

7-year-old Margao lad gets a liver transplant

By A STAFF REPORTER
reporters@governmentimes.com

MARGAO: Billed at a cost of Rs 15 lakh to his next of kin and a liver donated by his father, Margao lad Albert (name changed to protect identity) got a liver transplant done last month on January 6 at the Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in New Delhi.

This development was a logical consequence of Apollo Victor Hospital in Margao referring Albert to its counterpart in New Delhi in the absence of this facility here.

The transplant was ultimately accomplished successfully last month in New Delhi.

Although still in its embryonic stage in so far as instituting a liver transplant facility at Apollo Victor is concerned, its director vowed to clear the decks for having a kidney transplant facility at this hospital in the South.

However, with this operation at new Delhi culminating in the liver transplant, Albert now joins the list of 501 such operations performed till date at the Apollo Hospital.

Interestingly, adults comprising a whopping majority among these 501, with the Senior Consultant (Paediatric Gastroenterologist and Hepatologist and Group Director at Indraprastha Apollo) Prof Anupam Sibal pegging the figure

of adults at 444 and the success rate of liver transplants at 90%.

The first such paediatric liver transplant was performed in India in the year 1998 on a one Sanjay from Kanchipuram, informed Prof Sibal at a press conference held at Apollo Victor, Margao.

"The seven-year-old child was

RARE SURGERY

flown to New Delhi on January 4 because of his worsening jaundice, excessive sleepiness and intermittent irritability.

On conducting a detailed examination, the case called for an urgent liver transplant. Both parents wanted to donate liver but it was felt that the boy's father's liver was more suitable.

The operation took 12 hours with two teams of surgeons operating simultaneously on the donor and the recipient.

He and his father tolerated the surgery well. His father was discharged within nine days and the patient was discharged on day 19," Prof Sibal told mediapersons.

Later, replying to a host of questions, Prof Sibal claimed seven-year-old Antonio was afflicted with Hepatitis on consumption of contaminated food



and it was a case of acute liver failure.

Asked about the cost factor of the operation, Prof Sibal gave comparative figures of the cost in such operations in countries such as USA (Rs 2 crore), England (Rs 30 lakh), Singapore (Rs 50 to 60 lakh) and India (adults: Rs 18 lakh, children: Rs 12 to 15 lakh). "With the medicines required to treat the patient in such cases being increasingly manufactured in India, the cost is likely to come down still further," Prof Sibal averred.

Replying to yet another ques-

tion as to the duration of the treatment after this operation and the cost factor of the medicines, Prof Sibal said the patient will need to take medicines throughout his life. "However, as time goes by, the dose of medicines will be decreased. The patient will have to incur a monthly expenditure of Rs 6,000 to Rs 8,000 per month," he said, while informing that blood group compatibility and the donation of the liver by a blood relative in the age group of 18 to 60 years are the pre-requisites for a willing donor. "This is in tune with the stipulations as laid down in

the Organ Transplant Act where a blood relative is considered eligible to be legal donor," Prof Sibal informed in reply to yet another question. The patient will have no dietary restrictions imposed on him, Prof Sibal observed while replying to another question.

Replying to an allied question, Prof Saibal said he looked forward to the government enhancing the upper limit of the ceiling in Medicaid from Rs 6 lakh. "Health insurance portability is also a positive development in the field of health insurance for the benefit of the patients," Prof Sibal remarked in response to another question in this regard.

On the other hand, the Director of Apollo Victor Hospital claimed that the Health Minister is positively inclined to have a tie-up for kidney patients referral under government Medicaid to his hospital once this hospital is beefed up with this facility. "The kidney transplant will materialise at Apollo Victor, Margao within the next six to eight months," Albuquerque informed.

The Senior Consultant (liver transplant surgery) at Apollo Hospitals, Prof Subhash Gupta, the Medical Superintendent at Apollo Victor Hospital, Dr Rajesh Javherani also contributed their views and disbursed information about the surgery.



One year later, India's youngest liver transplant survivor going strong



■ Mun Mun Pal is a relieved mother today: her son Suvojit has a new liver and a new life. Liver transplant, like the replacement of any organ, carries the risk of the body rejecting the alien tissue. SUNIL SAXENA / HT

Rythma Kaul

■ rythma.kaul@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Play any piece of music, and toddler Suvojit perks up to its beat.

An year ago, he would have barely stirred.

Suvojit Pal underwent a liver transplant when we was just seven months old.

"His condition was so bad that we weren't even sure whether our baby would survive a year," said Mun Mun Dubey Pal, Suvojit's mother, a Kolkata-based lawyer.

According to the doctors at New Delhi's Indraprastha Apollo hospital, where the surgery was conducted, he was then the youngest baby in the country to undergo a liver transplant.

Suvojit was born with Biliary Atresia, a rare condition in which the liver and intestine are not connected.

If not treated on time, this condition can eventually lead to liver cirrhosis.

It took a team of 24 specialists 12 hours to conduct the transplant and give Suvojit a new lease of life.

Today, the baby is leading life like any other normal one-and-a-half-year-old.

"Suvojit is an example for those who suspect that one becomes a cripple for life after a transplant surgery," said Dr Anupam Sibal, group medical director of Apollo hospital, who was also a part of the team of doctors who conducted the surgery.

"We want to shatter this myth. You can lead an absolutely normal life post-surgery, however, certain precautions need to be taken."

