

## Liver transplants on rise in capital



A liver transplant operation in progress. FILE PHOTO

**Pratik Kumar**

**NEW DELHI, DHNS:** Surgeons conducting liver transplants in the city say Hepatitis C is the single biggest reason pushing patients to the operation table.

The hospitals in the city conduct nearly 60 per cent of the country's liver transplants. And many are now opening up dedicated liver ICU (Intensive Care Units) to handle greater patient inflow from both country and abroad.

City doctors who specialise in transplanting livers say that nearly 50-60 per cent of the patients come from South and Central Asian countries.

"Hepatitis B or C, obesity and alcoholism are the major reasons for liver dysfunction," said Dr Vivek Vij, director of liver transplant programme at Fortis Hospital in Noida.

"Unlike the US, most Indian patients go for living donor transplant because here brain dead donations are very few," he said. According to Mohan Foundation, a non-profit organisation that coordinates donation of organs and transplant activities in India said that in the Delhi-NCR region only six persons pledged to

donate their liver during July 2012 to July 2013. Typically, liver donation involves a small part of the donor's liver.

"Last night I enjoyed movie and popcorn with my mother. She had to remain without salt for 8-10 months," said Rajat Agarwal who donated his liver to his mother. "Salt absorbs water which is not good for liver functioning," he added.

It is estimated that about two lakh people are diagnosed with end stage liver disease per year and nearly 0.02% population (25,000) of them need liver transplants, according to the Mumbai-based Global Hospital which specialises in transplanting livers.

Fida Hussain, a UK immigrant from Pakistan who came for his father's liver transplant told that his search for a speciality hospital ended in Noida.

Vij said liver transplant surgeries last for 10-12 hours and engages 25-30 doctors. "We have done more than 100 transplants and recorded a 100 per cent donor and 97 per cent recipient survival rate. Treating obese and paediatric cases are the most difficult," he said.