

CHILDREN'S HEARTLINK™ SPOTLIGHT ON INDIA

ABOUT OUR WORK IN INDIA

India is the world's second most populous country with one of the world's fastest growing economies. Yet, the country still struggles with poverty, and children with congenital heart disease face a shortage of pediatric specialists and uneven access to adequate medical care. As an organization dedicated to promoting cardiac care for children in underserved regions, Children's HeartLink™ is committed to continuing and building on our work in India.



Children's HeartLink is a non-governmental organization working in partnership with health care centers in underserved regions of the world to promote sustainable cardiac care for children with congenital or acquired heart disease. For over 10 years, Children's HeartLink has worked with pediatric cardiac centers in India, providing training and education to medical professionals in order to strengthen diagnosis and treatment of children with congenital heart defects and rheumatic heart disease. Currently, Children's HeartLink works with four partner hospitals in India – Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences in Kochi, Narayana Hrudayalaya Institute of Cardiac Sciences in Bangalore, Innova Children's Heart Hospital in Hyderabad, and our newest partner, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research in Chandigarh.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

- Congenital heart disease (CHD) is the most common major birth defect and affects millions of children around the world. Approximately one in every 120 children is born with a heart defect.
- In India, very few children with CHD receive optimal treatment. Each year in India, an estimated 180,000 children are born with CHD.^{1,2} Of these children, nearly 60,000 - 90,000 suffer from critical CHD, requiring intervention in infancy.^{1,2} And yet, in 2005, the total cardiac operations for CHD, across all age groups, approximated 6,500.¹ In the rest of the affected children, CHD remains either undiagnosed or untreated, and a vast majority of these patients will die.^{1,2}
- In India, the lack of trained professionals to treat children with CHD is staggering. In 2005, there were only 14 centers in the country with infant and neonatal cardiac surgery facilities; the total number of dedicated pediatric cardiologists and cardiac surgeons was about 25 and 10-12, respectively.¹

HOW DOES CHILDREN'S HEARTLINK HELP?

- Children's HeartLink works with teams of medical volunteers who provide training and education to

¹ Saxena, A., Congenital Heart Disease in India: A Status Report. Indian Journal of Pediatrics. July 2005; 72 (7): 595-598.

² Kumar, R.K., Vaidyanatham, B. The global burden of congenital heart disease. Congenital Cardiology Today. Oct 2005; 3 (10):1-8.



our partners, and treatment for local children. Volunteers from Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University, in California, Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota, Mayo Clinic, the University of Minnesota, Gillette Children's Hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Children's Hospital Boston have donated their time to support Children's HeartLink's work in India.



Photo by Sameer Moban of www.yolkstudio.com

- To meet the varying needs of our partner hospitals, our volunteers participate in cardiac training visits, provide on-site, customized training and support, and sometimes serve as hosts and mentors to Indian medical professionals whom we send to the West for specialized training. To date, Children's HeartLink has provided our Indian partners training, donated equipment and supplies, and support for charity care totaling \$2.1 million.

CHILDREN'S HEARTLINK'S PARTNERS IN INDIA

- **Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi (AIMS), Kochi:** During our ten-year relationship with AIMS, the Institute's pediatric cardiac team has become a valuable resource for the pediatric cardiac community in India and the world. Today, AIMS serves as a regional center of excellence in treatment and training. With the support of Children's HeartLink, AIMS has implemented a hospital-wide infection control program that incorporates concepts and techniques developed in the West and adapted by AIMS staff for use in a limited resource environment.
- **Narayana Hrudayalaya Institute of Cardiac Sciences, Bangalore:** Since 2002, Narayana has been a valuable partner for Children's HeartLink in strengthening India's pediatric cardiac care infrastructure. At Narayana, Children's HeartLink has supported nurse training delivered via distance learning technology from Mayo Clinic, arranged for training and consulting visits by experts from the U.S. in clinical pharmacy, infection control, central sterilization, and intensive care nursing, and provided critical supplies and funding in support of Narayana's charity care commitment.
- **Innova Children's Heart Hospital, Hyderabad:** Innova is the first hospital in India dedicated solely to pediatric cardiac care. Children's HeartLink has coordinated three full-team cardiac training visits to Innova and has provided education to Innova's staff across a range of disciplines. In June 2010, Innova introduced the newly developed Parent Education/Discharge Instructions program, produced by Children's HeartLink to train nurses to help parents and other caregivers better understand how to care for their child after a heart operation.

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