

India doctors remove foetus left inside mother for 36 years

August 26 2014, by Abhaya Srivastava

Doctors in India have removed the skeleton of a foetus that had been inside a woman for 36 years in what is believed to be the world's longest ectopic pregnancy, a doctor has said.

The 60-year-old [woman](#) became pregnant at the age of 24 but suffered a miscarriage because the [foetus](#) had been growing outside of her uterus, the doctor told AFP on Monday.

The woman, from a poor rural area of central India, was "terrified" of having [surgery](#) at the time to remove the remains of the foetus, and instead sought medication for the pain at a local clinic.

Although the pain gradually subsided, it returned years later, forcing the woman to seek medical help in a city hospital, Murtaza Akhtar said.

"She came to us complaining of pain in the abdomen," said Akhtar, head of surgery at the N.K.P. Salve Institute of Medical Sciences in the city of Nagpur.

"This is a case in which the woman got pregnant outside the uterus. She told us she was pregnant in 1978 and it was a mature [pregnancy](#)," he said.

Doctors felt a lump on her lower right abdomen and feared it could be cancer—but further tests and scans revealed a calcified mass.

"Once we saw the scans, our first reaction was 'what are we dealing with'? It was actually a matured skeleton encapsulated in a calcified sac," Akhtar said.

"A 60-year-old woman with a foetus lying in her abdomen for 36 years is a medical marvel. It's something we had never heard about."

The [doctors](#) searched medical literature and discovered a woman in Belgium who had retained the remains of a foetus for 18 years following an [ectopic pregnancy](#), the longest they could find on record.

An ectopic pregnancy occurs when the egg implants outside the uterus, usually in the fallopian tubes.

A team of doctors in Nagpur successfully performed surgery to remove the mass that was lodged between the woman's uterus, intestines and bladder.

Skeletal remains that were removed are seen in video footage laid out on a hospital bed, and include numerous parts of a rib cage, leg and arm bones and sections of a skull, spine and pelvis.

"She was shocked when she first got to know what had happened. But she is fine now and is recuperating," Akhtar said.

The footage shows the grey-haired woman, who has declined to speak with media, resting comfortably on a hospital bed, and being examined by her team of doctors.

"As far as this case is concerned, it's the rarest of rare cases and very difficult to believe," Akhtar said.

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