

HEART TO HEART TALK

JANUARY, 2021

From the Desk of Chitra Viswanathan

*To the "Hero Warriors" of 2020,
our heartfelt gratitude!*

I take this opportunity to wish our donors, well-wishers, volunteers, our MGM Healthcare team a very Happy New Year! On this auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti and Pongal, we pray:

"May you be healthy. May you stay well."

The year 2020 will go down in the history books as the darkest year yet. A year that locked down the world and destroyed the lives and livelihood of so many people. In these dark and challenging times, doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers rose to the occasion with their selfless caring while putting themselves in harm's way.

This year also tested the resilience of Aishwarya Trust as never before. The COVID-19 Pandemic brought our operations to a grinding halt in March/April 2020. We had to suspend all screening camps, and corrective surgeries were performed only in extreme emergencies. As a result, many infants and children were shut out of surgical interventions and even palliative care.

While the world stayed locked down, babies were born, including babies with congenital heart defects (CHD). Requests and referrals from our public health officials were coming with increased frequency. Our doctors and nurses and our partner, MGM Healthcare, were ready to hit the ground running as soon as the restrictions began to ease. Our screening camps resumed in August 2020. With growing demand from public health officials, we had to expand our camps' geographic scope to newer locations such as Madurai (Samayanallur), Sivagangai, Tenkasi, Tiruvallur, and Cheyyar. In addition to running our regular screening camps at Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram and Vellore. Each of the screening camps followed strict COVID protocols, putting patient safety first.

By October, we were back to Pre- COVID levels of screening and performing paediatric cardiac surgeries. This year Aishwarya Trust has conducted 33 screening camps, screened over 3475 children for congenital heart defects, supported 143 surgical interventions, 187 other interventions, and 11 heart transplants. These numbers would be a creditable achievement during normal times, but given these turbulent times, we are humbled and

grateful to our fantastic team of doctors, led by Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan, nursing staff, and MGM Hospital for making this possible.

Complex neonatal cardiac surgery is challenging at any time, but performing such surgeries in COVID times has meant extra caution (not to mention cost) in the operating room and ICU protocols. Our doctors and nurses rose to the challenge and got the program back on track during these extraordinary times and saving precious lives in the process. We could not be prouder of their commitment and dedication to our cause. If our children are brave, "Heart Warriors," our doctors and nursing staff are our "Hero Warriors!"

Our Cardiac team also continued performing heart and lung transplants; many lung transplants were for post-COVID patients from all over India. Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan received an award from the Director of Medical Services for doing the maximum number of Heart & Lung Transplants in Tamil Nadu.

Aishwarya Trust celebrated its 12th Anniversary in early March 2020. November 2020 marked the first anniversary of our partnership with MGM Healthcare. We hope to build on the foundation of this partnership for the greater good of saving precious young lives. We are also pleased to announce the Aishwarya Trust Beneficiary Information System (AT BIS) roll-out to capture and store key information pertaining to Aishwarya Trust's beneficiaries through the lifecycle of their engagement with the Trust. We are grateful to our Trustee, Mr. K.R Chandrasekaran, who took upon the task of building out a robust database and had the system up and running within a short span of 14 months. The AT BIS went live in Q1 of FY 2020-2021, and Mr. Sreekumar and Mr. Gokul ably manage its day-to-day operations.

The long -term effects of coronavirus disease on children with CHD is yet unknown. Meanwhile, our focus is on restoring normalcy to our screening program and providing support to needy families and children suffering from CHD and in need of surgical intervention.

We dedicate this issue of the newsletter to our doctors, nurses, and volunteers, our true heroes of the year 2020!

*Best wishes,
Chitra Viswanathan*

SCREENING CAMPS ROUND-UP

Aishwarya Trust Screening Camps are vital to our fight in eliminating CHD. These camps act as an early detection center to help identify children in need of early intervention and surgeries for heart ailments and defects. These camps are ably run and managed under the guidance and leadership of our doctors, Dr. Ramyashri and Dr. Rajesh Kumar.

Aishwarya Trust's screening camps are held in partnership with Tamil Nadu State Government under the auspices of Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), a programme of Rural Health Mission. We recommenced our screening camps in August and since then run around 16 camps at several locations in Tamil Nadu: Madurai (Samayanallur), Sivagangai, Tenkasi, Tiruvannamalai, Vellore, Villupuram, Tiruvallur, and Cheyyar.

Several of the children identified for CHD have undergone treatment, further interventions, or surgeries at MGM Healthcare and other local affiliated Hospitals.

Running screening camps during a pandemic posed enormous challenges and risks for our doctors and healthcare workers. Aishwarya Trust was among the few NGOs that were ready to meet this challenge. Our doctors and volunteers ensured the camps followed strict COVID protocols and kept everyone safe and socially distanced. We are profoundly grateful and humbled by the selfless dedication of our doctors, nursing staff, and volunteers who help save precious lives.



TENKASI

On November 6, Mr. G.K. Arun Sundar Dhayalan, Collector, Tenkasi, inaugurated this camp and welcomed the doctors, healthcare workers, and volunteers. A total of 215 children were screened for CHD (congenital heart disorder), and 78 children were referred for further surgeries or other interventions at Chennai's MGM Healthcare.



