mainly use DGHS or IEDCR pads.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/fake-covid-reports-cops-track-down-dozen-syndicates-1920021>

b) Regent Hospital

Fake Covid-19 certificates: DGHS directs Regent Group to shut down its hospital branches in Mirpur, Uttara

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has directed the authority of Regent Hospital to close the Uttara and Mirpur branches of its hospital immediately. "We have asked them to close the hospitals immediately," Aminul Hasan, director (hospital) of DGHS said, adding that, "Patients of those hospital would be shifted to the hospital in Bashudhara. If necessary, patients will be shifted to Kuwait Bangladesh Friendship Hospital." The move comes after the head office of Regent Group and its hospital in Dhaka's Uttara were sealed off on charges of issuing fake Covid-19 test certificates and collecting money from Covid-19 patients.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/coronavirus-deadly-new-threat/news/fake-covid-19-certificate-regent-group-head-office-two-hospitals-sealed-1926529>

Seven Regent Hospital employees remanded in a case filed over fake COVID-19 certificates

A Dhaka court on Wednesday placed seven Regent Hospital employees on a five-day remand in a case filed over their alleged involvement in issuing fake COVID-19 test certificates.

<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/seven-regent-hospital-employees-remanded-in-a-case-filed-over-fake-covid-19-certificates>

DGHS claims health ministry high-ups directed it to sign Regent Hospital MoU

Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has claimed that it took initiative to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Regent Hospital as per directives from the top authorities of the health ministry. DGHS came up with the claim on Saturday in a press statement. The statement was made to clarify DGHS' stand about the fraudulence of Regent Hospital owner Md Shahed and JKG Group.

<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/crime-and-law/dghs-claims-health-ministry-high-ups-directed-it-to-sign-regent-hospital-mou>

c) JKG Health Care

Fake Covid-19 certificates: JKG chairman Dr Sabrina on 3-day remand

JKG Health Care Chairman Dr Sabrina Arif Chowdhury, also a government official, was placed on a three-day remand by a Dhaka court today in connection with a case filed over issuing fake Covid-19 test reports.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/jkg-chairman-dr-sabrina-chowdhury-on-3-day-remand-1929657>

44 booths set up for collecting COVID-19 samples

A private voluntary organisation, getting the green light from the government, has installed a total of 44 booths to collect samples from suspected coronavirus patients in Dhaka and Narayanganj. The organisation -- JKG Healthcare -- collects around 300 to 350 samples daily from six places of Dhaka and Narayanganj and later sends them to government laboratories for testing.

<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/44-booths-set-up-for-collecting-covid-19-samples>

d) Impacts of Fake Certificates

Fake Covid Certificates: Public health, country's image abroad at stake

The fake Covid-19 tests have not only posed a risk to public health but also put the Bangladeshi expatriates in trouble. Many expatriates might face problems returning abroad if other countries have a poor impression of Bangladesh's testing and overall handling of the pandemic. Japan, Italy and South Korea have already restricted the entry of Bangladeshis after some of them, with documents certifying that they didn't have the coronavirus, tested positive after they arrived in those countries.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/fake-covid-certificates-public-health-countrys-image-abroad-stake-1927393>

STATUS OF BEDS IN HOSPITALS

A. Only 67 ICUs in Dhaka for treating COVID-19 patients

The number of Intensive Care Units (ICUs) kept prepared for treating the patients suffering from COVID-19 in Dhaka is only 67. In total, there are only 105 ICUs across the country. The ICU facilities are used to help critically ill patients breathe through ventilators.

<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/city/only-67-ic-us-in-dhaka-for-treating-covid-19-patients>

B. Vacant beds

67% of the beds in Corona Medical Hospitals are vacant

Although the number of people infected with coronavirus (Covid-19) is increasing in the country, most of them are not going to the hospital for treatment. 93.56 percent patients are receiving treatment at home. On the other hand, more than two-thirds (67.48 per cent) of corona beds are vacant across the country. Additional Director General of Health Directorate Professor Nasima Sultana said on 26 June, there are 16 corona-only hospitals in the Dhaka metropolis. There are 6,773 general beds for corona treatment in hospitals in Dhaka metropolitan area. There are 180 ICUs. Of these, 2,773 patients are now admitted in ordinary beds; There are 180 patients in ICUs.

