

Jaydev panchawagh is a man with many feathers in his cap. He is presently the coordinator of the department of neurosurgery at Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital and research centre in Pune, India. He is responsible for running the brain and spine surgery programme. He is also honorary consultant in neurosurgery at the Aditya Birla Memorial Hospital and at Sahyadri Hospital which houses the Pune Institute Of Neurology. Panchawagh is attached to the Sushrut Medical Foundation's Hardikar Hospital as a spine surgeon.

He is a Founder and Chairman of the Synapse Brain And Spine Foundation. This foundation is active in the social and scientific aspects of neurosurgery. He was the recipient of the prestigious K. Award for outstanding work in neurosurgery in 2007 and has to date been involved in management of over 10,000 neurosurgical cases since the days of his residency.

By Ravneet Sehmi

NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS EASED WITH NEW TECHNIQUE



evening, I may have to talk to a mother or a daughter or a son... whose relative has terminal brain damage.

On the very next day morning I may be presenting my work on brain tumours or trigeminal neuralgia..... in a scientific conference. The journey takes me through science, philosophy, art, spirituality, process of introspection.....It's a humbling experience.

Brain and spine surgery needs an unusually high degree of dexterity during an operation and also mental concentration. In brain surgery, the line between success and failure is very thin. It does call for courage, presence of mind and challenges our ability to take on-the-spot decisions. The question of completeness of the removal of pathology versus damage to the eloquent brain areas is persistently lingering during sur-

geries. Every small decision taken during surgery has far reaching consequences. Actually, there is nothing.... absolutely nothing.... in human brain that is dispensable. For example, elsewhere in the body, veins can be easily cut without much ado. In human brain, even a small vein could be vitally important.

When I look at an MRI or CT scan of brain or spine, my attention goes first to the normal structures surrounding the tumour and not at the pathology. My mind starts noticing the important blood vessels which might be adherent to the tumour or important brain areas with eloquent functions which are displaced by the tumour because they constitute the surgical target for me. To preserve 'these' is my aim. That I have to remove the tumour is a foregone conclusion.

WHAT ARE YOUR AREAS OF INTEREST?

I am personally interested in brain tumour treatment, treatment of spinal problem, trigeminal neuralgia and hemi facial spasms.

YOU ARE AN ESTABLISHED BRAIN AND SPINE SURGEON. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PRACTICING AND WHERE?

I have been active in the field of neurosurgery for the past 18 years. I have worked with Prof. Kvr Sastri (Chairman and Head Neurosurgery) at Nimhans (National Institute of Mental Health And Neurosciences) in Bangalore and for Endoscopic & Vascular Neurosurgery. I also worked as a consultant neurosurgeon in the city of Pune since November

I always think that the man behind these machines is very important. We have to remember that these machines are our slaves and not vice-versa.



spinal cord some damage will inevitably happen. What I mean to say is that it should be kept to the minimum.

At present, so many neurosurgeons are getting qualified and are into the practice. The present technology easily allows them to operate on brain and remove tumours, or other pathologies. But as I said the real question is at the end of surgery, are they able to preserve as many brain functions as possible.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY FOR YOU LIKE?

As a neurosurgeon, I see patients who have had severe brain injury, catastrophic brain haemorrhage, stroke, spinal cord trauma, brain tumours, severe facial pain (trigeminal neuralgia) debilitating back pain, sciatica... the list is very long. Sometimes we are fighting with death itself. Sometimes in the operation theatre I am trying to preserve important brain functions by operating for a longer time under microscope. The very

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am 43 years old. I live in Pune, western Maharashtra with my wife Malathi, who is an anaesthesiologist, my son Suhrud and my mother.

PROFESSIONALLY YOU ARE A NEUROSURGEON. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PRACTICING AND WHERE?

Yes. I spend most of my time at Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital. It was erected with a mission statement reading 'rational and ethical medical practice'. When the medical world is becoming rampantly commercial, a rare combination of excellence and medical ethics is found here.

WHAT IS NEUROSURGERY?

Neurosurgery is a branch which deals with diseases of brain, spine and spinal cord especially diseases requiring surgical intervention. Only a few decades ago, safe surgeries on brain and spinal cord were considered difficult and some areas of brain-impossible to reach surgically.

Common neurosurgical include brain tumours, brain haemorrhage, brain aneurysms etc. in the field of brain and for the spine - sciatica, spinal cord compression, spondylosis, spinal tumours etc. The brain is a unique organ. It harbours important functions which make us human such as thoughts, emotions artistic abilities, mathematic calculations etc. In addition, it is the seat of very basic abilities like sensations, locomotion (motor function), taste, smell, vision which are indispensable for life itself.

The real art and science of neurosurgery is not only in removing the disease, but, while doing so, preserving these brain functions.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD NEUROSURGEON?

You know, a neurosurgeon should be like a master thief. A master thief carries out the theft in such a way that no marks or evidences are left on his trail of entrance or exit. For a long time after the theft, people do not even realize that something is amiss.

Of course, when you enter into the delicate organ like brain or