

# Fetoscopy Helps Save Lives

*Using this procedure a healthy set of twins, who were afflicted with twin-transfusion syndrome, has been delivered successfully*

## Express News Service

**Chennai:** A treatment that has the potential to save the lives of twins in the womb who are afflicted by twin-to-twin-transfusion syndrome (TTTS) is now available for the first time in India.

Twins who share the same placenta are sometimes affected by this syndrome, as the blood gets transferred from one twin to the other. Thus, one foetus has excess blood, and the other has too little blood to function, leading to intra-uterine death of both babies. The foetoscopic laser ablation of the connecting vessels in the placenta

increases the chances of helping the mother carry the child to term.

Carried out successfully for the first time in India by Dr S Suresh of Mediscan, a centre for ultrasound, foetal care and genetics, one set of twins have been delivered and are healthy now. He was mentored by the Chairman, Department of Obstetrics and Foetal Medicine of Necker-Enfants-Malades Hospital, Paris Descartes University, Prof Yves Ville.

Dr Suresh said at a function held to inaugurate Mediscan's Fetoscopy and Twins Unit, "It used to be heart rending to watch the babies literally die before our eyes, but we could do nothing.

With Prof Yves' help through real time tele-mentoring, we are bridging the technology and expertise gap through remote collaboration."

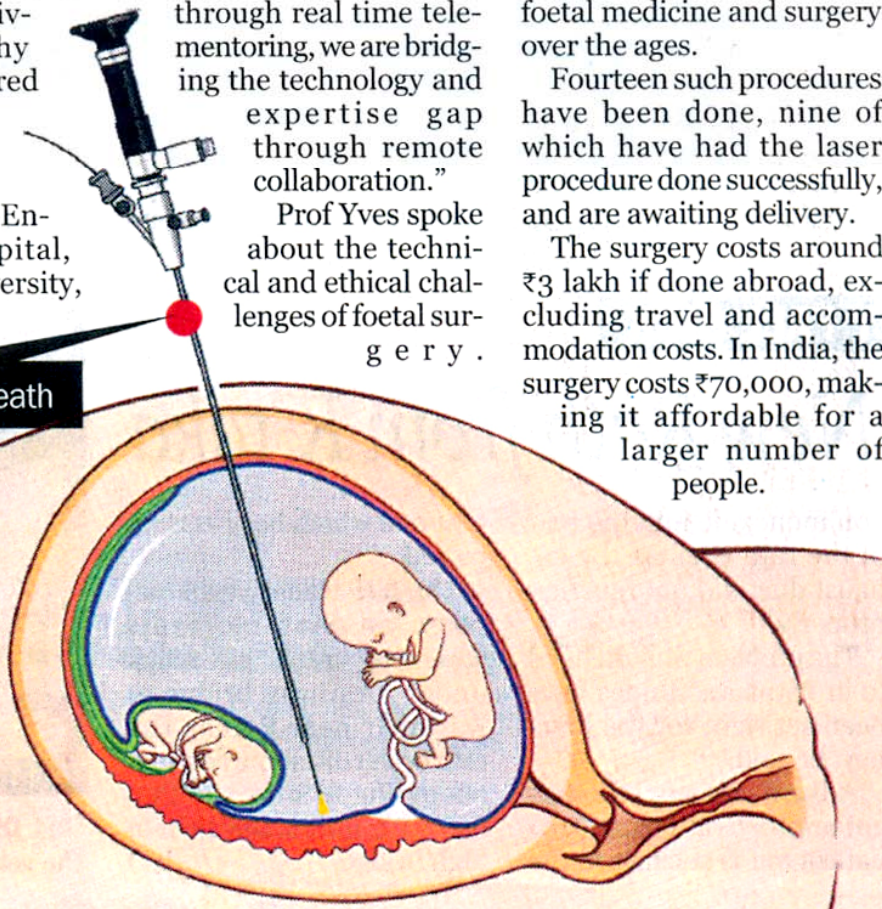
Prof Yves spoke about the technical and ethical challenges of foetal surgery.

Saying that ethics came to the forefront of this issue rather than the background, he said, "Taking care of foetal pain is the primary concern, especially from the 23rd week." He also gave the history and development of foetal medicine and surgery over the ages.

Fourteen such procedures have been done, nine of which have had the laser procedure done successfully, and are awaiting delivery.

The surgery costs around ₹3 lakh if done abroad, excluding travel and accommodation costs. In India, the surgery costs ₹70,000, making it affordable for a larger number of people.

Fetoscope and sheath



## WHAT IS FETOSCOPY?

### HOW IT WORKS

Fetoscopy is an invasive test in which a small camera is inserted in order to directly view the fetus and placenta

It is an endoscopic procedure, which is done during pregnancy to permit use of the fetus, the amniotic cavity, the umbilical cord, and also the fetal side from the placenta

A small (3-4 mm) incision is created in the mother's abdomen, and an endoscope is inserted through the abdominal wall and uterus into the amniotic cavity to acquire fetal tissue samples

It is done to evaluate the fetus for birth defects, which other tests cannot detect