TIRUVANNAMALAI:

Dr. Ramyashri led the Tiruvannamalai camp. A total of 85 patients were screened for CHD, and 20 of these children were referred for further interventions and surgeries at MGM Healthcare.



SIVAGANGAI:

Dr. Rajesh Kumar and his team of healthcare workers screened 50 patients at the Sivagangai camp. Twenty-five patients were selected to undergo further interventions. Doctors have so far treated 12 of these children who required either immediate intervention or surgeries at MGM Healthcare, Chennai.



MADURAI, (SAMAYANALLUR):

This camp had an overwhelming response, with over 80 children screened over two days at the Samayanallur camp, 69 were identified for CHD. Forty of these children with minor ailments were treated locally at Harshita Hospital. However, 29 children in need of procedures or surgeries were referred to MGM Healthcare, Chennai, for further evaluation and treatment.

Aishwarya Trust feels blessed, seeing so many children from underprivileged families get timely access to world-class treatment and care under the supervision of world-renowned doctors at the prestigious MGM Healthcare's Paediatric Cardiac Center.

'AT BIS' – HARNESSING DATA FOR EFFECTIVE PROGRAM RESULTS

In our June 2020 Newsletter, we had informed our readers about our team working at developing a Beneficiary Information System (AT BIS). We are pleased to announce that this project has progressed well ahead of schedule and is now in the implementation stage.

Mr. K.R. Chandrasekaran, Trustee Aishwarya Trust took the lead in creating a robust system to manage and monitor our beneficiaries' progress on an on-going basis. This required creating a plan to capture data, key information, and storage on each beneficiary patient through the lifecycle of their engagement with Aishwarya Trust.

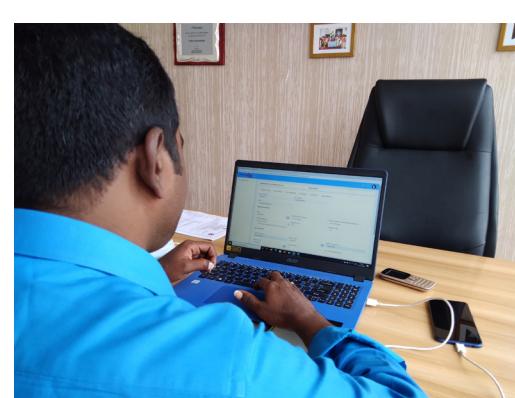
Aishwarya Trust's Beneficiary Information System (AT BIS) went live in Q1 of this financial year (FY 2020 - 2021). AT BIS harnesses information technology to further improve the quality of service to our beneficiaries and enhance our CHD Program's effectiveness. Simply put, AT BIS captures (and stores) key information pertaining to Aishwarya Trust's beneficiaries through the lifecycle of their engagement with AT.

Almost all of AT's beneficiaries are infants and children from the underprivileged sections of society. While AT's medical panel, along with our partner hospital, ensures best in class treatment for our beneficiaries, we are equally concerned about their continued well-being and progress post-surgery. We plan to use AT BIS to monitor their progress over time and make the necessary medical

information available to doctors for review, anywhere, anytime in their life. By making such records accessible online, our doctors can review the patients at the screening camps, thereby obviating the need for them to come to the hospital for routine reviews.

Analysis and research of the information captured in AT BIS, over time, can help improve the effectiveness of our CHD Program. Due care has been taken to maintain patient data confidentiality with access strictly limited on a 'need to know' basis.

We are grateful to P.K. Sreekumar and Gokul for their day-to-day responsibility to update and manage the BIS.



Seen here Mr. Gokul working on the Beneficiary Information System

Aishwarya Trust congratulates Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan on his recent publication and acceptance of four Research Papers. AT BIS is proud to have played a part in supporting Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan's efforts.

A MOMENT OF GREAT PRIDE



Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan receiving the award from Dr. Radhakrishnan. Also, in the picture, Dr. Suresh Rao and senior doctors from the Heart and Lung Transplant team.

Our Transplant Team, headed by Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan, was honoured as the Best Team for performing the maximum numbers of successful Heart and Lung Transplants by the Tamil Nadu Health Secretary, Dr. J. Radhakrishnan.

