

Abbott India launches device to treat congenital heart defects in premature babies

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First and only minimally invasive, transcatheter treatment specifically approved for premature babies with patent ductus

Abbott, the global healthcare company, has launched its Amplatzer Piccolo™ Occluder in India, the world's first medical device that can be implanted in the tiniest babies (weighing as little as 700 gms) using a minimally invasive procedure to treat patent ductus arteriosus, or PDA. One of the most common congenital heart defects occurring in premature babies, PDA is a potentially life-threatening opening between two blood vessels leading from the heart.

The Amplatzer Piccolo, a device even smaller than a small pea, now offers hope to premature infants and newborns who need corrective treatment, and who may be non-responsive to medicine and are at high risk to undergo corrective surgery.

"Piccolo is a critical advancement in the standard of care for the most vulnerable of premature babies who may not be able to undergo surgery to repair their hearts," said Payal Agrawal, general manager for Abbott's structural heart business in India and the Subcontinent.

The Amplatzer Piccolo Occluder is a self-expanding, wire mesh device that is inserted through a small incision in the leg and guided through vessels to the heart, where it is placed to seal the opening in the heart. It is designed to allow the physician to insert it through the aortic or pulmonary artery, as well as to retrieve and redeploy the device for optimal placement. Because the device is deployed in a minimally invasive procedure, many of the premature babies who are critically ill in the neonatal intensive care unit are able to be weaned from artificial respirator support soon after the procedure.

"This product is a potentially life-saving advance that will help us treat these delicate infants who might otherwise not be able to survive," said Dr. Edwin Francis, Senior Consultant, Head of Paediatric Cardiology Department, Lisie Hospital, Ernakulum. He further added, "This is an excellent pre-loaded device, which means it doesn't need much preparation, and has a softer profile that is easy to deploy. It has more variety in terms of size and is therefore suitable for babies of different ages and weight."