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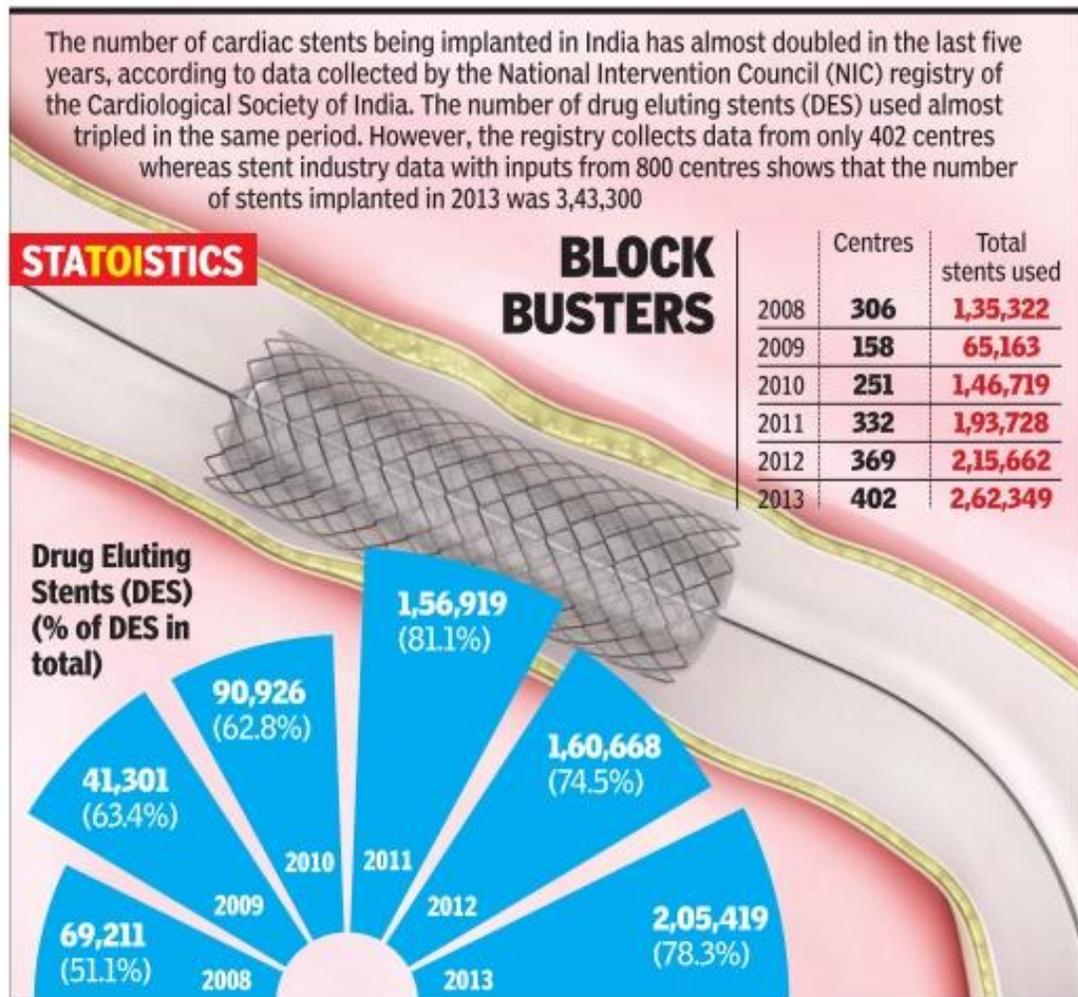
Patients spend Rs 2,500cr on stents every year in India

Following Norms Would Have Saved Rs 1,500cr

Patients spend about Rs 2,500 crore on cardiac stents alone every year in India even by conservative estimates, the bulk of it being paid from their own pockets. This does not include the cost of blood tests, angiography, procedures, charges for hospital stay, doctor's charges and so on.

An estimated four lakh stents were implanted in India in 2014. Of this, over 85% were drug eluting stents (DES), for which most patients pay anything between Rs 55,000 and Rs 80,000. Annually, the stent market is estimated to grow by about 15%, with the growing incidence of cardiovascular diseases. Hence, the market is expected to grow steadily.

Industry sources estimated that though the share of DES was around 78% in 2013, it would have gone up to over 85% in 2014. In that case, the total number of DES sold in 2014 would be about 3.5 lakh. If the average price being paid by patients for a DES is taken at Rs 65,000, the total expense on DES alone would have been approximately Rs 2,275 crore.



The Union health ministry had fixed Rs 23,625 as the price of a DES under various government schemes. If DES was available to everybody at this price, that would cost just Rs 827 crore, a saving of almost Rs

1,450 crore each year. Even if they were all priced at the imported price of about Rs 40,000, the total expense would be just Rs 1,400 crore, a saving of over Rs 800 crore.

Stent manufacturing companies pointed out that what patients pay is based on what hospitals are charging and that it is not the amount the companies are making, which they say is much lower. While Prime Minister Modi talks of 'Make in India', when it comes to stents, more than 60% of the market is with just three US-based multinational firms Abbot, Medtronic and Boston Scientific, which import the stents.

The rest of the market is divided between various Indian device companies like Vascular Concepts, Shahajanand, Meril Life Sciences, Translumina and others who charge Rs 12,000-30,000 for a DES. Their share of the market remains low despite these firms selling their stents in many European and South East Asian countries. Dealers for several multinational companies are known to offer hefty amounts as incentives to doctors and hospitals for every stent used to retain their market share. The margin between the import price and the final price paid by patients is huge enough to accommodate the cost of these large 'incentives'.

Approximately , 40,000 bare metal stents (10% of the stent market) were sold at an average cost of Rs 6,000-10,000, which works out to a market of about Rs 32 crore. The Cardiological Society of India's National Interventional Council registry says 8,500 bio-absorbable stents were implanted in 2013. Industry sources claim this segment of the market has shrunk a bit.