

## Colchester surgeon is front page news in India

A “medical marvel” is how a national newspaper in India described an operation carried out there by a Colchester breast surgeon.

Mr Arunmoy Chakravorty performed two operations in the northern Indian city of Allahabad, which were broadcast live to 150 surgeons, and then gave a lecture which was attended by about 400 doctors.

He became the first surgeon to carry out a specific type of breast cancer operation in Allahabad that involved removing only the tumour inside a breast cancer patient without the need for mastectomy.

The *Hindustan Times*, the second most widely read English language newspaper in India, described the operation, known as a sentinel lymph node biopsy, as a “medical marvel”.

Mr Chakravorty, a consultant oncoplastic and reconstructive breast surgeon, was interviewed and photographed by the paper and the story was reported by other newspapers and also by electronic media in the northern India state of Uttar Pradesh.

“Breast surgery as a specialty is still developing in India where the surgery tends to be carried out by general surgeons rather than specialists,” he said.

“An important advance in breast cancer surgery has been the evolution of oncoplastic techniques for breast conserving surgery and options for breast reconstruction.

“Traditionally, breast cancer rates in India have been low but they are rising due to a number of factors, including lifestyle changes, more awareness and better detection.

“In some parts of India, such as Allahabad, the only operation carried out for breast cancer surgery is a mastectomy whereas in this country the trend is more and more towards breast conservation surgery.”

Breast conservation surgery is done mainly in the early stage of breast cancer and involves the removal of cancerous tumours.

It is less mutilating surgery and causes little trauma to patients, who recuperate faster, and the results are the same as with conventional surgery.

Mr Chakravorty was invited to attend a national continuing medical education (CME) session at the Swaroop Rani Nehru University Hospital and Moti Lal Nehru Medical College in Allahabad, which has a population of 1.75 million and is about 350 miles from New Delhi, the capital of India.

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The live operations were seen via video conferencing facilities by 150 surgeons, ranging in seniority from trainees to professors of surgery in a tertiary teaching hospital.

Mr Chakravorty performed oncoplastic breast conserving surgery and a sentinel lymph node biopsy on a 55-year-old patient and a more conventional operation, known as a modified radical-mastectomy, on a 35-year-old woman.

His lecture, in which he gave a British perspective on breast cancer surgery, was heard by an audience which included GPs, physicians and surgeons.

Mr Chakravorty's visit was organised before the Government last month announced an initiative to export the NHS and make it a global brand.

He said he was very pleased by the positive feedback he received in India and used the occasion to make contacts from all over the country.

Professor Probal Neogi, organising secretary of the national CME session, told the *Hindustan Times*: "It was a great experience. I got to learn a lot. Now we would be able to conduct the operation of patients here ourselves.

"This would help in making a difference to many lives."

In the future, Mr Chakravorty would like to develop and establish an exchange programme for continuing professional development between Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust and medical institutes in India.

Mr Chakravorty joined the Trust in November last year and divides his time between its two hospitals – Essex County Hospital and Colchester General Hospital.

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