



Red hot Chemotherapy can 'gut' Tumours

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Chennai: Surgical oncologists don't usually despise the large tumours. That degree of loathing is reserved for the microtumours that evade their scalpels and often act as a bridge to the cancer's recurrence. To combat this problem with cancers that plague the abdominal wall (peritoneum), surgeons at MIOT International Hospital have brought in a form of chemo that has a great track record — Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy or HIPEC.

As the name suggests, HIPEC involves the heating of chemicals to a temperature much higher than the normal body temperature and shooting it into the peritoneal space directly. "Initially, the surgeons will cut out every part of the abdominal wall that is cancerous and after that, HIPEC is administered by general surgeons and nurses for 6-8 hours," explained Dr Prithvi Mohandoss, Joint Managing Director of the hospital. This super-hot chemo dose is more effective than normal chemo because it's targeted, constantly circulated

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and effective in weeding out smaller cancer cells. "Most of the peritoneal cancers are offshoots of bowel or colorectal cancers, so they're not easy to reach. But using this method, we have boosted a patient's one-year survival rate to 80 per cent," said Dr C R Selvasekar, consultant colorectal surgeon at the Christie NHS Foundation Trust Hospital in Manchester, where over 400 patients have had good results after HIPEC.

Though HIPEC has been used to combat peritoneal cancer's from 2002, it will be used on a patient at the hospital on Saturday to demonstrate to surgeons and nurses, just how it's done. This is part of a two-day conference organised by Dr Prithvi Mohandoss' Indo-British Health Initiative to discuss just this facet of aggressive cancer care — and it is being attended by surgeons from across the world. "In a country like India, where these cancers are often diagnosed when the patients are in end-stage, this can take their life expectancy from 3 weeks to at least a year or more. That is the difference," said Dr Prithvi Mohandoss.