

Case study — Medical

The prognosis came as a death knell to Arti and Hari. Their six-month-old daughter, Priya had only a few months to live. Priya was born with Congenital Acyanotic Heart Disease, and had a large hole in between the two main blood vessels of the heart, namely the Aorta and the Pulmonary Artery.



Occurring in only about 0.01 per cent of congenital heart disease patients, the condition leads to rapid increase in blood pressure of the lungs and unless operated upon immediately, mortality rate is as high as 90 per cent.

Priya exhibited breathlessness, coupled with excessive heart activity, which could be visible over the child's chest, a condition for which the harried parents had sought medical opinion from a couple of medical institutions. They were advised to go in for immediate high-risk surgery, the cost of which was estimated to be in the region of Rs300,000.

Hailing from a small village in Satara district, Maharashtra, with a modest economic background, this amount was far in excess of the Rs50,000 that they had managed to raise on a war footing through savings and borrowing. They then decided to approach the Miraj Heart Institute, Wanless Hospital, Miraj, which is institutionally linked to the Trust.

"The cost of the surgery here was Rs120,000. However, Priya's condition was very grim and hence I immediately admitted her and prepared her for surgery," recalls Dr Pargaonkar, medical superintendent at Wanless Hospital. "I subsequently sent an appeal to the Trust to secure financial aid for this child. I could not wait for the funds to arrive, as immediate surgery was the need of the hour. Besides, I was sure that the Trust would sympathetically consider the case."

Priya underwent successful surgery in July 2007, and the hole was closed. The pressure in her lungs stabilised and ten days later, she was discharged. Looking into the financial condition of the family and its inability to cope with the entire expenses of this major surgery, the Trust sanctioned Rs45,000 as part reimbursement towards the cost of the procedure. The amount may seem insignificant, given the astronomical costs associated with such surgeries. However, it has definitely ensured that Priya can grow up normally and lead an active and fruitful life.