

Dubai Heart Centre's Free Surgeries Save 100 Children

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DUBAI — Over a 100 children have got a new lease of life, thanks to free heart surgeries at Dubai Heart Centre in Dubai Hospital.

At a ceremony held on Thursday to celebrate the success of a campaign launched with a team of Swedish experts, officials at Dubai Heart Centre said they had conducted 120 heart surgeries since the launch of the campaign in 2007.

Consultant cardiac surgeon and director of the centre Dr Obaid Al Jassim said the surgeries were conducted during a phased programme organised in association with the Swedish team.

The Department of Health and Medical Services had launched the campaign after realising the need for paediatric congenital heart surgery facilities in the UAE.

Many children born with congenital heart diseases in the UAE have been forced to seek treatment abroad. Usually conducted in various phases, these surgeries cost over Dh300,000, including travel expenses in some countries. "Sometimes this can go up to Dh500,000 if it is a complicated case," said Dr Jassim.

He said that the initiative meant for citizens and residents from different emirates also benefited some children from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Bahrain, some of whom were in critical condition requiring urgent intervention.

Many children, whose lives were saved through the initiative, were present at the programme. Meanwhile, a Dubai-based healthcare group also launched a similar initiative to offer free and subsidised congenital heart surgeries for children born in poor families.

Dr Moopen's Group recently announced the "Save Little Hearts" campaign in Dubai to mobilise resources for conducting these surgeries at MIMS Cardiac Centre, the group's high-tech cardiac facility in Kerala, India.

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