

Call to Make Artificial Hearts in India

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Chennai: An artificial heart pump that has a manufacturing address in Ayanambakkam, and not quite Arizona. Sounds strange, but imminently possible if surgeons and engineers who are forming the Indian Society of Artificial Thoracic Organs have their way.

“Even though we have brilliant engineers and clinicians, we are not making healthcare devices in India. It is high time we started. Perhaps within the next five years we will be able to come up with HVADs, LVADs and ECMO devices made in the country,” said Dr Suresh Rao K G, Chief of Cardiac Care at Fortis Malar Hospital.

The reason why many pa-

tients with end-stage heart disease do not make it isn't the lack of technology or expertise to keep them going. It is just that it takes an arm and a leg (and a tiny fortune) to import and use the technology.

In a bid to bridge that gap and live up to Modi's 'Make in India' mantra, heart sur-

where 2% of the population suffers from consistent cardiac trouble, these devices can really bridge economic barriers.

Most of these devices cost upward of ₹20 lakh and the entire bill can creep up to eight figures.

It all began with medical questions that Malar's Direc-

with bio-medical engineering and we felt that having a workshop to foster that thinking was important,” said Dr Krishna Kumar. He roped in bio-engineering experts from across the world and is bringing them to Chennai for a two-day workshop that begins on Friday.

“The basic problem is that universities are separate. What we need is an umbrella university where research can go on back and forth - where engineering colleges and medical colleges aren't different, but have a chance for cross-pollination and research of that nature,” said Professor K R Rajagopal, a much-feted academic who teaches at Texas A&M University and is a specialist in the field.

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geons from Fortis Malar Hospital and scientists from IIT Madras' department of Engineering Design are pioneering a movement to foster indigenous research.

In a country like India

tor of Cardiac Sciences Dr K R Balakrishnan posed to IIT-Madras' Professor R Krishna Kumar.

“There were a lot of medical issues that he faced that we have been trying to solve