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## Hospital offers ancient healing



The 30-bed hospital will offer free treatment to patients

One of the first hospitals outside South Asia which specialises in ancient Indian medical techniques has opened in London.

The Ayurvedic Charitable Hospital has 30 beds and five doctors and will offer free treatment to patients who have suffered for years with chronic ailments.

Ayurveda is an ancient practice based on Hinduism and uses a mixture of herbal remedies, massage, strict diets and a spiritual approach to health.

Using what it describes as a holistic system of healing it evolved in India some 5,000 years ago.

▶ Hospital trustee Gopi Warrier "Ayurveda goes to the root of the disease"
◀ real **28k**

The system of medicine takes into account the differences between individuals, and believes that there are three human body types - vata, pitta and kapha.

### Celebrity appeal

It has become increasingly popular in the West, with celebrities such as Cherie Blair, Naomi Campbell and Madonna reported to be among those undergoing treatment.

Health and beauty retailers, including the Body Shop, have also begun to sell Ayurvedic herbal remedies.

> ❝ The West has a tendency to dilute and distort and commercialise everything ❞
>
> Gopi Warrier

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But the hospital's founder, Gopi Warrier, whose family runs several Ayurvedic hospitals in the Indian state of Kerala, says the new hospital is not for rich celebrities but for ordinary people.

"The West has a tendency to dilute and distort and commercialise everything, including sacred knowledge," he told the BBC.

"You see a lot of media coverage about Naomi



Ancient healing techniques will be used

Campbell and Madonna using Ayurveda. It doesn't matter to us," he said.

The hospital will offer treatment on a first come-first served basis to all patients - rich or poor - whom doctors feel they can successfully treat.

### Ancient remedies

Attention will be given to serious ailments such as rheumatoid arthritis, depression, mental illness and asthma.

Residential treatment, which could take a number of weeks, would involve dietary and life style restrictions as well as detoxification therapies.

Mr Warrier believes that most of his patients would be people for whom Western medicine has failed.

But he says that Ayurveda can work as an integrated system with Western medicine.

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"In fact the West is returning to Ayurveda but ... I want to ensure that in [the] hype of this new age western thinking this is not intellectually pilfered from India," he added.

The Ayurvedic hospital will receive funding for the first six months from trustees.

After that it, will need financial support from donors to contribute towards running costs estimated at $4m.

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