

## **Interventional Catheterization:**

### **New Hope to Childhood Congenital Heart Diseases**

About 6 to 8 in 1,000 babies are born with congenital heart diseases. However, the conventional treatment for these diseases, i.e. cardiac surgery is often traumatic and associated with high risk. The Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, HKU has started to perform interventional catheterization to treat congenital heart diseases since 1986 at the Cardiac Paediatric Unit at Grantham Hospital, which greatly reduces the risk of treatment to only 2 to 3% and is less traumatic. Recently, a new procedure called transcatheter occlusion of ventricular septal defect (VSD) has been performed in the first patient in HK in October 2004 by the paediatric cardiologists from the Department, to date, 3 patients have successfully undergone this new therapy.

Congenital heart diseases are the malformations of the heart and the large blood vessels resulting from abnormal development of the fetal heart. In most cases the causes are unknown but genetic factors and environmental factors are believed to be relevant. VSD accounts for 20 to 25% of all the cases with congenital heart diseases and on average, around 100 newborn babies would have VSD in HK every year.