

# Haemophiliac patient undergoes heart surgery

DC CORRESPONDENT  
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A team of 15 doctors performed a challenging and complicated surgery to repair a large aneurysm (widening or dilatation of an artery, a vein, or the heart) and aortic valve (one of the two semilunar valves of the heart) on a haemophilia (a rare genetic bleeding disorder) patient and infused a new lease of life into him.

The open heart surgery, performed for seven hours on 38-year-old Binu Paul from Kerala, was led by Dr V.V. Bashi, chairman, centre for thoracic and cardiovascular care, Miot International Hospital, here.

"Even though open heart operation has been performed earlier in patients with haemophilia, this particular operation, which is one of the most complex cardiac surgeries (David's operation) in a haemophilic patient, is not reported in the world so far," says Dr Bashi who heads the surgical team.

The anaesthesia team was headed by Dr Aju Jacob and haematologist Dr Chezhan Subash, who closely monitored the patient's clotting parameters during the entire process of surgery and post-operative care.

Haemophilia, which predominantly affects the male

population, has made it all the more challenging for doctors to operate upon Binu, because even a minor surgery could make the patient bleed profusely and this can be fatal.

"Another problem was that we could not use artificial valve made of metal as this would need blood thinning tablets for the rest of his life. The patient could die of bleeding if blood thinning tablets were given. As biological valve could last for 10-12 years, necessitating another operation, we decided to repair his own valve along with the aneurysm surgery," Dr Bashi explained on Friday.

By repairing the valve, the doctors ensured that Binu will lead a normal life, and also made sure his quality of life improved. During the procedure, the doctors had to stop every bleeding point before proceeding to the next step and gave clotting factors.

Thereafter, the patient was connected to the heart-lung machine.

After stopping the heart, the ascending aorta was replaced with a synthetic graft and the patient's own valve was then repaired and re-implanted into the graft and the coronary arteries were connected to the graft and finally the heart-lung machine was disconnected from the patient.

## Costly medicines come free

Project Share – a humanitarian initiative that donates blood-clotting medicine called Factor to various countries, had provided ₹10 lakh towards the cost of medicine, for free, to haemophilia patient Binu to undergo the surgery.

Haemophilia is expensive to treat. Up to 75 per cent of the world's estimated 4,00,000 people with haemophilia have little or no access to Factor. Untreated bleeds can cause unimaginable pain, be crippling or even lead to death. The donations are used to treat life- and limb-threatening bleeds, and to enable surgeries and rehabilitation. In addition, Project Share offers educational materials and expertise to guide patients, haemophilia non-profits, physicians and clinics toward self-sufficiency.

"There are about 1,600 haemophilic patients in Tamil Nadu and nearly 18,000 persons in India. We have been bearing the cost of medicines to enable the haemophilic patients to undergo surgeries," says Ms Usha Parthasarathy, coordinator of Project Share.

Founded in 2002, Project Share is a partnership among LA Kelley Communications, Inc., and the corporations: ASD Healthcare, Baxter Healthcare Corporation, CSL Behring, Grifols USA, New England BioLabs, Novo Nordisk Inc. and Octapharma.

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Binu Paul, (third from right), interacts with doctors. — DC