CELEBRATING OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY

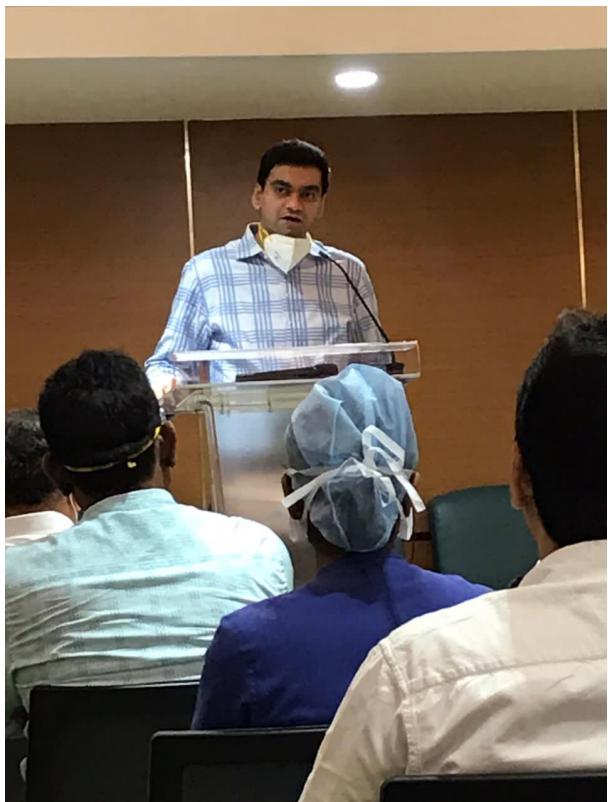
In November 2019, Aishwarya Trust officially joined the MGM Healthcare team in a partnership committed to bringing world-class Paediatric Cardiac Services to families most in need and without access to any healthcare. Given the Trust's mission of saving young lives (especially children from underprivileged families) and lower infant mortality rate through early detection and treatment, we forged this partnership to accelerate our work and reach communities across Tamil Nadu.

We commenced our work right away with the guidance and leadership of Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan, India's foremost cardiac surgeon. The first year was a test of our resilience and commitment. No one could have predicted the challenges and obstacles in the way of a global pandemic bringing an essential service like Paediatric Cardiac Services to a grinding halt. Despite it, we prevailed and can look back with satisfaction on our work together in saving precious lives. Between March - December 2020, we have held 20 screening camps across Tamil Nadu and supported around 187 surgical interventions. Our team of doctors at MGM Healthcare was the first to perform a paediatric heart transplant under a COVID lockdown, the first in South East Asia to perform Biventricular Heart Implant on a 3-year old child. Our Heart Transplant team, led by Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan, was awarded the Best Team for completing the maximum number of successful heart and lung transplants. These achievements are a testament to our panel of doctors and MGM Healthcare management's commitment to working collaboratively for the greater good.

The one -year anniversary was marked by a subdued event held in November 2020. Dr. Prashanth, CEO of MGM Healthcare, welcomed and addressed the doctors, nursing staff, and guests on this occasion, followed by a cake-cutting ceremony.



Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan, Co-founder, Aishwarya Trust addressing the audience.



Dr. Prashanth, CEO, MGM Healthcare addressing the audience at the First Anniversary of Aishwarya Trust partnership.

A TRANSPLANT THEIR ONLY HOPE FOR SURVIVAL!

Each of these children suffered from acute congenital heart disorders or heart failures. They had been through multiple hospital admissions, leading to worsening conditions. Born into underprivileged families, their parents could not even afford the cost of medicines but only helplessly watch their children suffer. In most cases, the only hope for survival is a heart transplant. The cost of hospitalization, pre-transplant workup cost, and heart transplantation cost are not economically viable or remotely possible for these families.

With the continued generosity of donors such as the H.T. Parekh Foundation and the support of other individual donors, Aishwarya Trust has been able to step in and provide medical support and financial assistance to these needy families. Every young life is precious and worth saving. We are grateful to our panel of doctors, nursing staff, and MGM Healthcare for providing these young patients world-class treatment and care. It is heartening to see these children get a new lease of life and bring hope to their families.

We hope to touch and save many more lives in this coming year with our donors' support.

We wish these brave children a bright future!

SASIDHARAN

Sasidharan, nine years. Since a three-month-old baby, he suffered from Dilated Cardiomyopathy. Father, a street vendor of small plastic items, could not afford the costly medical expense. Aishwarya Trust stepped in and paid for the pre-transplant workup required. He underwent a heart transplant in September 2020. He is doing well today and is looking forward to a happier childhood.



VARNIKA MOTWANI



Varnika Motwani, 14 years. She suffered from Dilated Cardiomyopathy, besides renal and liver dysfunction. Her case was fast deteriorating with multiple heart failures; a heart transplant was the only solution to save her life. Hailing from a middle-class family from Gurgaon, the parents needed support with the mounting medical expenses. Aishwarya Trust and other donors came forward to help the parents meet the hospital and transplant expenses. She underwent a successful transplant on 30th September.

Varnika, seen here celebrating her 14th birthday with her family and Dr. K.R. Balakrishnan.



SUBHASREE

Subhasree, 12 years. Diagnosed with Post Viral Myocarditis Dilated Cardiomyopathy. Her father, a daily wage earner, could not even afford the cost of medications to save his daughter. She underwent a heart transplant on December 29, 2020. Aishwarya Trust has promised to support the family with financial assistance and medical support till the child is ready to be discharged.

LAKSHANA

Lakshana, 11 years. She was diagnosed with Truncus Arteriosus at a Paediatric screening camp held at Erode. She needed immediate surgery to correct the anatomy. Her father, a small-time farm worker, could not meet the entire expense, even after getting a subsidy from the Tamil Nadu CM Scheme. With help from Aishwarya Trust, Lakshana underwent the high-risk surgery for CHD in October 2020.

Post-surgery, Lakshana is back at her home and hopes to lead a normal life.



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