50th Free Surgery conducted at Cleft Lip & Palate Care Centre for Children at FMRI, Gurgaon.

Milestone achieved by Fortis Memorial, Gurgaon in association with Fortis Foundation and Operations Smile India within one year of the launch of this exclusive center catering to children born with facial deformities

20th May 2016, Gurgaon: Specialists at Fortis Memorial Research Institute (FMRI), Gurgaon conducted their 50th free surgery at the Cleft Lip and Palate Centre for Children by carrying out a successful cleft repair surgery on a six-month old infant, Akansh from Mewat, the southern-most district of Haryana. The Centre was launched at FMRI in collaboration with Fortis Foundation and Mission Smile India in February 2015 to initiate a comprehensive Clinic for Cleft Lip, Palate and other facial deformities exclusively for children from the economically weaker sections of society.

Baby Akansh had a congenital deformity called cleft lip due to which there was opening in the upper lip that extended till his nose. This was associated with feeding difficulties which in turn hindered his physical growth. The parents reported to the hospital with the infant for the screening. At that time the child was too small to be operated. A regular follow up was planned and when the baby turned six months old the cleft repair surgery was conducted on Monday, May 16th by Dr Amitabh Singh.

A cleft is a gap or opening where the body structures that form before birth do not fuse as the normal body structure does. The deformity is caused by abnormal facial development during gestation. Babies with palatal clefts may have compromised hearing and therefore, if the baby cannot hear, it cannot try to mimic the sounds of speech. Thus, even before expressive language acquisition, the baby with a cleft palate is at risk for receptive language acquisition. Because the lips and palate are both used in pronunciation, individuals with cleft usually need the aid of a speech therapist. Clefts can also affect other parts of the face such as the eyes, ears, nose, cheeks, and forehead. The outcome of this non-fusion condition may pose problems with feeding, ear disease, speech and socialization. Individuals with cleft also face many middle ear infections which may eventually lead to hearing loss.

Specialist services at the Centre include Plastic/Maxillofacial Surgeons, anesthesiologists, pediatricians, speech therapists, ENT specialists, child life psychologists, and dental surgeon/orthodontists and 65 cases have been screened so far since inception. Patients who have undergone corrective surgeries range from babies as small as 3 months old to 27 year-old adults, 30 of these being male and 20 females. As regards cases, 24 were on cleft lip/lip deformity, 18 on cleft palate/palate fistula and 6 cases included both types of deformities. There were two rare cases on nasal deformity and burn contracture. Out of the total 50 cases, 36 were from Haryana, 12 were from UP and one each from Mathura and Kolkata.

Dr Gagan Sabharwal, Maxillofacial Surgeon, Dental Sciences, FMRI shared that, “A cleft lip or palate can be successfully treated with surgery, especially if conducted soon after birth or in early childhood. Approximately 1 in 700 children born have a cleft lip or a cleft palate or both. However, only 20-30%
children born with the problem actually receive corrective surgeries. This has to be followed by speech therapy to make it effective and this one of the focus areas of our Centre”.

Dr Amitabh Singh, Consultant Cosmetic and Plastic Surgeon, FMRI, said, “Under the joint initiative, free surgeries to children from less privileged sections are provided to enable them enjoy the joys of normal childhood. These children are also given free speech therapy sessions, after the surgery. Overall, the Centre through a comprehensive pre and post-operative approach has helped change the lives of many children”.

Mr. Jasbir Grewal, Head, Fortis Foundation said, “Under the UMEED programme at Fortis Foundation, our objective is to provide need-based healthcare programmes for children from marginalised sections of the society who don’t have access to quality healthcare. The surgeries required to treat children suffering from cleft lip and cleft palate are unaffordable for those with limited financial resources. UMEED ensures that through timely medical interventions and post-operative care, children can lead a functional, healthy and fulfilling life”.

“This is a first of its kind centre offering comprehensive services for Cleft Lip and Palate care. A child born with a cleft has an opportunity for a range of treatments under the same roof starting from a surgery to speech therapy to orthodontic treatment and cosmetic surgeries such as rhinoplasty and corrective jaw surgery (if needed) over their developmental years, under pediatric guidance,” said Dr Simmardeep Singh Gill, Zonal Director, FMRI.

About Fortis Memorial Research Institute
Fortis Memorial Research Institute is the flagship hospital of Fortis Healthcare Limited. It is a multi-speciality, quaternary care hospital with a comprehensive team of clinicians and patient care programmes, supported by advanced technology and medical research solutions. Set on a spacious campus with a potential bed capacity of 1,000 beds, this ultra-modern facility utilises and showcases some of the latest technologies in use in world class health care. Some of the milestone technologies at the hospital include amongst the first pilot project for precision Radio-surgery in the world, integrated operating and procedure rooms, digitized critical care cubicles, advanced Cath-labs, transplant rooms, endoscopy suites, private birthing centres, a state-of-the-art radiation wing and a stem cell lab to name a few facilities. A range of thoughtful services and health facilities for patients and their attending family include several Art ‘n’ Health programmes to recuperate, a mini theatre to de-stress, retail therapy outlets for immediate needs and a food court providing a choice of dining options to replenish energies.

About Fortis Charitable Foundation
Set up in 2005, The Fortis Charitable Foundation (FCF) was constituted as a trust with Malvinder Mohan Singh & Shivinder Mohan Singh (The Singh Group), Japna Singh and Aditi Singh as its founder trustees. The Foundation works in an inclusive manner not only to align and synergise the social enterprise work of the group companies but to expand its circle of partnerships with Government, Non-Government Organisations (NGO’s) and other Corporates. Fortis Charitable Foundation, through its dedicated team of employees and volunteers focuses on five committed programmes that work towards the health and wellbeing of Women; Children; Disaster Relief (Preparedness and Operations); Enabling and Sustaining Charitable Healthcare Infrastructure; Creating and Supporting Open Platforms for Health Information. For information and details please visit our web-site at www.fortisfoundation.in
For more information, please contact:

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