<https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/article/1665339/%E0%A6%B9%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B8%E0%A6%AA%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B2%E0%A7%87%E0%A6%B0%E0%A7%AC%E0%A7%AD%25-%E0%A6%B6%E0%A6%AF%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%AF%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%87%E0%A6%96%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%BF>

C. ICU beds

i) Total ICU Beds

733 ICU beds in govt hospitals

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) 10 June informed the High Court that government hospitals across the country have a total of 733 intensive care units (ICU) beds. Of those, 235 ICU beds have been set up at 17 government hospitals since February this year for the treatment of Covid-19 patients.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/733-icu-beds-govt-hospitals-1912325>

ii) Dhaka

DMCH struggles to meet rising ICU demand

Dhaka Medical College Hospital has only 14 ICU beds dedicated for Covid-19 patients or those showing the symptoms. The hospital has around 35 other ICU beds for general patients. Railway Hospital, which has a 100-bed coronavirus unit

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/dmch-struggles-meet-rising-icu-demand-1917453>

iii) Chattogram

Ctg Covid-19 Crisis: More ICUs a crying need

Mostafa Khaled, acting director of Directorate General of Health Services, Chattogram division, said, "Setting up an ICU is very technical and time consuming. Moreover, there is a lack of trained manpower all over the country." He said the government has decided to set up a five-bed ICU in each of all district hospitals. Giving the picture on ICU facilities in public hospitals of Chattogram division, Mostafa said, CMCH has 17 ICU beds, of which seven are for Covid-19 patients. All the 10 ICU beds at Cumilla Medical College Hospital are for coronavirus patients. Besides, 10 ICU beds have been installed in Feni General Hospital, all for Covi-19 patients. But this ICU facility is yet not operational due to lack of trained manpower.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/ctg-covid-19-crisis-more-icus-crying-need-1918325>

iv) Barishal

Sher-e-Bangla Hospital: ICU needs ATTENTION

In March, 150 regular beds and 18 ICU beds for Covid-19 patients were added to SBMCH, the only institution in Barishal division with ICU facilities. Previously, the hospital had 1,000 regular and 10 ICU beds. From March to June 13, a total of 954 patients were admitted at the coronavirus unit; 453 were released. A total of 52 patients have died; of them 17 were Covid-19 positive and the rest had coronavirus-like symptoms.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/sher-e-bangla-hospital-icu-needs-attention-1915665>

v) Khulna

Khulna Division Covid-19: Two dedicated ICU facilities on deathbed

The 10 districts of Khulna division have only two ICUs for coronavirus patients. Both the intensive care units are under public hospitals while no private facility in the division treat Covid-19 patients. All the eight ICU beds of Satkhira Sadar Hospital and all the 10 of Khulna Diabetic Hospital, now under Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH), have been kept for Covid-19 patients.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/khulna-division-covid-19-two-dedicated-icu-facilities-deathbed-1921673>

vi) Sylhet

Covid-19 ICU in Sylhet Division: Unaffordable, inaccessible

32 out of the 46 ICU beds for Covid-19 treatment in Sylhet division are at private hospitals -- 20 at NEMCH and 12 at Mount Adora Hospital. All of the 46 are in Sylhet city. The only public hospital with ICU facility for coronavirus patients in the division is Sylhet Saheed Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital, managed under MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital (SOMCH). All of its 14 ICU beds have been dedicated for Covid-19 treatment.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/covid-19-icu-sylhet-division-unaffordable-inaccessible-1920009>

D. New 1,000-bed facility

Hospital at DNCC Market: Armed Forces to supervise 1,000-bed facility

The Armed Forces will supervise the 1,000-bed isolation hospital for Covid-19 patients on the ground floor of DNCC market in Mohakhali.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/hospital-dncc-market-armed-forces-supervise-1000-bed-facility-1918225>

E. Isolation centre for poor patients

Covid-19 pandemic: Volunteers set up isolation centre for poor patients

A group of volunteers has arranged a 20-bed isolation centre to support the poor and helpless Covid-19 patients in Phulpur upazila of Mymensingh. HELDS Foundation, working for health, environment and literacy in Phulpur, made the arrangement at three rooms on the fourth floor of Phulpur Degree College, under the supervision of local administration.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/country/news/covid-19-pandemic-volunteers-set-isolation-centre-poor-patients-1919577>

F. 2 field hospitals for the metro rail workers

Beds and oxygen cylinders have reached the sites of Metro Rail in the capital's Uttara and Gabtoli, where the hospitals will be built with a capacity of between 10 and 15 beds.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/2-field-hospitals-the-metro-rail-workers-1921689>

