



Lilavati Hospital and Research Centre

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Spina bifida: 4 to 5 cases per 1k births

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Parents of nine-year-old Master Lavesh had the shock of their life when they came to know that their child had spina bifida. The family took him to various doctors for treatment, but they were unable to help him.

Finally, the mother contacted the Spina Bifida Foundation and was selected for their Incontinence Surgeries (Bladder Augmentation, BNR Mitrofanoff and MACE).

"We couldn't believe when doctors informed us that my son is born with a birth defect for which he needs to undergo surgery. We couldn't afford the surgery as our monthly income was only Rs20,000. Meanwhile, we got to know about the Spina Bifida Foundation, which provides treatment to those born with such birth defect and we admitted our son to Lilavati Hospital where he underwent successful back closure surgery," Master Lavesh's father said.

According to the doctors, spina bifida cases have been

burden in Maharashtra and across India, with an alarming four to five cases reported per 1,000 live births. Currently two to three patients are undergoing treatment for the congenital birth defect at Lilavati Hospital.

Spina Bifidi can happen anywhere along the spine and is usually seen as a hole in the baby's back when they are born. Sometimes, it can be a sac filled with fluid sticking out from the spine, which may or may not have the spinal cord inside.

Dr Santosh Karmarkar, a paediatric surgeon at Lilavati, pointed out that approximately 70% of the patients do not get the required treatment due to lack of awareness or financial constraints.

"Medical professionals are calling for proactive measures to address this issue and stress the importance of tackling the root causes of spina bifida. We plan to establish a state-of-the-art fetal surgery centre in Mumbai dedicated to performing complex in-utero surgeries," he said.

ABOUT THE CONDITION

A birth defect in which a developing baby's spinal cord fails to develop properly

The condition occurs when a developing baby's spinal cord fails to close properly in the womb

Symptoms can sometimes be seen on the skin above the spinal defect. They include an abnormal tuft of hair, a birthmark or protruding spinal cord tissue