



# Cure Fistula Permanently

## Why in News?

A Pune-based surgeon has developed the **Distal Laser Proximal Ligation (DSPL)** procedure to treat complex fistulas.

## What are Fistulas?

- **About:**
  - A fistula is an **abnormal connection between two body parts**, such as an **organ or blood vessel and another structure**. Fistulas are usually the **result of an injury or surgery**. Infection or inflammation can also cause fistula to form.
  - Fistulas **may occur in many parts of the body**. They **can form between**: An **artery and vein**, Bile ducts and the surface of the skin (from gallbladder surgery), the **cervix and vagina**, the **colon and surface of the body**, causing faeces to exit through an opening other than the anus, etc.
- **Prevalence:**
  - Two million women in low-resource settings have an obstetric fistula, and 100,000 more develop one every year. Obstetric fistula is a **devastating childbirth injury** and a neglected public health and human rights issue.
    - Only 1 in 50 women with obstetric fistula ever receives treatment.
  - Fistula-in-ano is one of the most commonly encountered surgical problems with the prevalence of an average of 2/10,000.
- **Treatment:**
  - While some **fistulas can be treated with antibiotics** and other medication, **fistula removal surgery may be necessary** if the infection doesn't respond to medication or if the fistula is severe enough to require emergency surgery.

## What is Distal Laser Proximal Ligation?

- The DSPL surgery is a minimally invasive, sphincter-saving surgery for complex fistulas.
  - **Sphincter** is a **ring-shaped muscle that relaxes or tightens to open or close a passage** in the body. **Examples Pyloric Sphincter** (at the lower opening of the stomach)
- The **surgery is based on two principles - debridement and efficient drainage from the fistula** in the first two to three weeks.
- **DLPL is performed under** the guidance of a **3D EndoAnal Imagine machine** which **can identify hidden fistula tracts** and micro abscess in real time during surgery.
- **DLPL is associated with a negligible recurrence rate** and the patient can resume work in about five days.
- According to the Indian Journal of Colo-Rectal surgery, minimally invasive, sphincter-saving DLPL surgery is a safe and effective treatment for complex fistula-in-ano.

## What are Global Initiatives to Treat Fistulas?

- **International Day to End Obstetric Fistula is observed on 23 May every year.**
  - The day aims to ensure access to emergency obstetric care and skilled health professionals, especially midwives, to all women to prevent and help ensure treatment for

obstetric fistula.

◦ The theme of 2023 is "End Fistula Now."

- **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** leads the **Campaign to End Fistula**, which works in more than 55 countries on prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation efforts.
- The United Nations Member States are invited to consult the resolution to end fistula by 2030.

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