

**CITY HOSPITAL ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF MESENCHYMAL PROJECT**

# Using stem cells to treat Parkinson's Disease

**Deepa Suryanarayan**

At 53, Katy Merchant was the senior vice president of Indian Market Research Bureau, in the prime of her life and career, when disaster struck in the form of Parkinson's Disease (PD), a neurodegenerative disorder.

From working double-shifts everyday, renowned physician Dr Dinesh Maniar's life came to a complete standstill, as he lost control over his movements.

Merchant and Maniar are not alone. PD affects one per cent of the population above 60 years of age in India. So far the treatment available has been drugs and deep brain stimulation therapy, where

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electrodes implanted inside the brain stimulate the cells that control movement.

But there's heartening news for patients suffering from PD. Jaslok Hospital has announced the launch of a revolutionary mesenchymal stem cell project.

"Mesenchymal stem cells are extracted from the patient's bone marrow. They are then transferred to a laboratory, where they are isolated and multiplied. Once they have multiplied, they are implanted into the patient's brain," explained Dr Paresh Doshi, head of the department of functional neurosurgery, Jaslok Hospital, which has tied up with Reliance Life Sciences for this project.

"As the cells are from the patient's own bone marrow, there is no potential of rejection," he added. A three-year clinical trial on five select patients will begin soon, Dr Doshi announced.

Apart from the stem cell research, Dr Doshi has also introduced a new drug delivery sys-



**Dr Paresh Doshi, Jaslok Hospital**

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**CARE PROGRAMME**

The newly inaugurated Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Andheri will launch a one-of-its kind 'total Parkinson's Disease care programme' on April 11 to mark World Parkinson's Day.

Research shows that PD affects 1% of the adult population. In India, the prevalence is reported to be about 50 per 1,00,000 persons.

This programme will allow a patient suffering from the neurological disorder to visit a movement disorder expert, rehabilitation expert, psychologist and other experts depending on the nature of the disease, in the span of half a day at the hospital. Patients can avail of the programme at an affordable cost of Rs1,500, to visit the hospital three times a week.

tem, Duodopa, to manage PD. The aim is to avoid motor fluctuations and involuntary movements that plague PD patients with the help of a continuously administered dopaminergic stimulation.

"A concentrated dose of drug in a gel formulation is administered into the small intestine via a tube through an external pump.

As the infusion is continuous, patients carry the pump with them all the time and can avoid motor fluctuations," explained Dr Doshi.

Based on the requests of hundreds of patients and their caretakers, Dr Doshi also launched a website, [www.parkinsons-group.com](http://www.parkinsons-group.com), on Thursday, which will disseminate information about the disease.

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