



EAR DISEASE & HEARING

INF's Ear Centre, in the Green Pastures Complex in Pokhara, successfully opened its doors in November 2015. The first few days of operation saw a young man's ear drum repaired and hearing bones reshaped. Alongside him, a young girl celebrated new hearing aids, the joy on her face delighting all as she excitedly showed off her new aids.

Ear diseases and hearing problems are often a hidden disability, yet have an enormous effect on day-to-day life. For children it means they fall behind in school, cannot develop language skills and often feel isolated. Left untreated, this sense of isolation continues into adulthood, where ear problems and deafness hinder not only their ability to communicate but also their ability to work.

INF has a long history in providing ear care, running ear surgery camps twice each year since 1992, in partnership with Ear Aid Nepal from the UK and Stiftung Ohrchirurgie Nepal from Switzerland. With 16 inpatient beds and capacity for seeing 60 outpatients a day, the Ear Centre will replace much of the work previously done during outreaches, though treatment will continue to be provided in remote locations.

Apart from treating people with ear disease and deafness, the Ear Centre also trains Nepali staff in ear related procedures and treatment, and provides education on ear care and deafness.

Our hope is to bring relief to many more Nepali people across the western regions living with ear disease.

INF opened its Ear Centre in 2015 but has been running ear surgery camps twice a year since 1992

Did you know... according to the World Health Organisation, over 5% or 360 million people worldwide suffer from disabling hearing loss, with the greatest proportion living in South Asia



RAMESH'S STORY

For individuals living with disability, especially in Nepal, there is the added disadvantage of the associated social stigma. Long held beliefs that past sins cause disability mean that people living with disability are often ostracised from their communities and treated with little respect.

12 year-old Ramesh from Myagdi District knows what it is like to live with this stigma.

“My mother died two years ago, she was dumb. My father works as a labourer, he is deaf.”

Even though Ramesh was born without disability, an ear infection at the age of two caused him terrible pain daily.

“Especially in the morning it was very difficult and the pain lasted for up to one hour. I didn't go to the hospital because we had no money and didn't know how bad the infection was.”

In the past year and a half, the pain became worse and his ear started to smell. Teachers, friends and family noticed.

“Some were talking about me and avoided me. That made me sad.”

Ramesh sought help at a small medical clinic half an hour from his home where he received some medicine. Although this reduced the pain, the infection remained and the right side of his face began to droop.

“My whole family then got very worried.” said Ramesh. “We went to the local hospital in Myagdi which is four hours from my home. But they couldn't help me there and so I was sent to Pokhara.”

At INF's newly built Ear Centre, expert doctors were able to locate the problem.

“I went to the INF Ear Hospital where they found the problem with my right ear.”

Doctors were able to operate on Ramesh which was a great success.

“After the operation my face was better.”

He is thankful for the doctors and staff that treated and healed him, and can now return to his village pain-free and full of joy.

During 2014-15:

- 2461 Ear examinations were conducted
- 246 clients received ear operations
- 470 Hearing Aids were prescribed

Follow the link for photos and videos:

www.inf.org/infs-work/ear-diseases-hearing/