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## NEET fix: KEA considers tweaks

Inability to switch streams among issues caused by multiple exams

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BENGALURU

With the introduction of national-level competitive exams, including the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), medical and dental seat aspirants find themselves in a quandary. They are unable to switch streams after counselling if they get a better seat. To fix this, and several other issues, the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) plans to propose tweaks to its rules.

As there is a shortage of medical seats, students tend to pick engineering seats as a backup. However, the counselling sessions for engineering colleges are now conducted first, with the NEET counselling following. Once students pick an engineering seat, they are not allowed to shift to medical or dental streams even if they obtain a seat in a "better" college, or vice-versa. To address this, the KEA

has decided to tweak the Karnataka Professional Educational Institutions (Regulation of Admission and Determination of Fee) Act, 2006.

Ujjwal Kumar Ghosh, executive director of the examinations authority, said they would propose to the government to amend the rules as several issues have cropped up because of the multiple entrance exams. Several stakeholders had their first meeting in the last week of September.

### Under pressure

The move has been welcomed by students, who are crumbling under the pressure of keeping up with different counselling schedules for various professional courses. While the counselling for all professional courses through the Common Entrance Test (CET) would be held simultaneously, the scenario has changed with the advent of na-

tional-level exams such as NEET.

Sujith S., a II PU student, said: "Many of our seniors were in a dilemma as the counselling for engineering seats was held first and later the counselling for medical and dental seats through their NEET scores was held. Normally, students pick medical and dental seats first and later, those who do not get these seats pick engineering. But for two years now, the reverse has been happening."

### For NRI students

Among other things, the KEA is mulling over allowing NRI students to write CET for admissions to professional courses for 2018-2019.

"This issue has to be studied before an amendment is proposed. The matter has been referred and, after studying the entire issue and legal position, a proposal will be submitted to the government," Mr. Ghosh said.

# Newer radiotherapy doesn't affect IQ: Docs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Mumbai:** As hundreds of brain tumour survivors gathered at Tata Memorial Hospital, Parel, on Sunday to kick off the international brain tumour awareness week, the hospital's doctors scaled an academic high.

The team's 11-year research work on the merits of newer radiation techniques for brain tumour treatment got published in a reputed international journal over the weekend. An accompanying editorial in the latest JAMA Oncology (a Journal of the American Medical Association) hailed it as "a rare and laudable randomized trial."

The Tata Memorial Centre's doctors, led by neuro radiation specialist Dr Rakesh Jalali, showed that certain IQ (intelligence quotient) and hormonal functions are better preserved with the stereotactic way of radiothe-



**According to Dr Jalali, the research can now act as a template for testing other high precision radiation techniques such as proton therapy, which will shortly be introduced in India**

rapy than conventional methods. Stereotactic radiotherapy allows focused radiation that spares normal brain tissues.

Long trials in radiation therapy are rarely carried out given the nature of brain cancer and newer methods are usually introduced without "level 1 evidence".

"Our research can now act as a template for testing other high precision radiation techniques such as proton therapy, which will shortly be introduced in India," said Dr Jalali.

Tumours of the central nervous system, including

the brain, constitute approximately 2% of all malignancies. In India, it is estimated that 50,000 get nervous system tumours, with 2,500 children getting brain tumours.

"Many of these patients, especially children, are cured, but they may have long-term disabilities," said Dr Jalali. Memory and cognitive It was to study such side-effects that the research was started in 2001. Around 200 patients in the three to 25 age group were enrolled for the study and divided into two groups; one received conventional radiation while the other received stereotactic radiation.