The post-transplant precautions are the same for any child, like taking care of food habits, personal hygiene etc.

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Rare surgery saves kid's life

Unique procedure at Apollo — only the world's second — saves her liver

Sanchita Sharma
New Delhi, February 4

IN A rare surgery — only the second time in the world — surgeons at Apollo Hospital used the appendix of a child to treat Byler's Disease, a genetic disorder that causes the buildup of bile in the body, leading to liver failure (cirrhosis).

In such cases, liver transplantation, a major surgery, is the only treatment.

Four-and-a-half-year-old Triveni Pawar had come to Apollo from Jodhpur last November with an itch so acute that her whole body was covered with welts caused by scratching. Even tufts of hair had fallen out because of secondary infections on scratch wounds on her scalp. "The itching was so bad that she couldn't sleep, eat properly or go to school. She didn't wear clothes at home because it irritated her skin," said mother Gunjan, a housewife.



MOHD ZAKIR/HT
Triveni (centre) with her parents.

KNOW THE FACTS

WHAT IS BYLER'S DISEASE?

It is a genetic disorder that causes the buildup of bile (which helps digest fats) in the body, leading to liver failure

WHAT ARE ITS SYMPTOMS?

Persistent jaundice, fat malabsorption, protein loss, deficiency of fat-soluble vitamins such as A, E and K, poor growth

leading to short stature, stumpy fingers and toes and constant itching caused by bile accumulation in bloodstream

WHAT WAS TRIVENI'S PROBLEM?

Bile is produced in liver from where it goes to the gall bladder and then the intestines. In her case, bile did not get drained from the liver into the intestine, leading to itching

Triveni was born with Byler's Disease (also known as progressive familial intrahepatic cholestasis), the genetic disease which is rare in India though fairly well documented in the US.

Bile — which helps the body digest fats — is produced in the liver from where it goes to the

gall bladder and eventually into the intestines. In Triveni's case, the bile did not get drained from the liver cells into the intestine. To drain the excess bile, surgeons used her appendix to create a bypass from her gall bladder to the surface of the skin through a 2-mm hole on her right abdomen just

below the panty line.

"The surgery is conventionally done using a section of the small intestine to construct a bypass for the bile from the gall bladder to the large intestine or the skin surface. For us, the appendix was a natural choice because it has no function in the body, is narrower than the intes-

tine and so needs a smaller opening (stoma) on the skin's surface, and best of all, it prevented surgical shortening of the intestine," said Dr Sujit K. Chowdhary, senior consultant in paediatric surgery at Apollo.

"She was cured by a relatively simple surgery. If her condition had not been treated, she would have needed a liver transplantation, a major surgery for both donor and recipient. She would also have had to take drugs to suppress her immunity all her life to prevent the rejection of the transplanted liver," said Dr Anupam Sibal, senior consultant paediatric gastroenterologist at Apollo who is treating her.

Three months on, Triveni looks like any other girl her age. "We have rediscovered what it feels like to sleep through the night. All these years, the itching kept her up," said father Rajesh, an advocate.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2009

TIMES CITY

She'll live on as youngest organ donor

16-Month-Old Abhilasha's Parents Took The Decision After Docs Declared Her Brain Dead

Photos: Anindya Chattopadhyay



LITTLE ANGEL: Doctors paying homage to Abhilasha Rahurikar; (right) her parents and elder sister at a press meet at Apollo Hospital

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: She came for a liver transplant, but has instead given a new lease of life to somebody else. Declared brain dead, 16-month-old Abhilasha Rahurikar became the country's youngest cadaver organ donor, said Dr Anupam Sibal, group medical director, Apollo hospitals.

Admitting it was a tough decision to make, her mother Vineeta Rahurikar said: "We know the importance of organ donation, as our child needed one. When doctors told us that she will not recover, we decided to donate her organs. Today I feel proud that my daughter's contribution has helped other live."

Abhilasha was diagnosed with biliary atresia, a rare condition in newborns in which the common bile duct between the liver and small intestine is blocked or absent, soon after birth. "She underwent a surgery for the same when she was five months old in Bangalore, but doctors told us that she would need a liver transplant soon," said Vineeta, hold-

ing her elder daughter three-year-old Ashlesha.

While Vineeta and her husband, who hail from Bhopal, were coming to terms with the reality of their daughter's condition and looking for liver transplant option, Abhilasha's condition deteriorated with each passing day. Her mother qualified as the donor. In January this year, when doctors at Apollo Hospital in Delhi

were evaluating Abhilasha for liver transplant her parents were shocked to learn that their daughter suffered from hydrocephalus, a rare neurological condition in which cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) starts accumulating in the brain. "We had to put a shunt in the brain to clear the CSF, but she could not recover from that surgery. These multiple medical conditions took a toll

on her and she gave up," said Dr Pushpendra Renjen, senior consultant neurologist, Apollo Hospital.

On February 28, doctors declared Abhilasha brain-dead. "We have a team that counsels the family of such patients and tells them about organ donation. Her parents were willing to donate her organs. We retrieved the organs on the same day," said Dr Sibal.

Lauding the parents' role, Dr PC Reddy, chairman, Apollo Group of Hospitals, said: "It is not easy to take a decision like this when you are under so much of emotional stress. What Abhilasha's parents have done will surely give a ray of hope to many patients. We have to create awareness about organ donation and help thousands of people in need of organs."

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