Amirta hospital performs rare surgery, tribal boy gets new life
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A 13-year-old tribal boy, who has a rare medical condition, "encephalocele", in which brain oozes out of the gap in the skull into a sac-like structure, giving the patient's head a grotesque appearance, will now mingle with his friends and even go to school, thanks to a group of doctors in Amritha Institute of Medical Sciences (Amrita Hospital) here.

Manikandan, son of plantation worker in Parambikulam, in Palakkad district, was the butt of ridicule since birth because of a rare medical condition which forced him to remain in his house all these years, will be able to do all activities like the children at his age, Amrita Hospital Plastic and Reconstructive surgery head Dr Subramania Iyer said.

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Though in the beginning, his parents were believed it is a boon and it is growing trunk like Ganapathi, they did not take it seriously. But later it was found a burden to their ward, the parents approached a hospital where it was confirmed as a kind of rare illness, which forced them to take the boy to Amrita Hospital," he told reporters at a press meet here.

A fist-sized ball of brain matter used to hang from Manikandan’s nose as a pendulum. It obstructed his vision and deformed his nose and face, he said adding that however, after 11-hour-long marathon surgery by a group of 10-member doctors team from various departments, succeeded in removing the growth rom bran, and reconstructed the nose of the boy, giving a new lease of life to the tribal boy.

"It was a complex surgery. Manikandan’s encephlocele was very large which had pushed the bone of his right eye outwards. For surgery, his skull was opened and the normal brain isolated from the sac of non-functioning brain matter hanging from his face. The removal of the deformity left a defect in the skull, a portion of which had to be reconstructed. The patient’s eye sockets were repositioned to remove the deformity in the right eye, and the nose was also remodeled. All these were huge surgical challenges. Manikandan has recovered fully from the surgery and is ready for discharge. He will now be able to attend school and participate in all social activities like any other child of his age," Dr Subrahmania Iyer said.

The surgical team that operated on Manikandan consisted of paediatric neurosurgeons, craniomaxillofacial surgeons and plastic surgeons, assisted by neuro anaesthetists and a paediatric neuro ICU nursing team. It was led by Dr. Subrahmania Iyer, Dr. Suhas Udayanarayanan and Dr. Pramod Subhash.

"for the surgery, it was carried out with the direct efforts of Kerala welfare of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes besides Palakkad District Collector P Marykutty, IAS.

The whole activities, right from spotting the boy to provide medical attention was done by Palakkad district Tribal welfare officer Suresh.

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