

Lilavati Hospital, Mumbai commissions foetal surgery department

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As per latest available data, five out of 5,000 births require specialised care. Lilavati Hospital, in association with the Spina Bifida Foundation, has partnered with Poland's Medical University of Silesia, to inaugurate a foetal surgery department, aiming to repair birth defects and foetal conditions before birth.

Spina bifida, a congenital birth defect, occurs at the foetal stage, when the spinal cord, brain, or their covering called meninges don't grow properly. It can happen anywhere along the spine and is usually seen as a hole at birth.

This collaboration seeks to offer foetal surgery as a primary clinical option for intrauterine correction, significantly enhancing the prospects for affected infants. However, some conditions like spina bifida, large neck masses, lower urinary tract obstructions, and certain tumours can adversely affect foetal development, necessitating timely intervention to prevent further harm.

Experts speak on foetal surgery

Dr Santosh Karmarkar, a senior consultant and paediatric surgeon at Lilavati Hospital, emphasised that foetal surgery represents a significant advancement in prenatal healthcare to prevent long-term complications for unborn infants.

He also pointed out that approximately 70% of the patients are not getting the required treatment due to lack of awareness or financial constraints. These patients also lack proper and timely guidance and medical care, forcing them to fend for themselves.

In this regard, a conference was also held to raise awareness about the importance of foetal surgery in India. It served as a forum for leading experts, practitioners, and researchers from around the world to convene and discuss various aspects of the surgery. *Free Press Journal*