

Neo-natal jaundice treatable

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Neo-natal jaundice is a treatable condition if detected early, but may cause severe brain damage leading to mental retardation. This was stated by Dr G.S. Cheema, a private practitioner in the township, here today.

Dr Cheema was addressing mediapersons relating the case of a child born on January 2 and suffering from acute jaundice. "By the time the child was brought to us he had a billurubin count of 56 while the normal is 1. The child was in a serious condition and had we not acted immediately permanent damage to the child's brain could have occurred," he said.

Explaining the cause of neo-natal jaundice, Dr Cheema said it was a common condition, "as the new-born child's liver is not strong enough to bear the billurubin overload. Generally neo-natal jaundice occurs within a few days of birth and the easiest treatment is phototherapy. In most cases enough exposure to the

sun treats the problem but in severe cases, when the billurubin level is higher, we expose the child to special lights inside the hospital. In worse cases, the child's blood has to be changed. The case we treated was unique in the sense that his blood had to be changed four times in a short duration," he added.

Asked if it was ethically right for doctors to gather publicity by parading patients as success stories, Dr Cheema said such cases were used to inform public and create awareness about a disease. "Even well educated parents are taken for a ride by quacks in many cases. In the majority of the cases neo-natal jaundice does not require any medication and gets cured naturally as the child grows. But many doctors insist that medicines be given to the child and when the child starts improving the parents feel that it is in response to the doctor's medicine," he said.

Dr Cheema also said in case the identity of a patient was being revealed to public with the consent of the patient, there was nothing wrong in it.



Dr Cheema (left) explains the cure of neo-natal jaundice at a press conference in Mohali on Wednesday. A Tribune photograph