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Pune is new hub for health-tech startups

By [Priyanka Sangani](#), ET Bureau | Jul 14, 2016, 04.55 AM IST

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PUNE: When Neeraj Joshi decided to set up a health-tech venture, Pune became his clear choice. That Joshi had spent time in the city as the centre head for Infosys and had a network of contacts may have been a reason, but what made him lock in on Pune was the easy availability of the kind of talent he was seeking for his venture.

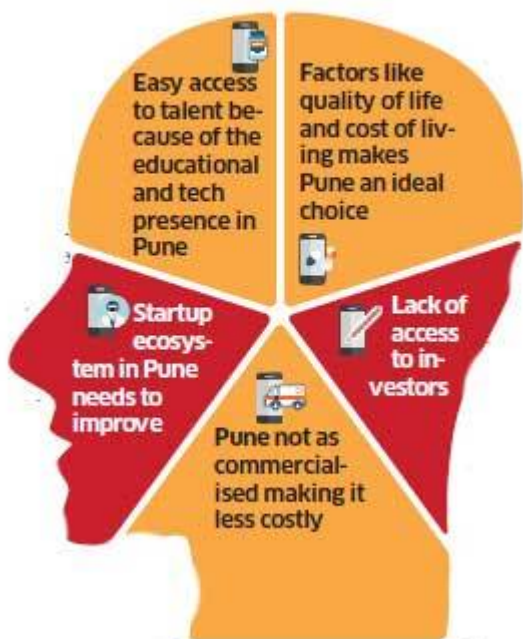
"A lot of tech companies like Infosys and Syntel have their healthcare vertical headquartered here, so there is a lot of talent available," said Joshi, CEO of Thingsmeet Solutions. "Also institutes like Symbiosis Institute of Health Sciences and Ashtang Ayurveda ensure access to experts with domain knowledge and expertise."

The company's first mobile application, [Prescribez](#), is a consumer-focused health management tool that aims to connect doctors to patients and laboratories, and over the next few months will be launching additional services like ordering lab tests online. Last month, Singapore-headquartered Govin Capital announced a health-tech accelerator in the city.

Its CEO, Anand Govindaluri, said: "Pune has the best startup ecosystem because of the natural presence of good medical, engineering and management schools. There is a natural flow of talent that is automatically attracted to Pune, and so identifying management teams for startups with diverse backgrounds is also easier."



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Companies like Medsonway, which delivers medicines, Docplexus, a doctor's network, Allizhealth, which lets you store your health data, and Medifee, which provides pricing information on tests and hospital procedures, are all headquartered in the city.

Abhijit Gupta, CEO of Praxify Technologies, said most companies starting up in Pune are trying to do something unique, rather than provide a me-too service. The company has a team of 100 people in Pune and will be expanding soon.

Using a mix of natural language process and machine learning, Praxify has created a virtual assistant, Mira, which helps doctors with customised workflows to boost productivity, and Siya, a patient engagement app.

"There is a lot of noise in other cities; we wanted to do our groundwork and Pune provided the best environment to do that and stay under the radar. Pune lacks investor attention, but it's better this way — it helps companies focus on the basics and bootstrap. Investors will get involved only when they really want to invest," said Gupta.

Not everyone shares this sentiment, though. Anurav Rane, CEO of Planmymedicaltrip.com, a medical tourism portal, rues the lack of access to investors.

"Pune is a technology hub but the startup ecosystem needs to improve. What works for it, however, are factors like proximity to Mumbai, and for us, a large out-of-town population of students and professionals, which helps create demand for our services," he said.

Abhimanyu Bhosale, CEO of Live Health, a medical records management platform, said that in addition to easy access to talent because of the educational and tech presence in the city, factors like quality of life and cost of living too play a role.

"The high cost of talent in other cities like Bengaluru can make it difficult to find the right people if you are a startup. Though Pune lacks investor support, it's not as commercialised, making it easier to manage the cost of operations, management and travel," he said.