



The nurse to patient ratio at ICHRI is much higher than most hospitals. That way, all the patients can be carefully attended to.

function simultaneously, complete with HeartLung machines, monitors, defibrillators, diathermy machines, Intra Aortic Balloon Pump and Hot Lab facilities. The speciality of the Intra Aortic Balloon Pump (IABP) instrument is that it can give support to the heart for about 12 to 16 hours. After an operation, if the heart cannot maintain the pressure of blood inside the body, this machinery helps to do so, hence keeping the body stable. This helps to save a lot of patients. This machine is not easily available in Bangladesh as it comes with a hefty price tag of around Tk 25 lakh to Tk 30 lakh. "On average we have two operations a day. We do not really want to do three to maintain the quality but we do so in case of emergencies," says Siraj. The OTs too have been made to suit international standards. A careful glance at the ceiling will reveal that there are very little joints on the roof. This minimises the risk of infections in the OT.

On the surgery side, there is the surgery ward and patients are usually admitted into the wards two days in advance. Since the dates for the operations are fixed beforehand, the patients are properly prepared for the big day and their diets are maintained. After the operation, the patient is taken from the OT to the Cardiac Surgical Intensive Care Unit (CSICU). This unit holds 8 beds and is fully equipped with Ventilators, Monitors,

Ducted medical gases and suction, Rewarming/Cooling Blankets and Emergency surgical procedure facilities. Moreover, there are nurses assigned for individual beds such that the patient is always kept under constant observation. The risk of infection in cardiac surgery is very high so the place has to have a very clean surrounding. According to M. Anamul Haque, Head of Cardiac Surgical Perfusion, there is almost 'zero chance of infection'.

Patients undergoing a heart-attack, receive treatment and are sent to CCU Chest Pain Unit step down, and finally to general wards. These are all in the cardiac medicine side or cardiology.

So what's the difference between a cardiologist and a cardiac surgeon. Cardiologists are physicians who practice medicine. They tend to the patient's initial problems, such as exercise tolerance, ECG, pains in the chest, angiogram. Cardiologists also administer 'stents' when an angiogram detects a blockage. They also put pace makers inside patients. These are just intervention procedures and not operations explains Siraj. Initial assessment, treatment and investigations are always done by the cardiologists. When the Cardiologists see that it is not possible to help the patient, they send them over to the Cardiac Surgery unit.