

Baby with 'external heart' recovers after surgery: reports

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A 10-day-old baby born with a heart on the outside of his body is recovering in an Indian hospital after undergoing surgery to create space for the organ, reports said Friday.

The unnamed boy from the eastern Indian state of Bihar had a complete thoracic ectopia cordis, a rare condition when a child is born with the heart in an abnormal position, the reports said.

"We gently placed the heart partly in the heart cavity and partly in the stomach cavity without twisting, kinking or rotating anything," cardiac surgeon A. K. Bishoi who operated on the boy told the Hindustan Times newspaper.

Born to labourer parents, the infant was also suffering from a blood infection after his parents wrapped him in a thin towel to cover the "jutting out" heart, the paper said.

He was brought to New Delhi in a non-air-conditioned train from their native state at the height of the humid, rainy season here and was then transferred to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Doctors said the three-and-half-hour surgery was a challenge as they had to push tiny lungs aside and the liver to make space for the heart to be set while ensuring that it continued to beat normally once inside the body.

"We had to literally create a home for the heart in the baby's body but I am glad he is showing signs of recovery," Bishoi said but warned the child was still in critical state.

"Now we have to see how he responds to the surgery. Every minute is important," the surgeon told the Press Trust of India.

"Only when he goes back home hale and hearty can we conclude that this is a successful path-breaking surgery in the history of our hospital," the doctor added.

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