Akshay youngest stem cell donor in Kerala

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Akshay Krishnan (L) with a pouch containing the stem cells he donated on Wednesday. Seen with him is Eby Sam John. (Photo: DC)

Kochi: At 21, Akshay Krishnan, a B Tech student of KMEA Engineering College, Edathala, near Kochi, has become the youngest stem cell donor in Kerala. He is also the fourth donor from the state and the 62nd in the country.

Akshay donated stem cells through a simple procedure at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences in Kochi on Wednesday and saved the life of a 29-year-old leukemia patient in Bengaluru who will remain unknown to him and the rest of the world as per the ethical practice followed in stem cell donation.

Akshay, who participated in a stem cell drive for young Sachin Sijoy along with hundreds of other students at his college on April 3, was happy to learn a couple of month ago that he turned out to be a genetic match for a patient in Bengaluru.

“His was a 10/10 match and he readily agreed to donate,” said Eby Sam John, one of the three other donors from Kerala who is now working as a coordinator of Datri, the NGO which
maintains a registry of willing stem cell donors. Akshay’s mother, a higher secondary school teacher, also encouraged her son’s humanitarian gesture.

Eby told Deccan Chronicle that the procedure for stem cell donation was similar to that of blood donation but the awareness of it remained low in the state. “It’s a life saving measure, which is also completely safe for the donor. For thousands of patients suffering from blood disorders like leukemia, stem cell transplant is the last hope. But the chance of getting a genetic match is 1:20,000 to 1:2 million,” he said. Datri’s registry has over 61,000 willing donors now.

The other two stem cell donors from the state are Gireesh Kumar C.S., clinical application specialist at Alcon Laboratories Pvt Ltd and Sidhin T.R., an employee with Kochi Shipyard.

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