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When 13-year-old Ms Percy (name changed), the only child of her parents, was suffering from frequent falls and pain in her leg, her parents took her to a doctor for checkup. Initial diagnosis through an X-ray showed lesion over her femur (thigh bone) area.

Later, a biopsy was performed, which revealed a massive cancerous growth (Osteogenic sarcoma - a form of bone cancer) in her femur (thigh bone). She was started on chemotherapy after diagnosis at a local hospital. But after three months and no improvement in her condition, an amputation of the limb seemed imminent.

In a complex 8 hour surgery, a limb salvation surgery was performed on her by consultant orthopedic oncologist, Dr Agarwal, assisted by Dr Amol Dongre, medical oncologist and Dr Manoj Pahukar, orthopedic surgeon, from Wockhardt Hospital, Nagpur.

Initial tests at Wockhardt Hospital, Nagpur, revealed that the tumor had metastasized (was spreading). Examination of the affected limb revealed tense shiny skin with discharging sinus, she had developed severe infection at the site of main tumor. Considering her young age, it was important to salvage her limb and ensure that the infection does not spread to other parts in the body.

Talking about the complications of the case, Dr Agarwal, consultant, orthopedic oncologist, said, "This case was complicated not only due to the young age of the patient, but also because of the infection she had and the massive size of the tumor in her body. Fortunately, she has responded well to the treatment, and will hopefully have a good quality of life."

Ms Percy was first started on antibiotics and after few weeks of treatment, her infection subsided and she was started on chemotherapy. A surgery was then performed for removing the tumor from her bone. The femur, which is the longest bone in the body, was infected by more than 80%. The size of the tumor was more than 30 cm over the 37 cm femur.

Futher on, the removal of the bone, a spacer was placed in the leg to suppress infection. Later on, her chemotherapy was continued and a prosthetic was inserted in the leg after removing the spacer. The patient has recovered well, is practically cured of her malignancy with an intact limb.

Dr Amol Dongre, medical oncologist, Wockhardt Hospital, Nagpur, said," Since she suffered from infection, it was not possible for us to start treatment before reducing her infection. Chemotherapy would not have worked then. After reducing the infection, we have given her some cycles of chemotherapy. Since her response to chemotherapy has been good, we hope that the cancer would not resurface."

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