Born with heart & lung disorder, docs say 6-yr-old can breathe easy now

Mihir Sejwal had Early Eisenmenger Syndrome, in which, pressure in the lungs becomes high and oxygen level starts dropping

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 14

SIX-YEAR-OLD Mihir Sejwal was born with Congenital Heart Disorder (CHD) and had multiple holes in his heart. He also had the Early Eisenmenger Syndrome, in which, pressure in the lungs becomes high and oxygen level starts dropping.

But now, after undergoing a banding procedure for lung artery combined with oral medication, which doctors at Max claim is the first in the world, Mihir can hope to make up for all the years he could not play with his friends. Blood is prevented from entering the lungs in banding surgery.

After undergoing banding procedure for lung artery combined with oral medication, which doctors claim is a first in the world, Mihir can hope to make up for all the years he could not play with his friends.

Mihir's first banding surgery was done in October 2004. The second surgery to close the large holes--Ventricular Septal Defects--was done in 2005. Though Mihir's lung pressure is down to 25 per cent, doctors say, they would be evaluating the case for the next ten years.

"We were under so much stress and trauma. I am happy that he can play and run like children of his age. He could barely walk earlier but all is well now," said Rachna Sejwal, Mihir's mother.

The doctors claim they have done 10 such procedures so far. "It's a unique combination (banding and oral medication to reduce lung pressure) to treat patients with Early Eisenmenger Syndrome. Such patients are considered to be inoperable in a majority of cases," said Dr Rajesh Sharma, paediatric cardiologist at Max heart and vascular institute.

The doctors claim the procedure, which has not been experimented anywhere, would be a boon for many. The treatment option has now been acknowledged at the Philadelphia Adult Congenital Heart Center, US.

"It's indeed an honour that a clinical study has been acknowledged by one of the best centers of paediatric cardiac surgery in the US. The work has put India on the map of paediatric cardiology," said Dr Anil Bhan, cardiac surgeon and chief co-ordinator, Cardio Thoracic Vascular surgery.

Doctors say Mihir came to them in 2004 after other hospitals refused to take up his case. "We reviewed the reports and after the angiography, we knew there was high risk but we were sure he could become better," added Dr Sharma.

"Banding is routinely done but the combination of both was a first. Where the conventional closure by putting a patch cannot be done, this procedure will be of help," said Dr Viresh Mahajan, who got an outstanding investigator award for the path breaking study by the US heart center.

Meanwhile, critics say such procedures have been tried before. "This is not a cure for patients with Early Eisenmenger Syndrome. The only cure is a heart and a lung transplant. To have a clinical significance, you need to have a large percentage of patients," said Dr Nishith Chandra, senior consultant, Escorts Heart Institute and Research Center.

Rare surgery saves 6-year-old boy

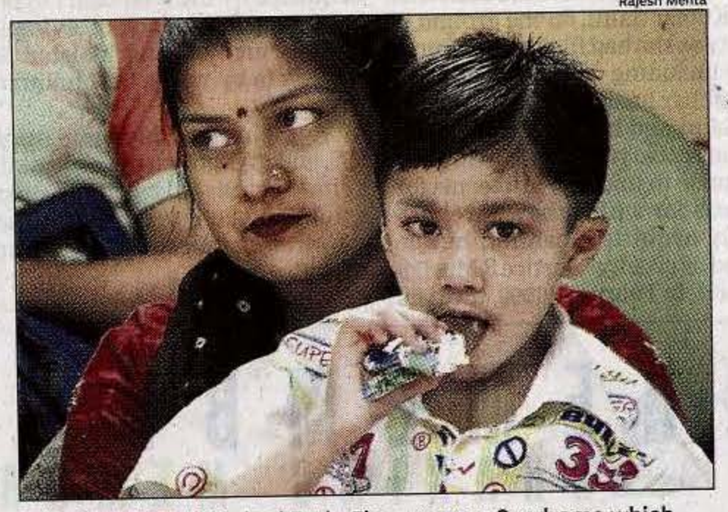
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Bubbling with energy now, it would be hard to tell looking at six-year-old Mihir Sejwal that three years ago he was struggling to survive. With multiple holes in his heart, doctors in most hospitals had given up on him, declaring him inoperable. However, it was at Max Hospital in the Capital that a rare surgery was conducted on Mihir to save his life.

Mihir had Early Eisenmenger Syndrome, a common condition that plagues many of the ventricular septal defect (VSD) or hole in the heart patients when they don't get treated in early childhood itself. The lung pressure increases, in turn damaging the lungs.

Besides, the oxygen levels start declining and exercise tolerance decreases as well.

Rajesh Mehta



HALE & HEARTY: Mihir had Early Eisenmenger Syndrome which affects holed-heart patients who aren't treated when young

graphic designer father Naresh Sejwal: "We knew about Mihir having VSD soon after his birth but his recurrent chest infections prevented us from getting

drome have very little chances of survival, banding of the pulmonary artery helps as it decreases the pressure of blood flowing into the lung, re-

which for instance was 120 mm Hg in Mihir when he first came to Max Hospital in 2004. The normal lung pressure is 30 mm Hg. He was given a drug known as syldenafil to reduce the lung pressure. We also put a band on his pulmonary artery to control the pressure of the blood to his lung. Once his lung pressure had come down we could take the risk of operating on him to close the holes in his heart."

It took almost an entire year to bring Mihir's lung pressure down. It is still 50 mm Hg and he has to take drugs to keep it down. However, he is fine and has even started attending school. "I wanted to be like Hrithik Roshan when I grow up,"says a cheerful Mihir.

This rare surgery was done on nine other children after Mihir, eight of which have