

## KMCH Surgeon Performs Rare Surgery In Colombo

**By Our Staff Reporter**

COIMBATORE – The seed for Medical Tourism that was sown on the premises of Kovai Medical Center and Hospital a couple of weeks ago has grown and blossomed on the soil of our neighbouring country – Sri Lanka, as an interventional radiologist was flown from KMCH to render emergency medical treatment to a foreigner.

Mrs. Mala Ranasinghe, a 65-year-old woman was admitted to the National Hospital in Colombo with severe headache and the CT scans had shown blood on the surface of the brain (sub-arachnoid hemorrhage). A Digital Subtraction Angiogram revealed the bleeding to be from the right internal Carotid artery which is a major blood vessel supplying to the brain. The blood vessel had two areas with abnormal bulges called aneurysms. If these aneurysms were left untreated, there would be a high risk of a second hemorrhage which could be fatal.

This is the premier hospital in the country with an excellent Department of Neurosurgery. Meanwhile, the case in question was an extremely difficult and complicated one to treat through surgery due to the presence of two aneurysms. The neurosurgeons in Colombo felt that the safest treatment option would be to treat these aneurysms without opening the skull by a procedure called GDC coiling.

In this procedure, a small tube (microcatheter) is inserted in a blood vessel in the thigh and navigated into the abnormal sac in the blood vessel in the brain under imaging guidance. But unfortunately, this procedure had never been performed in Sri Lanka before and if so, this would be the first double aneurysm to be ever coiled and treated without surgery on this island country.

Dr. Nihal Wijeyawardena, a radiologist at the hospital, consulted Dr. Mathew Cherian, who has a vast coupled with rich experience in successfully treating similar cases at

KMCH, Coimbatore.

Shifting the patient out of the country was out of question keeping in view the critical condition of the patient and hence treatment had to be arranged in Sri Lanka itself. However, considering the urgency and gravity of the situation Dr. Mathew Cherian flew to Colombo and the procedure was carried out on Sept. 9.

Under general anesthesia, first a thin balloon was navigated into the abnormal blood vessel and positioned close to the aneurysm. This is called the 'remodeling balloon' and this would be used intermittently to ensure that the coils did not prolapse out of the abnormal sac into the normal vessel, which could lead to a massive stroke.

Then a finely specialized tube was guided by the side of the previous catheter into the aneurysm itself. Subsequently, six fine platinum coils were carefully placed within the aneurysm obliterating it completely. Following this the second aneurysm

was treated in a similar way.

An angiogram after the procedure showed that the procedure had successfully treated both the aneurysms.

The total procedure took four hours. A little later, when the woman recovered from the anesthesia she found it hard to believe that she was able to do everything normally with no scars anywhere on the head or close to it.

Dr. Nishal, son of the patient, could not believe that the ordeal was finally over. This was truly a historical procedure – the first patient to have two aneurysms treated without surgery in Sri Lanka.

The hospital has now requested Dr. Mathew to develop this procedure and other interventional radiology procedures at the National Hospital as a visiting consultant, which would mean frequent visits for at least a year to enable the Sri Lankan doctors to start these procedures.