

Indian city stops traffic to save heart transplant patient

Recently the unending traffic in a city in India came to a stop, and it wasn't because of a major accident, traffic light problems or even the horrendous rush-hour congestion.

It was because of a heart.

Doctors and police worked together and coordinated the very special delivery that was well worth stopping the city's traffic for.



A 21-year-old was waiting for a heart transplant at Fortis Malar Hospital. She had been waiting for 2 weeks - that's a long time when you're in need of a heart. A heart became available for transplant at the Gandhi Government Hospital, but the two hospitals are more than 12 kilometers apart and on opposite sides of the city.

As the surgeons prepped the transplant patient they knew that time was of the essence. They hoped for the best but they anticipated the city's heavy rush hour traffic slowing down the organ's delivery, decreasing the odds of a successful transplant, so they contacted the traffic police.

The police knew that with the traffic conditions as they were at that time, it would take at least 45 minutes for the heart to reach the hospital. That's too long. The police mapped a route for the ambulance and then stationed officers at all intersections along the route. Thus creating a red light-free route that allowed the heart to arrive at its destination in just 13 minutes and 22 seconds.

"We in the police take medical emergencies seriously and in case of organ transplants make all efforts to help patients," said a spokesperson for the city police.

"The request like the one we got from Fortis Malar requiring help in transporting the heart harvested from a donor is rare. We informed all the traffic inspectors to facilitate smooth passage of the ambulance."

"As soon as the heart was brought, the transplant began." said Dr. Suresh Rao.

"The patient is fine and all her vital parameters are functioning normally. She is up, talking and smiling but it will take some time to get discharged." the doctor said.

The patient, a university student, had been diagnosed with a severe heart condition. While taking her final exam, she had a stroke and collapsed. A heart transplant was her only chance at survival.

"Hvovi wouldn't have been able to survive for more than six months had the heart transplant not been done. After she was admitted into our hospital, we put her on waiting list. After waiting for about two weeks, we got the heart of a 27-year-old, the victim of a road accident, who was declared brain dead." said Dr. Rao.

A human heart should not be without blood circulation for more than four hours. In this case, the heart was successfully transplanted well within that timeframe.

"After harvesting the heart from the brain-dead patient, we had to implant it in Hvovi within four hours. With the help of the police, we transplanted the heart, and Hvovi will now have to spend at least a week in the intensive care unit. A heart transplant patient can easily lead a normal life for more than 10 years."

Hvovi's mother expressed her gratefulness to the donor's family.

"My heart goes out to the brave mother who agreed to donate the heart of her son (declared brain dead in an accident) despite her immense grief," she said. "We are indebted to the mother whose son's heart gave a new lease of life to my daughter."