

1 litre blood loss from cancerous ulcer on tongue, patient now stable

Sumati.Yengkhom
@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: A cancer patient would have lost his life to severe bleeding from a malignant ulcer on his tongue had it not been for an emergency surgery. By the time the patient was taken to hospital, he had lost 1 litre of blood from his tongue, sending him into severe shock.

The life-saving operation later, the patient, Rakesh Tiwari, returned home and could have food orally. Though such surgeries were not uncommon, they were usually planned ones, said doctors.

Tiwari, a 30-year-old driver from Kidderpore, was at a relative's place in Konnagar on February 6, when his tongue started to bleed late into the night. With the bleeding not stopping for a few hours, his family took him to Narayana Superspecialty Hospital (NSH) in Howrah. It's the same hospital, where

6-HOUR EMERGENCY SURGERY



Rakesh Tiwari is now back home

Feb 6: The cancerous ulcer on Rakesh Tiwari's tongue starts bleeding

Early on Feb 7: Tiwari is

taken to hospital as severe bleeding continues; within a span of a few hours, he

loses 1 litre of blood

Feb 7: An emergency free-flap surgery, is performed

As the oncology team removes the affected area of his tongue, the plastic surgery team harvests tissue from his thigh with its blood supply and

transplants them to his mouth to recreate the tongue



he was diagnosed with a cancerous ulcer on the left side of his tongue in the first week of January. After the malignancy was confirmed, doctors had advised surgery. But before the operation could be conducted, the tumour started bleeding.

At that hour of the night, Tiwari's family took him to a

few hospitals, but all refused to treat him, given the criticality of his condition. So, they finally took him to NSH, where the head and neck onco-surgeon team doctors, Sourav Datta, Harsh Dhar and Apurva Garg, along with the plastic surgeon team, headed by Adish Basu, took the challenge. "We had to

conduct an emergency free-flap surgery to save the patient's life. The entire tumour was removed and we reconstructed his tongue," said Basu. A free-flap surgery is a microvascular operation that ensures the best possible functionality of the tongue. As the oncology team removed the affected tongue, the plastic surgery team rapidly harvested tissue from the thigh with its blood supply and transplanted it to the mouth to recreate the tongue. Within six hours, the surgery and the reconstruction were completed. "We perform such surgeries regularly but they are all planned. That it was done as an emergency makes it stand out," said Datta.

In the absence of the emergency surgery, the chances of aspiration of blood and death were high. "We are thankful to the hospital and the doctors for saving his life," said Tiwari's brother, Dharmendra.