



Mid-Day ePaper

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HOW SINGLE MOTHER FOUGHT THE ODDS TO RESCUE SON FROM COMA

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MOTHER SAVIOUR: Rashid Shaikh came out of coma after three months of continuous struggle by his single mother Aarzoo who fought to ensure he got the right treatment.

As we mark World Head Injury Awareness Day today, MiD DAY brings you the story of a mother who refused to give up hope and helped cure her comatose son

ON World Head Injury Awareness Day MiD DAY brings to you the story of Rashid Shaikh (21), a young boy, whose life was adversely affected by a rail accident, which resulted in an injury to his head.

His single mothers struggle, endurance and fight to do everything for her sons cure against all odds has finally got him out of coma.

Rashid, a resident of Govandi, met with a tragic rail accident in November 2009 when a pole hit him between Chembur and Govandi causing severe head injury. The accident occurred when he was on his way back home after purchasing books for his exams.

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His family was informed and he was rushed to Sion hospital.

Though the doctors did their best to save him, Rashid went into a state of coma following heavy loss of blood. After keeping him in the hospital for 21 days, doctors informed his mother Aarzoo that there was no hope for him and he was discharged and sent home.

Aarzoo is a single mother as her husband abandoned her 19 years ago. She has since then struggled to make ends meet for her three children. In this comatose state, Aarzoo took care of Rashid with the hope that he would come out of coma. Her efforts paid off as over time he showed signs of improvement.

Aarzoo says, " My son was very good at studies and other activities and a very wellbehaved boy. His accident came as a shock to me. He suffered heavy blood loss and doctors had given up all hope." Ray of hope Aarzoo approached Dr Alok Sharma, a neurosurgeon who performed stem cell transplantation on Rashid at NeuroGen Brain & Spine Institute. This was followed up by intensive physiotherapy by his mother.

Doctors at NeuroGen said, " His personality had been completely compromised. He had lost all sense of understanding.

His cognitive ability was severely damaged. He could not understand anything around him. He would only be able to weakly recognise few family members. He became extremely aggressive in nature. He would kick and scratch anyone who came near him." Aarzoo said, " He could not balance his body weight, and could not sit on a chair or walk independently. He could not perform any daily activities and became entirely dependent on me. Slowly, he began to regain consciousness. He could open his eyes and move his fingers and toes to a small extent. He started responding to some selective commands." Following the stem cell therapy, his condition improved almost immediately. Within one week of therapy, his understanding improved. He started following more commands. He could recognise and differentiate between objects and colours. His aggression reduced drastically. He could balance his body while sitting on the wheelchair for a short while, say the doctors at NeuroGen.

Mothers efforts

Dr Nandini Gokulchandran, deputy director, NeuroGen, said, " His mother diligently kept up rehabilitation. He underwent stem cell therapy a second time. With time, he showed more improvement.

Drizzling from the mouth stopped completely. He could recognise more objects and even differentiate between right and left side. He began to comprehend situations and react more easily."

Fatal facts

Doctors claim that head injuries are a major cause of death and disability the world over. It is estimated that approximately 10 million people sustain traumatic brain injuries each year worldwide. Injury to the brain is caused when sudden trauma such as a blow, jolt, or penetration disrupts the function of the brain. Such injuries vary in severity from mild (brief change in mental status) to severe (a

period of unconsciousness)

Accident statistics

Doctors claim that 1 in 6 people in India die due to trauma as compared to 1 in 200 people in US. In India 1.5 to 2 million victims suffer from traumatic injuries due to accidents. Head injury is very serious as victims can go into a coma and even after regaining consciousness there are neuro deficiencies