

Fearing cost, patients delay diagnosis of heart disease

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Doctors say diagnosis of a killer heart disease called aortic aneurysm and dissection, where the artery weakens and bursts, is getting delayed because it is hard to convince patients to go in for expensive scans after ECGs show no results. Many patients in the country die because diagnosis or treatment is delayed.

When patients are wheeled into emergency rooms with severe chest pain and discomfort, the first suspect is a heart attack. The first test to ascertain this is an electrocardiography (ECG). "If there are no big vari-

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ations, we order a CT scan to rule out aneurysm or blockage in the main artery of the lung, pulmonary embolism," said Dr K Murali, interventional radiologist, MIOT Hospitals.

An aortic aneurysm is a weakened and bulging area in the aorta, the major vessel that supplies blood to the body. A ruptured aortic aneurysm can be life-threatening. But doctors say it takes them several minutes before they move the patient to the scan rooms. "Sometimes, they fear we are over treating. I spend most of my time convincing them to undergo the procedures rather than wasting time in the operation theatre," said cardiac surgeon Dr V V Bashi.

The hospital is organising a two-day international aortic summit from Friday to discuss latest technology and treatment of the disease.