

110-yr-old man beats back stomach cancer

INDOMITABLE SPIRIT This much-loved sarpanch of a village in Kashmir is raring to go home after doctors at a city hospital operated on him for cancer

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NEW DELHI: Haji Ghulam Rasool Dar's frail 110-year-old frame hides an indomitable spirit that has helped him beat back stomach cancer which, along with the cancers of the oesophagus and colon, is the most common form of the disease in Kashmir.

Dar, sarpanch of Humhama village in Srinagar district, was diagnosed with stomach cancer a month ago, and operated at Apollo Hospital on August 19. He is now raring to go home. "I am better now and I want to go home," said Dar, fidgeting in his hospital bed.

"It is very challenging to operate upon someone who is so old. But what helped was his supreme will to live. Age is no bar for any surgery. If there is willpower and unqualified support of the family, then one can survive anything," said Dr Sameer Kaul, oncological surgeon who headed a team of six doctors that did the surgery at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals.

The others in the team were Dr Rajinder Kaul, Dr Rohit V Nayyar, Dr Vivek Gupta, Dr



■ Dr Sameer Kaul and Dr Feroz Pasha with Haji Ghulam Rasool Dar after his surgery at Apollo Hospital.

SANJEEV VERMA/ HT PHOTO

Feroz Pasha and Dr Prabhat Raina.

What helped was that Dar was otherwise healthy and had no other health disorders associated with age, such as blood pressure or diabetes. "We had to go slow as we could not afford any complications," said Kaul.

Dar was admitted in early Stage III — larger tumour size and/or the cancer has spread from the initial site to nearby lymph nodes and/

or tissues —and was operated immediately.

"He came with symptoms of repeated vomiting, which had made eating a problem. We had to do the surgery without delay as he was getting inadequate nutrition," said Dr Pasha.

Dar's surgery, which involved the removal of the stomach and the creation of a new one from a part of the small intestine, took more than three hours.

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oncological surgeon,
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ning the family's construction business in Srinagar before his surgery, said his grandson Manzoor Ahmed Dar. "He is very popular in our village and we are getting calls every day from people asking when he's back. Everyone's waiting for him to go home," said Manzoor.

After his surgery, the only changes in Dar's lifestyle will be the way he eats and sleeps. "Now he can't sleep flat on a surface — he has to keep his head a few degrees above the plane level. There are no restrictions on his diet but he'll have to eat frequent, small meals. He will have to have 200gm (a small bowl) of solid food or 200ml of liquid (one glass) every two hours," said Dr Pasha.