

## This doc finds her feet again

**Malathy Iyer | TNN**

Mumbai: When Dr Hemangi Sane was handed over the damning diagnosis of motor neuron disease, she was told the median life expectancy was little over 18 months. “It is not fair of doctors to give out such a statement,” says Dr Hemangi, who trained as a doctor herself, first at KEM Hospital in Parel and then in New York. She remembers crying on receiving the diagnosis — more so when one considers that scientist Stephen Hawking has been living with the same disease for 42 years now. She worked for two more years before weakening movements made it impossible for her to do so. A year back, she returned to India when it became impossible for her to lift things. “I had heard about stem cell therapy in the US, but it was all in the lab stage. Moreover, I was sure the first stem cell breakthrough would come from the US. So, I was a bit sceptical when I heard about stem cell therapy being offered in Sion Hospital,” she said. But her family egged her on to try and she is happier. “Even my care-giver who is not a medical person can feel the muscles developing in my shoulder and calves,” said the doctor, adding that she owes her recovery — ability to climb stairs and speak clearly, among others — to the double dose of stem cells and rigorous physiotherapy. “Both have to go hand in hand for it to make a difference,” she said, adding that she is working on setting up a support group for patients with motor neuron disease.



**BEST FOOT FORWARD:** Dr Hemangi Sane (centre) is helped to her feet by relatives.