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Infertility helpline proves popular in state

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai, Jan. 18: India's first free infertility helpline, launched in mid September 2003 is evoking an overwhelming response. With an average 250 calls per month, the helpline has till date catered to over 1,000 calls from Maharashtra and other states of India.

The helpline (98202 24000 and 98922 11112) is a brain-child of gynaecologists, Dr Nandita Palshetkar, infertility specialist, Dr Hrishikesh Pai — both from Lilavati Hospital and gynaecologist Dr Rishma P. Dhillon of Jaslok Hospital. The helpline seeks to guide wrought couples about therapeutic options and preventable infertility. Dr Dhillon says, "The response to the helpline has been good. On an average, we receive about eight calls daily. Callers range from the newly-weds to 40-year-old couples."

They say that the helpline tries to fill a void in the life of people by spreading awareness and education. The doctors feel that the helpline's popularity is due to the fact that the caller remains anonymous and still gets related information and guidance.

Dr Pai says, "The problem of infertility afflicts nearly 20 million couples in India. One out of every 10 married couple fail to have children even after trying for a year without contraception. Nearly 80 per cent of these patients are likely to achieve success with modern yet simple therapies."

Dr Palshetkar says, "Times are changing. Couples who fail to conceive call the helpline for advice without hesitation."