Knowing About Automated External Defibrillator

What is the issue?

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- In recent times the incidence of deaths due to sudden cardiac arrests outside home is increasing.
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- Various Indian cities need to install Automated External Defibrillator (AEDs) in public spaces to address this issue.
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What are AEDs?

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- Automated External Defibrillators or AEDs are portable electronic medical devices to detect life-threatening cardiac activity such as irregular heartbeats and pulselessness.
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- It can revive the heart by defibrillation or application of electricity to restore effective cardiac rhythm.
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- In the absence of a trained medical professional, AED can be used by an ordinary educated person, as it is equipped by simple audio and visual commands.
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What is the need for an AED?

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- During a cardiac arrest, the heart stops functioning due to problems in the electrical system of the heart, disrupting the pumping action.
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- As a result the blood flow to brain and other parts of the body stops, within seconds, a person drops down unconscious and has no pulse, and within minutes, a person suffers death.
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- It is estimated that the failure to administer life-saving defibrillation within 4 to 6 minutes of suffering cardiac arrest is a major factor for 95 per cent of sudden cardiac deaths.
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- A person suffering from cardiac arrest except for timely administering of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and AEDs, there remains no other way to save the life.
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What is the need for AEDs in public spaces?

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- Emergency services in India unfortunately are known to take way more time than they should and therefore, first-aid tools have crucial role to play for saving lives.
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- With a large population size and densely crowded public spaces, there are strong indicators for growing incidence of sudden cardiac events in the country.
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- This makes installation of AEDs in public places important and they should be placed alongside fire-extinguishers or at similar locations.
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- In large buildings, possibly every floor can have an AED, in markets, malls, and public places, they could be placed centrally and at entry and exits.
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- The device may be installed at security guards rooms and surveillance centres as well.
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What measures needs to be taken in this regard?

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- Apart from few initiatives, India is largely unaware of the need for installing AEDs at strategic locations in public places.
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- The changing health scenario is causing a rethink and up gradation of such standards worldwide, and India needs to learn from the US, the need to make this device readily available.
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- Keeping the trends of public health in mind, the union and state governments need to lay guidelines for installation of AEDs.
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- Government should make Installing AEDs mandatory in railway stations, airports, metro stations, and bus terminals.
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- Security staff and emergency service personnel should be trained to administer first-aid services, including CPR and AEDs.
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- AEDs should be installed in traffic police vehicles and patrolling cars, and such officials should be trained to operate AEDs.
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Source: Business Line

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