

Maiden use of 3D-printed vertebra in spine surgery

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Singapore: For the first time in medical history, surgeons in China have used a 3D-printed vertebra as an implant for orthopedic spine surgery.

In a recent five-hour operation, doctors at the Peking University hospital in Beijing, have successfully removed a tumor located on the second vertebra of a 12-year-old child, replacing it with a 3D-printed part.

Dr Liu Zhongjun, director, Peking University, said in a statement, "Compared to the conventional titanium tube implants, the new technique offered much greater customization and comfortable recovery."

Dr Zhongjun added that conventional implants had a lot of disadvantages as the patient's head had to be framed with pins after the surgery and the head cannot touch the bed until three months.

"However, with new technology the shape of the vertebra can be simulated which is much stronger and more convenient than traditional practice," he added.