

DR. SUMITA SOFAT HOSPITAL **DELIVERING SMILES**

With all types of stress and strain imposed on our bodies by today's hectic and often unhealthy lifestyles, it is little wonder that many couples wanting to start a family have trouble conceiving. However, there's no need to suffer anymore for the cure is just there!

Met Dr. Sumita Sofat – the esteemed Infertility Specialist-Doctor – an M.B.B.S., and M.D. (OBS. Gynae) – who with a firm belief in herself and some ground-breaking ideas – set up a state-of-the-art Infertility and women-care hospital in Ludhiana two decades back.

An epitome of divinity to those who're desperately trying to have a baby, Dr Sumita Sofat, a stunningly beautiful and warm-hearted personality, believes in the power of dreams and doing everything possible to metamorphose them into a reality.

Her success story begins, when during her final years of medical study, a revolutionary idea of setting up a dedicated infertility and women care center-one-of-its-kind in Punjab-dawned upon her mind. She had a strong vision and an even stronger will to transforming it into reality. "I used to feel very bad at seeing the condition of childless couples in Punjab, who for the lack of appropriate treatments, resorted to quacks like black magicians and other such hooligans. I really wanted to do something constructive about such a harrowing situation, instead of turning a



blind eye to it," reminisces, Dr Sumita. Her idea was novel, but was that proliferating? "Not many people thought so. Not even my seniors," she quips, adding, "As, the total percentage of human population suffering from the disease of infertility is only 10-15%, so a lot of senior colleagues of mine, thought that I would just be, wasting my time, efforts and money by investing in a clinic targeted only at a small niche segment." In 1996, when Dr Sumita set up the Sofat Infertility and Women Care Center in Ludhiana, questions were raised by her fellow colleagues, senior doctors and friends - who doubted whether an IVF center would work here or not. "Though it seemed like a risk to most of the people around me, but in the heart of hearts, I was totally convinced with myself and knew what I was doing," she says.

Armed with a medical degree, enormous amount of passion, along with the ability to dream and take risks, Dr Sumita embarked upon a journey that has now become a success story for many others to draw inspiration from. Though she was already married, but according to her, marriage can never be a deterrent for those who're confident about their dreams and willing to do the required hard-work. As the fortune favors the brave, Dr Sumita soon started getting tremendous response for her treatment and the love and heartfelt wishes by her patients inspired her to work even harder. "The biggest gratification that any doctor can get is when

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MYTH VS FACTS

- A lot of people think that once IVF is done, one must resort to bed-rest or otherwise, the embryos will come out. However, that's far from true. 25-40 minutes rest is all that one needs after embryo transfer is done.
- Many people assume that IVF is risky for the mother but now with minimal protocol stimulation, the risk of ovarian hyper-stimulation in IVF can be avoided.
- A lot of people seek astrological advice too whenever a medical treatment is to be done on the infertility patient. They also want to adjust the date of procedure according to the planetary conditions. However, such things are baseless and often cause a problem for us.
- Many patients also think that they have to be admitted for few days in the hospital for IVE. But the fact is that a patient need not be admitted for the procedure. The patient can go home after 3 to 4 hours when the effect of anesthesia wears off.
- Also IVF is perceived to be a very expensive procedure but it is not as expensive as it is assumed to be.



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a patient comes to you especially, to just 'thank you'. I don't think any amount of money in the world can ever replace this feeling," says the compassionate doctor, who is always gung-ho to provide the best of the facilities to her patients-irrespective of their financial backgrounds. Talking about the kind of treatment that one can expect at Dr. Sumita's hospital, it's imperative to note that the Hospital offers the most advanced facilities which are at par with international standards. It is the first centre in Punjab to have CASA and LASER HATCHING for accurate and better semen analysis and ultimately to increase the success rate of IVF. "We are also the FIRST CENTRE of PUNJAB to have modular IVF lab and IUI lab with AHU unit and class 100 environments and photocatytic filter for highly sterile environment. Besides that, we are the

pioneers in new techniques like LASER HATCHING and BLASTOCYST culture in Punjab. One of the best features of our hospital is that here, all the microscopes in the labs are fitted with CCTV cameras and monitors with the facility for the patient and trainee doctor to see what is happening in the lab," explains Dr Sumita. "Every person has a right to have a baby. Sometimes when the patient is genuine but financially weak, we don't mind giving discounts or doing the treatment completely free of cost," she says. "Our hospital is also associated with charitable societies like H.E.R.O society which helps in the treatment of poor patients and also aids in organizing training programmes and conferences for doctors. Recently the Hospital with H.E.R.O society organized a live IVF conference where infertility

■ When should a couple consult an Infertility expert?

If a couple is having unprotected intercourse for one year and are still unable to conceive, they should visit a gynaecologist. However, in some cases, the couple should not wait for one year but consult earlier, for example, late marriage or irregular periods or any kind of medical problems.

■ What's the role of diet and lifestyle in treating or preventing infertility?

Studies have shown that factors like an unhealthy diet, lack of Vitamin D, drug addiction and obesity affect fertility. Also, stress and infertility are interrelated.





In my opinion, no matter how well you've studied your subject, you can't become a successful doctor until you connect with the patient on an emotional level first. It's the compassion that you feel for them and the smile on their face upon successful treatment that gives you true satisfaction.



procedures were relayed from hospital to the venue via satellite."

A member of FOGSI-Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society of India and other such esteemed national and international medical organizations, Dr Sumita makes sure to update herself regularly about the latest technological advancements, as far as the treatment of infertility is concerned.

Perhaps, it is for her strong commitment to do nothing but the best, that she's been conferred with many awards and honors from all over the world. Besides, being invited to USA by American Society of Reproductive Medicines twice, to produce papers, Dr Sumita has also been awarded the coveted 'Young Scientist Award' by World Association of Reproductive Medicines in Rome in 2004, and not to mention, the 'Vashist Chakitsak' paruskar that she received for her excellence services, in the year 1998. Recently, she was honoured by the Hon'ble Deputy CM of Punjab, Mr. Sukhbir Singh Badal, for her meritorious services in infertility.

Known for innovation, integrity, modern equipments and personalized services, at Dr Sumita SOFAT Hospital, all doctors under the aegis of Dr Sumita, strive to give personal attention to each patient. "Since we deal with a disease that's almost a social stigma in Punjab, I try my best to personally meet and counsel each and every patient," says, Dr Sumita, who believes that it's 'the personalized attention' that makes this hospital different from the rest, apart from the fact that it offers a comprehensive range of infertility services under one roof so that patients need not run from a clinic to a laboratory to a scan centre.

Considering the fact that at Dr. Sumita's SOFAT Hospital, all the treatments including consultation, ultrasound scans, egg collection and ET are done by Dr Sumita herself, and the fact that she's there at the center for about 14 hours a day, it's hard to figure out how she manages to remain such perky and energetic throughout the day. "I am a fitness freak! Yoga, kickboxing, & meditation are what keeps me going," she smiles to say. After having given a new ray of hope to each and every childless couple in Punjab, Sumita is now all set to open more infertility centers across north India and continue her crusade of bringing smiles to the eager hearts.