GOOD PRACTICES

A. Doctor's dedication

Going beyond the call of duty

Doctor cuts maternity leave short to help Covid-19 patients

A doctor of Chattogram Maa O Shishu Hospital has applied for cancellation of her maternity leave to serve Covid-19 patients at her hospital. Dr Mahmud Sultana Afroza wants to rejoin her work almost one-and-a-half-month before her leave ends, leaving her 4-month-old son at home.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/going-beyond-the-call-duty-1914001>

B. No death in Hospital

Barguna General Hospital: 56 Covid-19 patients recover

As of 20 June, 428 Covid-19 positive and suspected coronavirus patients at Barguna General Hospital have successfully recovered. Of them, 56 were Covid-19 positive patients. No Covid-19 positive patient has died at the Corona unit of the hospital till date, where the first coronavirus patient of Barguna was admitted to the unit on April 9. Of the 428, 217 were admitted to the Corona unit while the rest put in home quarantine and they received treatment over phone. Apart from this, nine Covid-19 positive and 20 suspected coronavirus patients were being treated at the hospital till 20 June.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/country/news/barguna-general-hospital-56-covid-19-patients-recover-1918513>

C. One Hospital for protecting their employees

Covid-19: Sajida Foundation sets example for protecting employees

All their doctors, nurses, medical staff, and administrative officials use fresh PPE everyday

About 1300 doctors, nurses, and other medical staff at various health facilities have been infected with coronavirus across the country so far. But none of them is from Sajida Foundation's hospital dedicated to Covid-19 treatment in Narayanganj, one of the hotspots for the deadly disease. A non profit organization, Sajida Foundation

established the hospital in March and began treatment of Covid-19 patients from the first week of April.

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/health/coronavirus/2020/06/19/covid-19-sajida-foundation-sets-example-for-protecting-employees>

D. Medicine supply by Police

Ctg police station home delivering medicines

Kotwali Police Station under Chattogram Metropolitan Police has introduced a mobile medicine service titled "My Pharmacy" for city dwellers, to fight the artificial price hike. Anyone can get medicine via home delivery for a fair price, after calling the hotline and showing doctor's prescription through digital communication channels.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/ctg-police-station-home-delivering-medicines-1915693>

E. Hassle-free Primary healthcare

Primary healthcare made hassle-free

Daktarkhana is the first general physician (GP) model in Bangladesh. According to founder of Daktarkhan Dr Ratindra Nath Mondal, each area has a GP centre, where people of that particular area can go and get primary medical consultation and treatment.

Since Bangladesh has no specialist field for general physicians, and every year, a large number of new graduate doctors fight for employment, Daktarkhana has been helping the new doctors with employment. Newly graduated students, who have an MBBS degree and are registered as a doctor under Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BM&DC), can take part in a four-day training called GPOC (general practice orientation course) by the General Physicians' Society. After training successfully, one can open a Daktarkhana branch with due permission.

In metropolitan areas, one needs to pay Tk 200 for treatment, while in district and upazila level branches, they charge Tk 100 from the patients.

To open up a medical history record book, one needs to pay Tk 30, while the patients of district and upazila level need to pay Tk 20. However, if someone is unable to bear the fee, Daktarkhana doctors provide with free treatment and medicine.

Since its inception on February 14 last year, it has established 70 branches around the country, while a total of 95 doctors have been offering treatment at Daktarkhana. A total of 15 GPOC have been carried out countrywide, where a total of 3,250 doctors were trained. Another positive aspect of Daktarkhana is that during the Covid-19 crisis, all their branches have been providing free telemedicine.

Currently, Ratindra Nath is aiming to set up a branch for every 20,000 people and in every one kilometre area. "If there is one such branch in every area, only 15-20 percent of patients will need to go to specialists.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/primary-healthcare-made-hassle-free-1920025>

F. Field hospital by a Voluntary Group

Bidyanondo sets up Chattogram field hospital

Bidyanondo Foundation is going to set up a field hospital at beside the Butterfly Park of Patenga in Chattogram for the COVID-19 patients. The 100-bed hospital would be the first hospital with a central oxygen system. The hospital would open in the first week of July. The hospital will have 12 doctors, 18 nurses and 50 volunteers to take care of the patients.

<https://www.newagebd.net/article/108562/bidyanondo-sets-up-chattogram-field-hospital>

G. Isolation centre for poor patients

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<https://www.thedailystar.net/country/news/covid-19-pandemic-volunteers-set-isolation-centre-poor-patients-1919577>