

A ray of hope for kidney patients

Mamta Singh writes about Andheri-based The Narmada Kidney Foundation which works for the benefit of those suffering with kidney ailments

Statistics, research and case studies suggest that compared to various other diseases, kidney failure and kidney related diseases cause a lot more suffering. More so because of the limited treatment options and their staggering cost. That there is a lack of awareness on the subject doesn't help either.

Keeping all this in mind, a charitable trust The Narmada Kidney Foundation (NKF) was founded in 1999. Based in Andheri (E), its sole purpose is to work for the benefit of kidney patients. With more than 1,200 members, including volunteers, patients, doctors, social workers dedicated to the cause it's no surprise that the trust is able to do a lot of good for society.

The most recent milestone that NKF has achieved in collaboration with K-Care Incorporation is the launch of its new service "Dialysis @ home". The inauguration of the service was held on January 26, 2007 at the Goregaon Sports Club. According to Rajni Dhuwad, co-ordinator NKF, the service will be a boon to patients who are too ill or otherwise unable to travel to the dialysis centre.

He says, "The foundation is equipped to set up

the entire unit in the patient's home even if he resides on the 15th floor." This will not only be convenient, cost and time effective but also comfortable for the patient.

For this service, a portable hemodialysis machine, a portable water treatment plant is carried by an ambulance to the patient's residence and dialysis is provided at the comfort of his home.

To start with the service will be provided only between Bandra and Borivli. Elaborating on the entire process, Dr Meeta Shah, general physician and trustee of NKF says that two machines are taken to the patient's home. One is a water purifier that treats the tap water that is used from the patient's house and the second is the dialysis machine which is attached to the water purifying machine. A technician and one helper accompanies the equipment. They are there for the entire procedure. The process takes up to four hours but will also depend on the condition of the patient. Dr Bharat Shah, consultant nephrologist at Lilavati and Nanavati hospitals, feels that this dialysis at home is an extension of the dialysis treatment. It is another op-



The mobile dialysis service which was inaugurated on January 26, 2007

tion that people who are suffering from kidney ailments can avail of. Rajbala Mittal was the first patient to have benefited from this scheme. She underwent dialysis@home on January 25, 2007. Speaking about the experience, her daughter Madhu Mittal says, "My mother did not realise or feel a thing. She was at ease in the comfortable and familiar surroundings compared to being at a clinic. I feel as people get to know about this scheme it will definitely catch up and will be beneficial to people who can afford it and are not in a position to go out for treatment." The facility costs Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,000 per dialysis. In the hospital

it would be around Rs 1,400.

The foundation's primary focus is to educate the people about normal functioning of the kidney, ways by which kidneys get damaged and the consequences of losing the kidney function. The foundation conducts regular meetings, seminars, awareness programs to educate the public about kidney diseases, their symptoms, early detection, kidney donation, transplant and most importantly the fact that many kidney ailments are preventable.

The foundation's quarterly newsletter as well as two books that have been published namely Kidney fail-

ure: a guide for patients and families and Diet in chronic renal failure will also be of great help to people. Being aware of the long list of patients waiting for a kidney, the foundation has joined hands with like minded organisations like the National Liver Foundation and National Association for the Blind to form a National Organ Donation campaign. This tells people about brain death and encourages organ donation after death. In fact, this thought has been beautifully captured in the tag line of their website- "Don't take your organs to heaven". Think about it.

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