

Kerala-based Craft Hospital & Research Centre gives hope to parents of SMA-affected children

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Experts at Craft Hospital & Research Centre emphasises the importance of genetic counselling, genetic screening and genetic diagnostic tests as to when and where it has to be applied to prevent such devastating conditions of Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA).

Craft Hospital & Research Centre has successfully dealt with three pregnancies for couples who were carriers of SMA through Preimplantation Genetic Tests (PGT). The IVF PGT-M treatment helps to identify the carrier status and if there are any disease-free normal embryos available, they can be placed in a mother's uterus so that SMA is eradicated from the family and henceforth the next generation also will be free from the disease.

"It has been really unfortunate to see the rising number of Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) in our state. It is said that there are around 102 reported cases in the state suffering from SMA, of whom only a few have received the treatment under the compassionate use programme extended by pharmaceutical companies. We could also witness cases wherein children died of this SMA disease which has been unreported. On the other hand, the drug itself costs so high and many families are not able to afford the treatment. Therefore, we feel it is our responsibility to make use of right technology and techniques which will help in eradicating the genetic burden from families and societies, so that later on families do not feel burdened to buy such an expensive drug to cure their children," commented Dr Noushin Abdul Majiyd, Chief Consultant in Reproductive Medicine & Director, Craft Hospital.

"We agree that the Preimplantation Genetic Tests are expensive but if we compare with the current scenario, the PGT options outweigh the benefits over drug usage to cure SMA which costs much bigger. These top-notch techniques and technologies were available only abroad, but we have been doing it in our hospital with greater success for the last 10 years. We have also reported many successful genetic condition-free pregnancies and healthy babies through PGT technology which eradicated Thalassemia, Citrullinemia, Tay Sachs, Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, and many more apart from SMA,"

said Dr Abdul Majeed, Medical Superintendent, Craft Hospital.