

Fortis Bengaluru performs its maiden heart transplant

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A team of doctors at Fortis Hospital, Bannerghatta Road recently conducted its maiden complex pediatric heart transplant to save a 13-year-old boy from Karnataka who was suffering from dilated cardiomyopathy.

The heart was harvested from a 20-year-old boy who met with a road accident and was declared brain dead later in Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. A team of specialists from Fortis Hospital went to retrieve the heart before a green corridor helped the heart travel in just over an hour.

The heart transplant was performed by two renowned cardiac surgeons of the country, Dr. K. R. Balakrishnan, Director of Cardiac Science; Chief Cardiothoracic and Transplant Surgeon at Fortis Malar Hospital, Chennai and Dr Vivek Jawali, Chief Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgeon, Chairman, Department of Cardio Vascular Sciences, Fortis Hospitals, Bangalore.

The team from Fortis rushed to Visakhapatnam to retrieve the live heart after a potential organ alert was received by the team at Fortis Hospital in Bangalore. A green corridor from the Care Hospital in Visakhapatnam to Bangalore was planned and executed to cover in less than an hour and twenty-six minutes. The transport of the live heart started at 09:30 PM and it reached the hospital in Bangalore at 10:56 PM. The entire procedure right from harvesting the donor's heart in Vizag, its transit and the heart transplant surgery took only 4 hours & one minute.

The interstate coordination and swift execution facilitated the time bound heart transplant procedure. The recipient was in dire need of a heart transplant as he had an end stage heart failure with a serious consequence. The child was off ventilator in 6 hours and recovered smoothly. Because of the poor socioeconomic status of the child, he was kept in hospital a bit longer for ensuring good recovery & prolonged counselling. All reports including heart biopsy shows good acceptance by the body.

Dr Vivek Jawali, Chief Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgeon, Chairman, Department of Cardio Vascular Sciences, Fortis Hospitals, Bangalore said, "This was our first complex pediatric heart transplant surgery at Fortis Hospitals, Bannerghatta road and I am really glad that despite multiple challenges, it went smoothly. The entire procedure was carried out in around 4 hours. The boy was in a critical condition and the heart transplant was the only solution. This successful transplant is a result of cooperation and teamwork of our entire staff member and doctors at Visakhapatnam who harvested and transferred the heart to Bangalore. Also, the team who managed to transport the heart from Visakhapatnam to Fortis Hospitals, Bannerghatta road in 45 minutes. This case proves the ease of the logistic and admirable proactivity and cooperation between the two states Government bodies. After a 48-hour non-stop saga, the child recovered uneventfully and rapidly with minimal blood loss and was off from ventilation machines in 6 hours and is recovering steadily now. The boy has started following a normal diet and additionally started his routine physiotherapy and cardiac rehabilitation exercises."

Dr Jawali further added, "India experiences acute shortage of organ donors every year. The lack of knowledge about organ donation is quite evident, however, through the story of this transplant we believe that it will create awareness among the people and they will come forward for organ donation. An organ donation means giving a second chance at life to someone and allows them to return to a normal lifestyle."

Dr. K. R. Balakrishnan, Director of Cardiac Science and Chief Cardiothoracic and Transplant Surgeon at Fortis Malar Hospital, Chennai said, "The child was suffering from a rare disease among children for which, usually, the morbidity and mortality rate in affected patients is high. In this case, heart transplant was the only way to give him a new lease of life. We had planned a structured procedure which involved removing most of the patient's heart and creating a small cuff at the upper chambers to suit the new heart in the cavity. Post heart transplantation, with routine physiotherapy and proper diet the boy will reach his full fitness level in coming few months, leading a normal life."

The Amalgamation of two teams of doctors from Fortis Hospitals, Bangalore and Fortis Malar came forward to help the patient with the heart transplant surgery at Bangalore.