

A first for India: Rainbow Children's Hospital saves baby by airlifting with ECMO support

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*18-month-old becomes **youngest patient** to receive lifesaving treatment.*

Rainbow Children's Hospital has displayed the highest degree of medical expertise and commitment by saving an 18-month-old baby boy from Goa who was suffering from severe Pneumonia and ARDS and was on the highest ventilatory support. Rainbow Children's Hospital, Hyderabad, has demonstrated excellent teamwork, coordination, and commitment with a heroic effort to save this little child. This is the first time a medical intervention such as this one has taken place in our country.

The child had ARDS (Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome) secondary to Influenza pneumonia. He was already on respiratory support for 1 week. He was on high-frequency ventilation, 100% oxygen and maximum support on HFOV. As he was not maintaining oxygenation in spite of all this support, the only way he could now be saved was by initiating ECMO and being transferred to a hospital that could manage such patients.

ECMO is Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, a process in which the blood is pumped outside of one's body and to a heart-lung machine that removes carbon dioxide and sends oxygen-filled blood back to the tissues in the body. This helps the lung to rest, heal and maintain oxygen.

Dr Dinesh Kumar Chirra, Director of Intensive Care Services said, "As a leading pediatric ECMO centre with survival rates comparable to developed countries, as soon as we received the call for transport, the whole team including Pediatric Intensivist, Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgeon, ECMO trained perfusionist, ECMO trained intensive care nurse and the Biomedical team geared up to initiate transport with ICATT team and make all arrangements to conduct ECMO safely in Goa hospital and transfer the child here."

Dr Kapil B Sachane, Senior Consultant Neonatologist and Pediatric Intensivist, trained in ECMO in the UK, was heading the Transport team along with **Dr Sai Ram, a Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgeon**, explained, "Rainbow Retrieval Team has worked relentlessly for more than 24 hours to accomplish this task. Within four hours of the decision of ECMO, our team was next to the baby in Goa, and he was swiftly initiated on ECMO within 6 hours. The Baby was extremely sick, and it was very challenging to initiate ECMO in a new facility. Also, this was the first time such transport

had been conducted in the country. Once initiated on ECMO at the local hospital, half the job was done. The baby's oxygen saturation improved, and the parents had a sigh of little relief. We had an excellent surgeon who did a great job. Our team worked tirelessly to ensure that the baby was safe before and during transport."

Dr Farhan Sheikh, Head of Department, Pediatric Intensive Care, mentioned, *"The child had very severe lung disease and was on ECMO support for 29 days (about 4 weeks). It was because of meticulous planning and coordination among various stakeholders that we were able to execute this transport. It was very challenging to manage this baby during the prolonged stay in the unit. He had many ups and downs during his stay. The parents were very supportive too. With impeccable teamwork, round-the-clock intensive care specialist cover and excellent infection control practices we were able to save this child."*

Dr Anupama Yerra, Senior Consultant Pediatric Intensivist, said, *"Our ability to rapidly airlift the child in need of ECMO support has been a game-changer. Thanks to our strong partnerships with major air ambulance providers, we ensure that sick babies receive safe, efficient and timely transport. This helps us utilize the golden period for saving lives, making timely intervention possible, and ultimately bringing hope to families in their darkest hours."*

Dr Ramesh Kancharla, Chairman and Managing Director, Rainbow Children's Hospital, said, *"Rainbow has the largest network of Neonatal and Pediatric Transport services in the country. We have been doing both road and air transport for more than two decades. We have transported many tiny and sick babies. Recently we became the first in the country to airlift and transport an infant with PPHN on HFOV with inhaled Nitric Oxide. I am very happy for the family and extend my congratulations to the medical team for demonstrating exceptional teamwork."*

The baby boy has now made remarkable progress, has come off ECMO and is now on low-flow oxygen. His parents are planning to take him back to Goa very soon.

Rainbow Children's Hospital goes the extra mile, literally, to retrieve young patients, even from the remotest areas, demonstrating its commitment to saving children's lives. With strategic tie-ups with all major air ambulance service providers, they act instantaneously, ensuring swift transport and timely intervention. Their dedication has resulted in numerous lives saved.

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