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19-year-old undergoes heart transplant



Chief cardiothoracic surgeon Vijay Dikshit (left) along with patient Veer Anjaneyulu addressing a press conference in Hyderabad on Monday. Apollo Hospital MD Sangeeta Reddy is also present.

“I never thought I will get a new lease of life. I thought I had no future,” remarked 19-year-old Veer Anjaneyulu, a pharmacy student, who recently underwent the first heart transplant surgery carried out at Apollo Health City here.

Thanks to the city traffic police, the harvested heart of the donor was transported from Yashodha Hospital in Secunderabad to the Apollo in just eight minutes.

At a press conference here on Monday, Dr. Vijay Dikshit, Chief of Cardiothoracic surgery, who led the team of specialists who conducted the transplant surgery on November 11, said Veer Anjaneyulu was suffering from a condition called dilated cardiomyopathy, a condition in which the function of heart muscle was severely affected. Despite medical therapy, he had to be regularly admitted to hospital due to difficulty in breathing and swelling of the body. He was finally diagnosed with end-stage heart failure and was advised heart transplant.

On the night of November 11, personnel of the Jeevandan project informed the Apollo hospital that a donor heart was available at Yashodha hospital as the family members of an accident victim agreed to donate the organ. A team of cardiac surgeons rushed there, harvested the heart, transported it and conducted the surgery in just two hours.

Thanking the donor's family, Dr. Dikshit and Sangeeta Reddy, Executive Director, Apollo Hospitals emphasised the need to increase awareness on organ donation. While rough estimates showed that there was a need for 50,000 to one lakh heart transplants a year in the country, only 100 such surgeries were carried out since the first heart transplant done at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in 1994.

Dr. Dikshit said cardiomyopathy was quite common and in most cases the condition could be treated with medicines. Like in the case of Veer Anjaneyulu, the cause of the condition was not known in most cases.

FREE OF COST

Ms. Sangeeta Reddy said the heart transplant surgery was done free of cost. She said that heart transplants normally cost around Rs.10-15 lakhs.