

# 'Need data to understand trends in healthcare'

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DIRECTOR OF Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar (IIPHG), Dr Dileep Mavalankar on Tuesday stressed on the need to collate credible data to understand trends in different sections of health care, like mortality rate, in the country.

Speaking at a panel discussion here at the IIPHG auditorium, Mavalankar said, "We are not a nation of data. We do not have the data of important things like how many deaths. It is important that we work on data to understand trends. Once there is data no politician can hide anything."



**At the inauguration of the new centres, Tuesday.**

The panel discussion, organised to mark the inauguration of the Centre of Water and Sanitation and the Centre of Maternal and Child Health at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) and Indian Institute of Public Health - Gandhinagar (IIPHG) respectively, was moder-

ated by Rajat Gupta, former Goldman Sachs director and current chairman of US-based non-profit organisation WHEELS Global Foundation (WGF).

Missing health educators in the public health structure, lack of political will, non-availability of data in the health sector and use of technology to promote health services in remote areas were some of the topics that were deliberated upon on Tuesday.

Dr Thakor Patel from The Sevak Foundation addressed the issue of open defecation free (ODF) Gujarat and said, "When someone told me that Gujarat is ODF free I asked him to reconfirm and suggested the names of a few villages. There is no re-

search done in what is a good safe toilet which can work across the country. There is a political leader of a backward class who speaks about using technology to clean toilets. We should ensure that we work when we talk about technology in the context of water and sanitation."

Speaking about maternal mortality rates, Mavalankar said, "Our mothers are dying because we have not made the political and social decision to save our mothers. There are many barriers in the system and we need to deal with it. We did not invest in mid-wives. In our rush to invest in nurses and obstetricians, we did not understand the role that mid-wives play."