

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

UMMC, NMMC PARTNER FOR NEWBORN WITH CONGENITAL HEART CONDITION

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JACKSON, Miss. - The University of Mississippi Medical Center and North Mississippi Medical Center (NMMC) recently partnered to bring UMMC's congenital heart surgery team to Tupelo to repair a certain type of heart defect in newborns, saving the infant and the family the time and stress of traveling out of town for this procedure.

Dr. Jorge Salazar, chief of congenital heart surgery at UMMC, and a specialized team of medical professionals operated in NMMC's neonatal intensive care unit to close a newborn's patent ductus arteriosus (PDA). This was the first newborn heart surgery at NMMC.

Before birth, there is a natural connection between the aorta (the heart's main artery to the body) and the pulmonary artery (the main artery to the lungs) called the ductus arteriosus. This opening usually closes shortly after birth, but when it doesn't, it's called a PDA.

The PDA, if left untreated, causes excessive blood flow to the lungs and can lead to heart failure and worsening lung disease in premature babies. The surgery, or PDA ligation, permanently closes this connection improving survival, and at times preventing severe chronic lung problems.

Dr. Bryan Darling, medical director of NMMC's neonatal intensive care unit, said this condition occurs in 20-30 percent of premature babies with respiratory distress syndrome.

"In a certain percentage of cases we can close the PDA with medications. Of those that respond to medical therapy, 25 percent will reopen," he said. "If we can't close the PDA with medical therapy, surgery is the only option."

Darling said the recent collaboration with UMMC was very timely in providing a surgical solution to an infant with this condition.

"Now babies with this condition won't have to be transferred to other hospitals when they're unstable. Previously, the only choice was to transport the baby in an ambulance to the pediatric cardiovascular surgeon, and there's always a risk of the baby's condition deteriorating during travel," he said.

UMMC may be contacted when a neonatologist at NMMC diagnoses a PDA that requires surgery. Then the UMMC congenital heart team travels to Tupelo to examine the baby and operate.

Salazar said the surgery takes 45 minutes and babies recover quickly from the procedure. He and his team have performed this surgery successfully on babies as small as 1 pound.

"This procedure has a 99 percent success rate and results in dramatic improvement in

heart and lung function for these fragile, premature babies," Salazar said.

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Please forward this message to colleagues who might be interested. If you wish to be removed from this list or know of a colleague to add, send an e-mail message to: LAGriffin@umc.edu.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. University of Mississippi Health Care represents the clinical programs of the Medical Center and includes University Hospitals and Health System and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center's threefold mission is to educate tomorrow's health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state's citizens. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at 601-984-1100 or visit us on the Web at <http://info.umc.edu/>.