

New technique to cure aneurysm sans surgery

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

COIMBATORE - For the first time in the City, a 70-year-old man, with complaint of aneurysm (dilation of the artery), was cured by a novel technique using tiny stainless steel spring coils, thus avoiding costly surgery.

The new technique called 'endovascular spring coil embolisation' was performed by Dr. Mathew Cherian of Kovai Medical Centre and Hospitals.

Perumal Gounder, a farmer of Bhavani, was suffering from a swelling of the size of tennisball, in his posterior, for the past two years. He was advised to undergo surgery by a hospital at Erode. When he reported at the KMCH a few days ago, the doctors found that one of the arteries from the hip to the left part of the portion had abnormal dilation (aneurysm) and it was pulsating, giving excruciating pain.

The normal treatment would have been a surgery by opening the abdomen and reaching the dilated artery. It would have kept the patient in the hospital for two weeks, with all attendant risks of blood loss, sutures, etc.

But what Dr. Mathew Cherian did was to adopt the endovascular spring coil "embolisation" technique. Embolisation means 'blocking' by using tiny spring coils. If the flow of blood to the concerned part is blocked, the patient can be relieved of his symptoms. So the doctors punctured the skin at the left shoulder and then introduced a catheter through the hip, through a polyethylene capillary tube.

The doctors delivered 20 spring coils, one after another straight to the dilated section of the artery.

According to Dr. Cherian these spring coils are imported stainless steel materials, costing between Rs.12,000 and Rs.15,000. But the

KMCH doctor indigenously prepared the spring coils and got them sterilised.

The 20 spring coils formed themselves into a chain, pressing the artery tightly at the posterior. It had a dramatic effect as the pulsation of the artery came to a stop. Within a few minutes, the swelling subsided. The entire procedure took less than an hour and the patient remained fully conscious, as he was put only under local anaesthesia.

Within three days, the patient returned to normal. The old man was very cheerful when newsmen met him at the hospital and said he was now free from the swelling as well as pain and that he was eager to go back home.

Dr. Mathew Cherian said the new technique of spring coil embolism was being tried only in two centres in India - at Shri Chithra Thirunal Hospital in Trivandrum and at K.M. Hospital in Bombay.

He said that aneurysm, if not attended to promptly, may prove fatal, due to bursting of the blood vessel. The surgery could have cost around Rs.10,000, excluding the cost of hospitalisation, which may last 10 to 14 days.

Dr. John, a colleague of Dr. Cherian who had surgically treated aneurysm in U.K. and other places, said the novel technique of spring coil embolisation was not only safe but also cost-effective, compared to surgery, though surgery could not be avoided in some cases.

The embedded spring coils can remain for ever in the body of the patient, without causing any damage. The entire procedure has to be performed using a sophisticated "image intensifier", (costing Rs. two crore) which help the doctors to monitor the "voyage" of the spring coils to the right place through T.V. screen.